A comparison between middle school and high school teachers' perceptions of empowerment, teaching social skill competency, and participative leadership

Rebecca Jane Beattie

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A COMPARISON BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL
TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT, TEACHING
SOCIAL SKILL COMPETENCY, AND PARTICIPATIVE
LEADERSHIP

By
Rebecca Jane Beattie

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in School Administration
in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi
May 2009
A COMPARISON BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL
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Title of Study: A COMPARISON BETWEEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT, TEACHING SOCIAL SKILL COMPETENCY, AND PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP

Pages in Study: 156

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The purpose of this non-experimental study was to investigate teacher empowerment and the participatory management within the schools’ cultures. Also, the study investigated the teachers’ expectations of their students’ social skill competency needs and classroom behavioral practices within the existing school culture.

Pearson r coefficients were used to determine the degree of relationship between teachers’ perceived empowerment and school culture. Independent t-tests were run on the mean scores between middle school and high school teacher perception of autonomy and collaborative leadership. Responses to an open-ended questionnaire were analyzed as qualitative data on teacher expectations of student social skill competency. Descriptive profiles of the administrators’ strategies in the process of decision making and the formal structured participative management system were calculated. Cross tabulation of school, gender, and years of experience for the administrators’ participatory leadership was included.
After data was analyzed, a positive correlation was determined for teacher empowerment and school culture from both the middle school and the high school. The independent t-tests indicated statistically significant differences between the two groups of teachers for autonomy and collaborative leadership. The data from the open-ended questionnaire indicated that teachers’ expectations of social skills in the classroom include cooperation and self-control, but not necessarily assertion. Administrators from both the middle school and the high school agreed that there exists a degree of participatory management. The male administrators with more years experience indicated that explicit procedures for participatory management are only used some of the time and exist infrequently at their schools.

It was concluded that overall, the middle school fostered a school climate where teacher empowerment was facilitated by the administration and the teachers. Recommendations included a future study involving teacher empowerment in elementary schools and participatory leadership style in relationship to gender.
DEDICATION

I respectfully dedicate this work to my beloved parents and teachers in life, Dr. Richard L. Beattie and Cynthia D. Beattie, who encouraged and supported me through all my educational endeavors.
I would like to express my gratitude to several people who have encouraged and supported me through my graduate program. These individuals have made the difference in my successful completion of this work.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Connie M. Forde for her kindness, support, and encouragement as my committee chair and dissertation director. I also would like to express my gratitude to my entire committee for their support and encouragement. Dr. Anthony A. Olinzock, Dr. Jerry Mathews, Dr. Patricia M. Lestrade, and Dr. D. Kay Brocato all contributed greatly in helping me complete this work in a professional manner and achieving my goals during this process.

I also must express my gratitude to my family, including my sisters Amy and Molly, Dixie, and my loving grandmother Ellene E. Davis. Lastly, I would like to thank all the teachers that have given me the gift of knowing how to use my imagination, to be amazed through knowledge, and to be empowered.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Teacher empowerment is conceptualized at the micro level as investing in teachers the right to exercise professional judgment and the content of the curriculum and instruction content on a daily basis within the classroom. At the macro level, teacher empowerment is conceptualized as the administration’s investment in teachers by giving them the right to participate in the determination and regulation of school goals and policies (Lim, 2008).

More participative styles of leadership and teacher empowerment produce more creativity and more worthwhile projects (Somech, 2005a). Participative leadership enhances teachers’ sense of control or autonomy, which can validate their professionalism. The decision making process, teacher autonomy, and the teachers’ sense of professionalism define the most important component of empowerment (Somech).

The aspect of the academic environment that is thought to be relevant to student dropout outcomes is school and learning environment organization. When developing dropout prevention strategies, administrators and teachers need to consider how background characteristics of students interact with the school environment or school culture (Zvoch, 2006). Educational theorists have argued that the organizational structure
of schools influences student dropout outcomes by promoting an educational culture that serves to personalize or depersonalize the learning experience (Lee & Burkam, 2003).

Empirically, the structural characteristics of the school have been shown to have an impact on the student success rate. The organization of the rules, practices, and decision making which reflect the policies and practices that occur within the school’s culture have been shown to exert important influences on school achievement and the dropout rate (Rumberger, 1995).

The dropout rates for high schools are a serious, complex problem. The individual student, the school system, the community, and society are all affected by the economic consequences caused by low retention. Students, who drop out of middle and high school, have fewer options for employment with fewer options for advancement (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007).

Dropping out of school has been associated with broader negative outcomes including the national income, tax revenues for the support of government services, increased demand for social services, increased crime and antisocial behavior, reduced political participation, reduced intergenerational mobility, and poorer levels of health. Early prevention and intervention efforts are critical and can become more limited as students accumulate risk factors for dropping out of school (Suh & Suh, 2007).

Risk factors for dropping out of school exist in all life domains. However, most of the research on drop-outs has focused on the characteristics of individuals rather than on features of schools and the school experiences. The decision to drop out of school is influenced by social, political, and economic factors and is dependent on one’s developmental history, educational experiences, and current circumstances. Fitzpatrick
and Yoels (1992) argue that the organization of education plays a critical role in the dropout crisis (Fitzpatrick & Yoels). Analyses of variations in the educational outcomes are especially critical because state agencies are the prime developers and implementers of educational policy for that particular state (Fitzpatrick & Yoels).

Constituting a school climate is the configuration of the personality or set of organizational characteristics that define the atmosphere of a school. Climate is based on collective perceptions of members and can arise from behaviors such as decision making on the part of administrators and teachers (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). In a healthy school climate, teacher and administrator interrelationships are characterized by a quest for academic excellence and institutional levels of harmony (Sweetland & Hoy).

The importance of empowerment of teachers to make good decisions, take risks, and do their work well has reemerged as a component of school management reform. Among the potential benefits of empowerment is that it is likely to increase the quality of decision, improve instructional practice, increase students’ academic achievement, and elevate the quality of teachers’ work life (Somech, 2002). Teachers who are in sustained contact with the students and the students’ constantly changing needs benefit from the empowerment to make strategic decisions without scrutiny (Conley, Schmidle, & Shedd, 1988).

In an attempt to change roles from management to collaboration, administrators have tried to be facilitators of shared decision making with the teachers. From this type of facilitation comes empowerment of teachers. This process removes the teachers from subordination and isolation to collaboration and consensus building (Rinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley, 1998). Empowerment in organizations and schools include the
distinction between psychological empowerment of individuals and political empowerment. Factors which influence teacher empowerment include the following: clear and meaningful roles, self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, access to strategic information and resources, and inspiring and shared leadership (Cherniss, 1997).

In the relationship between teachers’ empowerment and their commitment to the school climate and culture, it is important that the teachers have an identification with the school’s goals and values. Empowered teachers have the willingness to invest effort on behalf of improving and enhancing the academic achievement of the students (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

The foundations of teacher empowerment include two factors. The first factor is the human factor, which is comprised of psychological empowerment, motivations, professionalization, and trust. The second factor is the operational factor, which is comprised of autonomy and collaborative information sharing with other teachers and the administration (Wan, 2005).

Teacher empowerment has been linked with the theory of self-efficacy. In context, a teacher who exhibits high self-efficacy regarding performance ability for teaching and higher levels of effort in regard to motivation of students to achieve (Bandura, 1977; Diperna, 2006) is empowered by the administration through collaborative leadership directives. In the classroom, empowered teachers can engaged their students by enabling them to develop and enhance social skills and social competence (Diperna, 2006; Lane, Beebe-Frankenberger, Lambros, & Pierson, 2001; Lane, Pierson, & Givner, 2004a; Lane, Pierson, & Givner, 2004b; Luiselli, McCarty, Coniglio, Zorilla-Ramirez, & Putnam, 2005; Warnes, Sheridan, Geske, & Warnes, 2005).
Social skill competence and the ability for students to achieve social skillfulness implies that it is important for the student to both acquire and use important social behaviors for interacting with others in ways that are acceptable to others in an environment (Sheridan & Walker, 1999). From middle school to the transition into high school, students are expected to negotiate a range of social and interpersonal skills. Students who are deficient in these skills are at risk for dropping out of school. There is a strong relationship between low academic performance and achievement and deficient social competency in students. These students are at-risk for both short and long-term negative outcomes for their success in life (DiPerna, 2006, Lane et. al., 2001, Lane et. al., 2004a; Luiselli et. al., 2005).

In contrast to directive leadership where administrators mandate decisions to teachers, participative management and teacher empowerment has an overwhelming advantage of effectiveness within the academic organizational structure. Recent research has portrayed the two leadership styles as mutually exclusive and contradictory (Somech, 2005a). In regard to participative leadership, Somech, suggests that it enhances teachers’ organizational commitment and teachers’ empowerment (Somech).

Participation by teachers in decision making ensures that better information will be available for making the decisions that facilitate successful teaching and implementing programs. Also, it is suggested in the research, that teacher participation in the decision making for the organizational culture of the school strengthens self-efficacy and determination (Somech, 2005b).

Participative administrators seek to encourage teachers to discover new opportunities and challenges and to learn through acquiring, sharing, and combining
knowledge. The participation process helps ensure that when unanticipated problems arise, the work can be tackled directly and immediately by those affected by the problem, hence, the problem of student retention and the goal of academic achievement (Somech, 2005a).

Dunlap and Goldman (1991) suggest power as a system of facilitation, which is characterized by mutuality within the school’s structural organization. The facilitative power does not replace the hierarchical system of administrator and teacher, but rather a power shift in perspective. Power can be an act of relationship between equals where acts of domination are the least desired alternatives (Dunlap & Goldman). Teachers who are empowered in participative environments can increase the pool of ideas, materials, and methods, which will lead to a higher quality of instruction. Decision making in this environment is done in an open communicative process that can help lower barriers between the teachers and the school administrators (Somech, 2005b).

Statement of the Problem

Educators are currently looking for new and economical ways in which to implement reform in their schools. Through participatory leadership, administrators can acknowledge the link between the collective efficacy of teachers and teacher empowerment. Administrators can also identify the importance of a more facilitative, flexible school culture from which student success can be initiated.

In addition, there is considerable interest in identifying characteristics of students that are predictive of student dropout behavior in middle schools and high schools. Concern over the outcomes of school disengagement include: increased joblessness,
welfare dependency, and lower economic status for both the individual and the community. Academic failure, low socioeconomic status, and behavioral problems are the three major factors impacting the decision to drop out of school. Students making the transition from middle school to high school face changes in school culture, social and emotional development, and the development of higher order cognitive skills. In the case of at-risk students, these challenges may derail their school careers (Zvoch, 2006; Suh & Suh, 2007).

Through collaborative leadership efforts, empowered teachers can be able to assess social competency skills and self-management levels of their students. Therefore, teachers succeed by implementing their own expectations of the students in their classrooms and by identifying meaningful behaviors for social competence (Warnes et al., 2005).

With an empowered faculty and a participatory school climate, school administration can create opportunities for the teachers to act on a situation and improve the success of the organization. In the transformation of the educational system, teachers are the best resources for change because they understand the problems and know the students individually. In order for teacher empowerment to impact the school culture, the teachers must believe that their opinions and involvement in the school organization is genuine (Short, 1994; Wall & Rinehart, 1998).

**Purpose of the Study**

This researcher of the study investigated the perceived empowerment of teachers and the assessment of the participatory leadership in school management of the
administration within the cultures of a middle school and a high school. Assessment of the teachers’ expectations of their students’ sociobehavioral needs and classroom behavioral practices was included in the study. Also, the study sought to assess the perceived participatory decision making strategies and the formally structured participative management systems in existence within the schools as perceived by the administrators. A comparison by gender and years of experience of the administrators was included with the assessment of the participatory leadership.

The empowerment of teachers allows them to participate in decision making imperative to the success of the school as an organization and the development of instruction within the classroom. Teachers who are empowered by the administration acknowledge their importance in the success of students’ learning capabilities and academic and social competency needs. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived empowerment of teachers and the assessment of the participatory leadership of the school administration within the comparative school cultures of a middle school and a high school. Also, the study investigated the teachers’ expectations of their students’ social skill competency needs and classroom behavioral practices. Lastly, the study sought to assess the perceived participatory decision making strategies and the formally structured participative management by the school administration with a comparison by gender and years of experience.
Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to accomplish the stated purpose of the study and to guide the analysis of the data:

1. What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in middle school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)?

2. What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in high school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)?

3. Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the autonomy subscale in the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the collaborative leadership subscale in the School Culture Survey (SCS)?

5. What are the middle school teachers’ perceptions and expectations and the high school teachers’ perceptions and expectations of students’ social skill competency and student success as measured by the Social Skills Survey (SSS)?
6. What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ *strategies in the process of decision making* at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

7. What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ perceptions of the *formal structured participative management systems* at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

**Theoretical Framework**

The framework of the study is influenced and grounded by the following theories: teacher empowerment, teacher autonomy, collaborative leadership, student social skill competency, and participative management.

In their research with reading recovery teachers, Short and Rinehart (1992) found that as a result of teachers having more opportunities to make decisions and grow professionally, having control over daily schedules, and feeling a high level of teaching competency, they were more highly empowered. Short and Rinehart identified six dimensions of teacher empowerment: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact (Short & Rinehart).

Short (1994) defined the dimensions of teacher empowerment. Decision making refers to teachers’ participation in critical decisions that directly affect their work within the school culture. Self-efficacy refers to the teachers’ perception that they are skilled in the ability to help students learn and are competent to develop curricula for their students. Short defined teacher autonomy as it refers to the teachers’ feeling that they have control
over various aspects of their working lives at school including curriculum development and planning instruction. If a teacher has a sense of autonomy, that teacher is enabled to freely make decisions related to their educational subject area. These decisions have an impact that can affect and influence life within the school culture (Short).

The most recent concept of teacher autonomy is based on collaborative decision making and the freedom to make prescriptive, professional choices pertaining to students. Franklin (1988) and Hanson (1991) argue that autonomy does not mean “isolation within the classroom.” They state that teachers with a sense of autonomy perceive themselves as qualified authorities in the instructional process. These teachers formulate their own, personalized, flexible rules, which allow them to operate within their classrooms at their own discretion (Franklin; Hanson).

Irwin (1996) maintains that collaboration between teachers and administrators results in “the construction of empowering communities within schools” (Irwin; Irwin & Farr, 2004, p. 344). In building a collaborative community, Irwin suggests that the “power-over” is changed to the “power-within.” The “power-within paradigm” involves empowering teachers to have a voice in decisions that affect them and connects teachers to administrators in a relationship of mutual respect. This type of collaborative effort in the decision making process is consequently reflected in the classroom interactions and student learning processes (Irwin & Farr).

Middle school and high school students are expected by their teachers to participate within the classroom environment with certain social and behavioral competencies. Transitions between grade levels become more difficult for students when social competency skills are not explicitly taught and the teachers’ social and behavioral
expectations may be unclear to the students. In a collaborative decision making effort, teachers and administrators might improve intervention results during transition into high school by understanding differences and similarities of how teachers converge and diverge in their expectations of student behavior. Thus, the teachers are able to provide the students with information of social skill competency expectations that would improve students’ future adaptive coping skills and relationships with adults (Lane et. al., 2003; Lane, Givner, & Pearson, 2004).

New ways of governing schools requires the re-conceptualization of school management. Somech (2002) incites the emergence of participative management strategies in schools. Somech states that participative management and decision making in schools carries the potential for achieving outcomes and adoptions of innovations. Somech defines participative management as a multidimensional construct consisting of the following factors: (a) a decision domain where teachers are involved in technical issues relating to students, (b) a degree of participation where an administrator relies on a teacher to participate in decision making to varying degrees, (c) a structure where formally structured participative management systems have explicit rules and procedures as to who participates in the decision making, (d) a rationale which answers as to the justification of the participative management, and (e) a participation target, which refers to specific teachers’ characteristics affect the level of participation (Somech).

**Significance of Study**

Currently, no research has been conducted on a comparison between teacher empowerment in middle schools and teacher empowerment in secondary schools and
how teachers’ expectations of student social skills competency contribute to student success within the school culture and in their future contributions to society. In focusing on school improvement efforts, participative management and the decentralization of educational decision making is often a major challenge. The significance of the study is to provide a case-study framework for future research on teacher empowerment and its connection to teachers and administrators planning interventions that include sociobehavioral instruction for school reform purposes.

A demand for school restructuring to improve the quality of education and reduce the dropout rate of students at-risk is needed. This research may provide insight to administrators by way of comparison between middle school teachers’ and high school teachers’ perceptions as to participatory, problem-solving processes. Also, the study may provide insight regarding effective intervention strategies for students experiencing academic and behavioral difficulty and directions for the development of multi-method, prevention-oriented services in the schools.

**Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations should be considered in interpretation of the findings for the study. First, the data will be largely self-reported and therefore, subject to bias. Also, calculations done in the data analyses were conducted with ordinal data, creating a situation where generalization of the conclusions for the research population could not be made. The study was limited to teachers in a single school district in a rural setting and the sample size of the administrator participants was restricted to the school setting for comparative purposes within a single school district.
Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. **Assertion skills**---Assertion skills include abilities and conduct associated with interpersonal relationships and effective communication processes. Assertion skills also include skills related to problem solving and active participation in the classroom (Lane et. al., 2004).

2. **At-risk students**---Students with social-emotional learning problems whose performance and success in school is hindered by their behavior. Thus, possibly causing them to not complete the transition between middle school and high-school and causing them to not complete their high-school education.

3. **Collaborative teacher autonomy**---Teachers are recognized as qualified authorities in the instructional process by administrators. The teachers participate as a group or a team in participatory decision making with the administration. In the classroom, the teachers formulate their own, personalized, flexible rules, which allow them to operate at their own discretion. The teachers feel that they have control over their collaborative work (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005).

4. **Directive management**---The school administration provides teachers with a framework for decision making and action in alignment with the administration’s vision. Directive management reinforces teachers’ behaviors of adherence to rules and procedure with the goal to increase teachers’ in-role performance (Somech, 2005a).
5. High school students---students enrolled in grades 9-12 at a high school in Mississippi.

6. Managerial domain---The administrators are concerned with the managing of buildings, programs, budgets, and hiring of faculty within the school (Mohrman, Cooke, & Mohrman, 1978).

7. Middle school students---students enrolled in grades 7-8 at a middle school in Mississippi.

8. Organization or school climate---A school’s climate can be defined by the communication perceptions of the teachers and administrators of the decision making structure within the managerial and technical domains. A school’s climate includes the teachers’ shared perceptions of organization or school policies, practices, and procedures, both formal and informal. Aspects of the school climate can also include teacher job satisfaction, attitudes about involvement, and willingness to participate in preventions for at-risk students (Shadur, Kienzle, & Rodwell, 1999).

9. Organizational citizenship behavior---A voluntary behavior directed at the school as a whole. Teachers perform beyond existing role expectations, which benefit the school (Bogler & Somech, 2005).

10. Participative decision making---Teachers have the opportunity to be involved in and to exert influence on the decision making processes. The teachers’ participation is believed to promote commitment to the decisions that are made and to increase willingness to carry them out in their work with students. Active participation enhances involvement and trust in the administration, validates teachers’ professionalism, and enhances teachers’ sense of autonomy (Somech, 2005a).
11. *Psychological empowerment*---A motivational construct manifested in cognitive meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These four cognitions reflect an active orientation in which a teacher wishes and feels able to shape his or her work role and context (Spreitzer, 1995).

12. *School culture*---The administration, the teachers, and the students involvement within the organizational environment of the school. A school’s culture is defined by the involvement of teachers and administrators in types of school programs, curriculum, and managerial structure. Examples include the opportunities for openness in the decision making processes to exist and the opportunity for teachers to be empowered through participatory decision making, trust in the administration, and teacher professionalism (Shadur et. al., 1999).

13. *School mindfulness*---School principals encourage teachers to create new ideas, feel safe to take risks, to experiment, and to be resilient. When the unexpected happens, because of the school culture is focused on sensitivity and learning from failure, the school rebounds with persistence and expertise. Decision making is fluid and participative (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter, 2006).

14. *Social skill competency*---The ability to acquire important social behaviors for interacting with others. Social skills such as sharing, helping, initiating communications, self-control, anger management, and assertion must be displayed in ways that are acceptable others in their environment (Warnes et. al., 2005). Students at-risk for antisocial behaviors are likely to experience long-term, negative consequences such as:
academic failure, drop out, and criminality, which result in costs to society and the individual student (Lane et. al., 2001).

15. *Teacher empowerment*---Teachers develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered teachers believe they have the teaching skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it (Short, 1994).

16. *Teacher self-efficacy*---Teachers belief that they are competent in building effective programs for students and can effect changes in student learning (Short, 1994).

17. *Technical domain*---The teachers are concerned with the instructional, student behavior, and curriculum aspects of the school (Mohrman et. al., 1978).
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational reformists have recognized the critical role that administrative participative leadership plays in initiating, implementing, and sustaining forms of shared decision making and teacher empowerment. The review of literature focused on the following topics relevant to the problem and purpose of this study: teacher empowerment, teachers’ expectations of sociobehavioral skills of their students, and the participative management of school administration.

The review of literature is divided into six sections that substantiate the rationale and framework used in the study. These sections include: the dropout risk factor, empowerment theories, teacher empowerment, teaching social skills competency, participative leadership theories, and school-based participative management.

**Drop-out Risk Factor**

Dropout rates for high school students have been increasing since the 1970’s. For the past 20 years, the economic consequences for these individuals and the social costs to the country became much more serious during the 1980’s. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education statistics, it cost the United States more than $325 billion in lost wages, taxes, and productivity over students’ lifetimes when 1.2 million students dropped out of high school in 2004 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). At risk students are
those defined as students who are at risk of and probably not going to graduate from high school. Risk factors include low achievement, low socioeconomic status, and behavior problems. Disengagement from school has profound social and economic consequences for the students and their communities (Christle et. al., 2007).

School dropouts have become a major problem for educators for two reasons. Not only are dropout students costly to themselves and to the community, but the demographic changes increasing the number of dropouts in the absence of effective interventions. According to the research, historically, the most common explanation to why minority groups had higher dropout rates due to the socioeconomic status of students’ families, students’ family structures, parental involvement level in education, and school experiences.

School experiences include social interactions with teachers and peers, disruptive behaviors, and poor attendance. Correlates are well-documented empirically between school experiences of students and the dropout rate. However, the research does not offer many conceptual models to explain how and why these factors influence the dropout process. Research on a multilevel analysis of dropouts and schools indicated that many of the factors that predict dropping out of high school also predict dropping out of middle school (Rumberger, 1995).

In current research on risk factors and levels of risk for high school students, Suh and Suh (2007) found that low GPA, socioeconomic status, and behavioral problems have the greatest impact on the dropout rates. They concluded that intervention programs that target students with only academic risk factors are more limited and not as effective. It is the researchers’ conclusion that multiple intervention processes may be needed to
help students stay in school. These students include those with behavioral and social skill competency problems. Suh and Suh state that intervention programs should also address these students’ peer relationships and the possible emotional impact and the educational climate of their living environment (Suh, S. & Suh).

Another set of factors in the dropout rate concerns the structural characteristics of the schools. Within the school’s organization or culture of the school, there exist the rules, practices and policies of the administration, and the process of decision making. An investigation of relations between student and school characteristics and student dropout status indicated that school organization and schools’ social context were statistically significant predictors of several of the student dropout results. As suggested by the research, school personnel need to consider how characteristics of the school culture interact with the background characteristics of students when developing intervention strategies for at-risk students (Zvoch, 2006).

**Empowerment Theories**

Since the early 1980’s, empowerment has been a principal component of managerial and organizational effectiveness. The term empowerment can mean delegating or sharing power with subordinates. However, it can also imply enabling an individual through enhancement of self-efficacy or intrinsic need for self-determination. With the enhancement of an individual’s self-efficacy or strengthened need for self-determination, there will be in increase in the sense of power an individual possesses (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).
Empowerment as an enabling process affects both initiation and persistence of subordinates’ task behavior. Empowerment practices are useful in motivating subordinates to persist despite difficult organizational and environmental obstacles (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). According to Shera and Page (1995), empowerment in organizations is defined as the process of self-efficacy enhancement among organizational members. The removal of these conditions by both formal organization practices and informal techniques creates the empowerment (Hardina, 2005; Shera & Page). The enhancement of self-efficacy is achieved through the identification of conditions that create and maintain a sense of powerlessness (Shera & Page).

Organizations that empower staff at the individual level through the opportunities of learning and participatory decision making are effective both in their internal operations, transformation, and community-level learning (Perkins, Bess, Cooper, Jones, Armstead, & Speer, 2007). At the organizational level, Pitts (2005) asserts that managers are more likely to empower subordinates in environments with greater task difficulty. In organizations with more resources, empowerment of employees is less likely to occur. Pitts also defines empowerment through seven dimensions which include: (a) power granted to subordinates; (b) decision making; (c) information relevant to tasks; (d) autonomy; (e) subordinate initiative and creativity; (f) subordinates who possess knowledge and skills to carry out responsibilities; and (g) accountability to others (Pitts).

Experienced empowerment is an outcome of an individual to achieve more power (Turner & Shera, 2005). Embedded in the social discourse of organizations are the pragmatics of power (Gordon, 2005). Power can be dissected into a four dimensional framework. The first two dimensions view power as a factor where conflict is necessarily
apparent in decision making scenarios. Power is linked to control where individuals act upon their interests by participating in decision making. Power utilized in the second dimension differs from the power utilized in the first dimension by existing less mobilized through resources (Gordon; Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan, 1998).

The third dimension of power might be used to prevent conflict by shaping individuals perceptions, cognitions, or preferences. Power is structured and legitimized through an integrated system socio-cultural meaning systems of organizations. The fourth dimension draws on Foucault’s idea that power is knowledge and competing viewpoints struggle for power. In a given social system there are multiple truths. This dimension of power constrains and enables employees in ways of thinking and performing tasks. Power relations between employees and management are examples of the fourth dimension of power (Gordon, 2005; Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan, 1998).

Psychological Empowerment

In addressing dynamics of empowerment in the workplace, it is important to make the distinction between empowerment that distinguishes between situational attributes such as management practices and psychological empowerment, which has to do with job incumbent cognitions about management practices. Spreitzer (1995) suggested, in her research on construct validation of psychological empowerment, a gestalt of empowerment that goes beyond four dimensions. She states that the construct has an independence from other theoretically related constructs such as organizational commitment. Specified in Spreitzer’s research is a partial nomological net of psychological empowerment in a work context. This partiality of the nomological net of
psychological empowerment was empirically examined as an additional step toward construct validation. This nomological net indicates how the context variables of personality and work shape psychological empowerment (Spreitzer).

A multidimensional conceptualization of empowerment includes the importance of perception, direction of influence in the workplace, role ambiguity, span of control, and a participative unit climate. For individuals to feel empowered, they must perceive the working environment to be a place of liberation. Perception shapes the empowerment in the environment. Through proactive behaviors, empowered workers can shape their environment in a direction of influence. An empowered employee has minimal role ambiguity due to the clarity of direction provided by the supervisor. In Spreitzer’s research, role ambiguity was found to have the strongest relationship to empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996).

Span of control refers to narrow spans of control that are associated with centralized decision making. Decentralized control helps employees feel as though they are contributing to the operations of the organization. An employee’s psychological sense of impact within the organization is the outcome. Participation within the organization’s climate or culture psychologically shapes behaviors and forms attitudes. The organization’s climate provides a frame of reference from which the individual psychologically makes sense of the organization’s climate. Janssen (2004) asserts conflict with an organization’s administration hinders empowered employees in developing and maintaining positive feelings and cognitions toward the organization. Thus, the conflict with superiors is a psychologically strong, salient job stressor that has the potential to
deter benefits of empowerment on the development of positive attitudes toward the organization as a whole (Janssen).

Participative climates promote and value the liberation and creativity of the employees and their part in the decision making processes of the organization. Thus, a high-involvement system within an organization provides an environment in which individuals have a stronger sense of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996). The more an organization’s climate is conducive to psychologically empowering the employees, the more job involvement and greater effort is exerted by the employees (Brown & Leigh, 1996).

Conger and Kanungo (1998) and Bhatnagar (2005), state that it is a perceived control over an individual’s own situation that has been termed psychological empowerment (Bhatnagar ; Conger & Kanungo). In his research on psychological empowerment being an antecedent to organizational commitment, Bhatnagar finds that affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment prove to be strong outcome variables to psychological empowerment. Thus, the components of organizational commitment are an outcome to psychological empowerment. His results also showed a strong support for construct validation and the four-dimension concept of empowerment (Bhatnagar).

Bhatnagar (2005) stresses that supervisors in organizations who express confidence in and high expectations of their employees result in employees perceiving themselves to be more psychologically competent. As a result, there is a higher organizational commitment on the part of the subordinates (Bhatnagar).
In the research of Huang, Shi, Zhang, and Cheung (2006), the analyses indicate that participative leadership behavior is positively related to the competence dimension of psychological empowerment and organizational commitment. Participative leadership behavior makes non-tenure employees feel competent to perform tasks and more committed to the organization (Huang et. al.).

Self-Efficacy

A managerial strategy that strengthens self-determination or self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions of employees will make them feel more empowered. In this context, the power in empowerment is a motivational technique which refers to an intrinsic need for self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Besides delegation in decision making, empowering individuals is a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members. Conditions that foster powerlessness are removed. Organizational practices provide efficacy information by way of informal techniques (Conger & Kanungo).

Through authentic mastery experience directly related to the job, self-efficacy as a part of empowerment is obtained. When individuals perform complex tasks and are given more responsibility in their jobs such as making decisions impacting the organization and job performance, self-efficacy is being tested. Factors such as a participatory organizational climate and culture, an existence of a competence and innovation-based reward system, role clarity, realistic and meaningful goals, high task variety and flexible work routines, and consistent contact with senior management provide employees the
opportunity to feel a sense of self-efficacy and a chance to become empowered (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Gupta, 2007).

**Teacher Empowerment**

Short (1994) defined teacher empowerment as a process in which teachers within a school climate of participative management, take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems (Short). In order to promote organizational effectiveness, school administrators should develop a repertoire of empowering practices which include the fostering of intrinsic task motivation among teachers (Somech, 2005b). Empowered teachers believe that they have the knowledge and the skills to act on a situation and develop programs to improve the organization of the school (Short).

Over the past three decades the rationale for increasing teacher involvement in school decision making has ranged from the pragmatic argument that educational innovation is unlikely to succeed without teacher support to the philosophical view that teachers have a right to be involved, regardless of outcome. Duke (1990) states, that without more of a voice in school governance, talented teachers are unlikely to remain in teaching. For school administrators, the key to teacher support lies in the general empowerment of all teachers than in the careful matching of opportunities for involvement with individual interest in involvement. However, Duke states that his research indicates that where teacher perceptions of school leadership are positive, teachers are less likely to desire a high level of involvement in managerial decision making (Duke).
The empowered school climate and culture is able to create opportunities for competence to be developed proactively and displayed (Short, 1994). There are six dimensions to teacher empowerment: (a) shared decision making, (b) opportunity for professional growth, (c) status or the professional respect from colleagues in education, (d) the belief in self-efficacy and the competency to build effective programs and curricula for students, (e) teacher autonomy, and (f) teacher impact and influence on school climate and culture (Bogler & Somech, 2004, 2005; Rinehart et. al., 1998; Short, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1992).

In the research for the SPES, Wu and Short (1996) indicate that among the six subscales, self-efficacy and professional growth were significant predictors of teacher job satisfaction, while professional growth, self-efficacy, and status were significant predictors of teacher commitment. Since self-efficacy and professional growth both involve an individual’s beliefs about their competency, it is implied that these dimensions of teacher empowerment might impact commitment to work and a sense of job satisfaction. Status, which is also indicated as a significant predictor of commitment, indicates that teachers who perceive greater empowerment and find a greater status in work, perceive also more closely aligned with the organization’s goals and teacher expectations (Wu & Short).

Wan (2005), asserts that school administrators develop a three-level strategy in the effective implementation of teacher empowerment. He describes the three levels as: (a) the teacher level, (b) the administrator level, and (c) the school level. Teacher empowerment is described as a process where teachers take control of their own work and resolve their problems in the classroom. The first foundation of Wan’s model of
teacher empowerment is divided between the human factors of psychological empowerment, motivation, teacher professionalization, and trust with administration. The second foundation of Wan’s model of teacher empowerment is divided into teacher autonomy and information sharing or collaboration in decision making (Wan).

Marks and Louis (1997) concluded that empowerment affects authentic pedagogy indirectly, through school organization for instruction. If the goal is to create professional communities within a school, empowerment should focus on decisions that affect midlevel policies regarding school functioning (Marks & Louis).

Teachers who view themselves as professionals or perceive opportunities to grow professionally may contribute more to the school as their commitment to the organization and to the profession increases. Principals need to recognize that the feelings and perceptions of teachers about their schools and their desire to attain opportunities for professional growth are beneficial to the organization itself. Principals’ participatory decision making practices should be recognized as highly important to the organization and its members (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

Somech (2005b) found in her research that teachers’ performance benefited most from the joint effect of high personal empowerment and team empowerment. Organizational commitment gained from high personal empowerment and team empowerment as well as from low/high interaction (Somech). Professional commitment benefited most from high personal empowerment/low team empowerment or low personal empowerment/high team empowerment (Somech, 2002).

Barriers to teacher empowerment reflect the hierarchical organizational structures between the administrators and the teachers. Lack of trust between teachers and
administration and lack of teacher motivation are also included in the description of barriers to teacher empowerment. Johnson and Short (1998) found a significant relationship between administrator and teacher intrapersonal conflict and teacher empowerment. Intrapersonal conflict and self-efficacy scores indicated the statistical significance. Intrapersonal conflicts have destructive consequences within the organization of the school. Thus, self-efficacy of the teacher having the conflict with the administrator is decreased (Johnson & Short).

Soodak and Podell (1996) found that teacher efficacy is comprised of three factors which include personal efficacy, outcome efficacy, and teaching efficacy. A teacher’s personal efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief that he or she possesses teaching skills. Outcome efficacy refers to a belief that when a teacher implements teaching skills, desirable student outcomes are the result. Teachers who lack self-efficacy beliefs are unable to behave necessary to promote student learning. Teachers who develop low outcome efficacy lose motivation in teaching. The researchers assert that teacher efficacy might not be relevant in the decision making process (Soodak & Podell).

Teacher efficacy was defined as an individual’s sense of opportunity for development as a professional within the teaching field. Teacher efficacy is important in relation to the sense of personal efficacy for prospective teachers. Overall, the research suggested that a supportive environment needs to be created within the school culture whereby teachers can effect change (Soodak & Podell, 1996).

Teacher empowerment is a dynamic and evolutionary process representing a paradigm shift where decisions are made about students by teachers, which involves the
implementations of administrators’ trust and teachers who have the professional expertise which qualifies them to participate meaningfully in job-related decisions (Wan, 2005).

The role of the trusted school administrator is defined by the administrator’s ability to provide the teachers with a realistic and believable interpretation of the school’s organizational intent and culture. It is the administrator’s reassurance to the teachers that the desirable value structure of the school will be sustained (Wan 2005).

Perry (2004) found that employees of organizations did not perceive that the empowerment, participation, and feedback came from the organizational climate. The research indicated that the employees attributed flexibility and quality to trusted supervisory discretionary power (Perry).

In increasing their regulatory responsibilities within their organization, empowered teachers are influenced by the principals in facilitative, collaborative process. In their research on understanding the relationship between administrators’ trustworthiness and teacher empowerment as defined by Short and Rinehart (1992) six dimensions of decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact (Short & Rinehart).

Rinehart et. al. (1998) provide empirical evidence that indicate all dimensions of teacher empowerment are positively related to the three components of social influence theory. Their findings indicate that principals who exhibit the attributes of expertness, social competency, and trustworthiness also facilitate teachers who perceive high levels of teacher empowerment. The teacher empowerment in these cases indicated high levels of greater collaborative autonomy, high levels of involvement in decision making, and greater self-efficacy (Rinehart et. al.).
Blasé and Blasé (1996) described both the characteristics of principal leadership and the meanings associated with teacher empowerment from the teachers’ perspectives in their research. The research was conducted in schools with decentralized, facilitative leadership was practiced by the administration. In the schools studied, the teachers reported job satisfaction, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, ownership, and expression, inclusion in the decision making process, commitment, teacher autonomy, and professional growth. The research is consistent with the multidimensional concept of teacher empowerment and the first to provide evidence of the association between teacher empowerment and psychological empowerment (Blasé & Blasé).

Marks and Louis (1997) assert that empowerment of teachers influence efforts to improve instruction and the teachers’ belief in teaching effectiveness pertaining to student achievement. Teacher empowerment was also found to improve communication exchange about teaching effectiveness and collaboration. Thus, the researchers concluded that to create professional communities within a school culture, empowering teachers should focus on decisions that affect policies regarding school functioning, which improve the learning environment and issues relating to students (Marks & Louis).

In the construction of teacher empowerment within a school culture, Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) found that there is sufficient empirical evidence to support the importance of teacher job satisfaction. Their research examined teacher job satisfaction with the four variables of professional growth, decision making, promotion, and status. These four variables were studied in relation to their contribution to teacher empowerment. High levels of job satisfaction can shape school culture and influence teachers’ sense of empowerment. It is suggested in the research that decision making not
only reinforces teacher empowerment, but it might also have a positive influence on
teacher job satisfaction. Also concluded in the research is the confirmation that the terms
teacher job satisfaction and teacher empowerment are not identical, but related (Zembylas
& Papanastastasiou).

Teacher empowerment requires teachers to gain political support from the
administration and time to develop and implement ideas. As empowerment theory
suggests, a sense of competence is necessary for teachers to feel empowered. Thus, the
more the teachers feel empowered, the more they are receptive to innovation and become
more experimental in the classroom (Cherniss, 1997).

According to Cherniss (1997) empowerment theory predicts that teachers will
become committed to new programs when those programs are personally meaningful.
The program becomes more meaningful when it reflects the important values and beliefs
of the teacher. In addition, Cherniss states, that when the innovation of a new program
within the school “makes sense” to teachers, the teachers are more likely to support the
newly introduced program. Thus, Cherniss concludes that teachers’ responses to new
programs are strongly influenced by the extent to which the teachers feel empowered
(Cherniss).

In order for teachers to perceive themselves as having a high level of competency,
as experiencing high status, and as having self-esteem, principals need to establish
working conditions which strive to raise teachers’ commitment to the organization and to
the profession of teaching. Teachers who perceive themselves as professionals contribute
more to the school as their commitment to the organization and to the profession
increases. Teachers who feel empowered at school reflect on their perceptions of
commitment toward the organization, the teaching profession and the extra-role behavior included within the participatory decision making processes (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

**Teacher Autonomy**

Emerging as a key variable in education reform initiatives, the term teacher autonomy refers to the teachers’ freedom to prescribe the best instruction methods for their students. Collective, teacher autonomy has been linked to teacher professionalism and teacher empowerment. Teacher autonomy is an empirically derived dimension of teacher empowerment. Within the school environment, teachers need to be part of the decision making process. As a result of his research, Friedman (1999) defines teacher autonomic behavior as, “. . . the power to influence fundamental processes at school (Friedman).”

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) indicated in their research that as teacher autonomy increased, so did teacher empowerment and teacher professionalism. Also, as perceived, teacher empowerment, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher professionalism increased, stress caused by factors within the school environment decreased. The greater the level of job satisfaction present, the greater the level of perceived teacher empowerment. Teachers who viewed teaching as a true profession perceived themselves empowered. As a group, teachers who feel autonomous related strongly to teacher empowerment and teacher professionalism (Pearson & Moomaw).

The research findings of Nir (2002) indicated that the school’s culture and organizational unit need to be strengthened by providing teachers with significant inducements, collective, teacher autonomy, and possibilities for professional growth.
Failure on the part of the administration may increase teacher burnout and negatively effect teacher commitment to the school’s organizational environment (Nir).

By providing a cooperative learning environment within the school’s culture, administrators promote and facilitate teacher empowerment. By allowing teachers to exchange information, schedule meetings, share experiences, and participate in teacher education and in-service training, administrators support teacher autonomy and teacher professionalism (Coke, 2005).

In the research of Van Mierlo, Rutte, Vermunt, Kompier, and Doorewaard (2006), it was indicated that a positive relationship exists between team autonomy and individual autonomy. Efficacious team members reported more individual autonomy of their team with a moderating role of supervisor and co-worker support. The autonomy at the co-worker team level was incorporated into individual tasks and responsibilities. The more self-efficacious co-worker teams felt supported by their supervisor and co-workers, the more individual autonomy was indicated. Teams of co-workers in participative work environments collectively control their own behaviors via the factor of the social structure of the team. However, members of a team who are reporting to be collectively autonomous, and experiencing high levels of support from their supervisor, might feel restricted rather than encouraged in their personal autonomy latitude (Van Mierlo et. al.).

**Collaborative Leadership**

Irwin’s and Farr’s (2004) study suggests that a supportive and laissez-faire attitude of the administration are important conditions for a collaborative school culture to exist. The teachers in their study were provided with decision making power and their
shared planning time was viewed as worthwhile. Both the administrators and the teachers report respect for differences, inclusion, and consensual decision making. However, the collaborative school culture is viewed as fragile and ongoing by the researchers due to possible staff turnover, canceled meetings and changes in district priorities (Irwin & Farr).

Lavie (2006) asserts that a collaborative school culture implies the need for administration to attend to the intrinsic collaboration initiatives with teachers and their obligations to classroom practices. In a successful collaboration with teachers, administrators can provide value-oriented attempts to redefine the nature and purposes of schooling and teachers’ work. Collaborative leadership can shape and improve the school by proposing that individual, professional, and teacher commitment become a collective responsibility. Managing conflicts in a productive manner becomes a factor in the value of school improvement and progression (Lavie).

**Teaching Student Social Skills Competency**

The systematic relationship between behavioral difficulties, at-risk students, and social competence in children has been confirmed by several studies. Riggio’s, Throckmorton’s, and De Paola’s (1990) correlation analyses revealed that social skill competency and self-esteem were positively correlated (Riggio et. al.). In identifying students at-risk for school failure, Walker, Cheney, Stage, and Blum (2005) found that it was important for schools to develop strategies to support at-risk students early in their behavior problems related to social skills competency (Walker et. al.). Diperna (2006) identified four academic enablers that mediate the effects of classroom instruction. The
researcher listed the four enablers as the following: (a) motivation, (b) engagement, (c) study skills, and (d) social skills (Diperna).

Social Skills and Academic Enablers

Longstanding literature from correlational studies exists that supports the reciprocal linkage between student social competencies and academic learning. As indicated by Malecki and Elliott (2002), students’ social skills emerged as a significant predictor of future academic functioning when both social skills and problem behaviors were analyzed simultaneously. Malecki and Elliott found that problem behaviors as a linkage to academic performance might vary as a function of ethnic or cultural status of the student. The researchers asserted that classroom social skills might act as academic enablers and that educators should acknowledge the importance within the school culture of the role student social skills competency hold (Malecki & Elliott).

Malecki and Elliott’s (2002) research was an investigation of the relationships among a diverse sample of elementary students’ social skills, problem behaviors, academic competence, and academic achievement. The primary research question addressed the relationship between social behaviors and academic achievement. The results of the study indicated that: (a) social skills are positively predictive of concurrent levels of academic achievement and (b) problem behaviors are negatively predictive of concurrent academic achievement. Only the social skills, however, emerged as a significant predictor of future academic functioning. (Malecki & Elliott).

As part of their research on protection from risk factors for students in the transition from sixth grade to middle school, Morrison, Robertson, Laurie, and Kelly
(2002) addressed the importance of classroom engagement efforts for social skill competency teaching. The results indicated social skill competency of at-risk students to be a protective mechanism in helping avoid anti-social behaviors (Morrison et. al.).

Teachings in the areas of managing emotions and using emotions to facilitate thinking are likely to enhance leadership self-efficacy as well as student goal orientation. Leadership flexibility among students is enhanced by teaching in interpersonal skills, skills in communication, and social skills in team building (Chan, 2007).

The interpersonal behaviors and cognitive-motivational antecedents and consequences of young adults were studied. According to the research of Eronen and Nurmi (2001), social status of young adults was found to be related to pro-social behaviors. Young adults who displayed low levels of verbal aggression and low levels of social anxiousness reported positive shared interactions with authority and peers which resulted in positive social outcomes (Eronen & Nurmi).

In research using self-management procedures to improve classroom social skills, results indicated that self-monitoring and the student-teacher matching intervention led to increases in targeted appropriate social skills. A decrease in off-task behavior was also reported in these students. The data from this research suggested that this is an effective procedure to promote the use of student social skill competency across multiple, general education settings (Peterson et. al., 2006).

**Teachers Empowered to Teach Social Skill Competency**

The research of Luiselli et. al. (2005) stressed the importance of teachers to assess students’ social skill competency. Their research concluded that students’ social skill
competencies are legitimate learning objectives equivalent to the way that academic skills are taught and mastered in the classroom (Luiselli et. al.).

When designing interventions for at-risk students, Lane et. al. (2001) assert that to ensure both, academic and socio-behavioral interventions to be successful, three main components must be addressed (Lane et. al.). The three main components to be addressed are as follows: (a) social validity of the intervention, (b) treatment integrity of the teaching, and (c) generalization and maintenance (Luiselli et. al., 2005).

In the study of Meier, DiPerna, and Oster (2006), the researchers concluded that social skills used in the classroom were deemed to be the most important to teachers. Teachers implemented classroom-based interventions for children experiencing these classroom social skill deficiencies. What teachers expect from students to demonstrate in the development of social skills is primarily in the domains of self-control and cooperation (Meier et. al.).

Lane et. al. (2004) indicated in their research that while middle and high school teachers are similar in their expectations regarding self-control and cooperation, they have different opinions about assertion skills. The middle school teachers rated assertion skills to be more important than the high school teachers’ ratings indicated. Assertion skills were not perceived as critical for student success for either the middle school teachers or the high school teachers. The researchers implied that this response might be due to the promotion of self-advocacy and assertion skills in an effort to encourage students to manage their own interpersonal relationships with peers (Lane et. al., 2003, 2004).
Participative Leadership Theories

Participative leaders share in joint decision making with employees. This type of leadership increases the quality of the decisions, contributes to the quality of the employees’ work lives, and increases employee motivation and job satisfaction. The movement toward participative leadership in organizations and schools has an overwhelming advantage over the contrasting leadership style of directive management (Somech, 2005a).

Participative leadership promotes empowerment of employees and innovation of ideas and new programs. Teachers in participative environments are able to increase the pool of ideas, materials, and methods. As a result there exists a higher quality of instruction. The open communication process in participative decision making lowers barriers between individuals within the organization’s or school’s culture (Somech, 2005a).

Formally structured participative management systems have explicit rules and procedures concerning who participates and how the participation occurs. Informally structured participative management may be informally structured also. This involves very few explicit rules concerning who participates, what decisions are open to participation, or how participation is to occur (Somech, 2002).
Researchers have documented varying degrees of participation, which include: (a) autocratic decision making—no advance information on a decision is given to subordinate; the superior makes the decision on his or her own, (b) the information-sharing—superior obtains the necessary information from the subordinate and then makes the decision on his or her own, (c) the consultative decision-making—superior shares the problem with the subordinate, getting his or her ideas and suggestions, then, he or she makes a decision which may or may not reflect his or her influence, and (d) the democratic decision making—superior shares the problem with the subordinate, and together they analyze the problem and arrive at a mutually acceptable solution (Somech, 2002).

The motives for participative management can broadly be classified into two types: (a) humanistic or democratic, which argues that people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their life, and it assumes that individuals have the ability, or at least the potential, to participate intelligently, and (b) pragmatic or human relations, which suggests that participative management is an instrumental way to achieve productivity, efficiency, or other valued organizational results (Somech, 2002).

From the perspective of social cognitive theory, participative leadership is a reciprocal causation. Within this structure, cognitive, behavior, and other personal factors and environmental events operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally. Individuals within the organization are both products and producers of their environment because of the bi-directionality of influence (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Leana (1987) asserts that participative leadership is theoretically linked to a human relations approach to management that emphasizes power equalization and social
interaction. Participative leadership engenders the democratic participative processes, which encourages achievement and individualism. Participation in decision making entails superior-subordinate collaboration and is always didactic (Leana).

Mohrman et. al.’s (1978) multidimensional perspective on participative decision making in education includes the two decisional domains of the technical-operational task domain and the managerial support domain. The technical-operational task domain is defined by teacher instruction. The managerial support domain is defined by the bureaucracy and the political climate of the school (Mohrman et. al.).

Somech (2002) defined participative management through the multiple dimensions of decision making and the existing formal structured management system within a school. She also includes in her definition, the rationale as to why the administrator relied on joint decision making with the teachers, and which teachers were asked to participate in the decision making process (Somech).

**School-Based Participative Management**

In order for school administrators and teachers to build up from changes in the classroom to planning for educational improvement through participative management techniques, principals must change the school climate structurally, informational wise, and developmentally for the teachers (Weiss & Cambone, 1994). The participation process helps ensure that unanticipated problems that arise during within the organization of the school and can be tackled directly and immediately by those affected by the problem. A participatory process may create an atmosphere or climate where innovative ideas are proposed, critiqued, and refined with a minimum of social risk (Somech, 2002).
The greater the vulnerability or uncertainty in a context of school-based decision making, the more mindful teachers may be of trust of the leadership and the greater its impact on outcomes. Individuals that believe they have a high quality relationship with a trustworthy leader have a greater impact on outcomes than a relationship where the belief exists that the leader has integrity (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

By encouraging faculty to experiment, to be resilient, and to participate in and create new ideas, school administrators can have profound effects on school mindfulness. Empirically, trust is necessary for school mindfulness and school mindfulness creates a school culture of trust between teachers and administrators when working together in problem solving. Hoy et. al. (2006) suggest that a strong case can be made to suggest that a mindful school culture facilitates a higher student achievement rate (Hoy et. al.).

Participative management of schools creates professional interdependencies. Educators, by implementing a more facilitative approach, use one another’s knowledge about students and programs within the school. Organizational power and professional actualization complement each other and problem solving becomes mutual between the administration and the teachers. This type of participative management encourages recognition that there may be multiple, acceptable solutions to complex, and educational problems (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991).

Democratic principal practices focus on expanding the scope of involvement and representation of the stakeholders of the school environment. Inquiry and decision making is viewed as a process which focuses on discussion of school mission and purpose, curriculum, and other practices on congruency with core beliefs (O’Hair & Reitzug, 1997).
In the research on outcomes of school-based participative decision making, Smylie, Lazarus, and Brownlee-Conyers (1996) found that participative decision making is related positively to instructional improvement and to student academic outcomes. The research indicated that teachers who participated in decision making were observed studying and discussing a range of curricular issues and planning different types of instructional activity. Teachers, who were not involved in the participative decision making process and whose leadership mainly came from the administration, were less likely to be engaged in instructional issues and did not take initiative nor assume substantial responsibility in educational outcomes within the school structure (Smylie et. al.).

In Fischer’s (2006) research on participatory governance, it was found that in order to implement and establish collaborative, autonomous participatory practices in local communities, it was recognized that they first needed to be facilitated by collecting local information, by resource mapping, and cognitively engaging community members into activities. Fischer also asserts that the lower political structure needs to have strong political support from above to deliberate empowerment through participatory projects (Fischer). Participatory facilitators need to establish the conditions and procedures that make deliberative empowerment possible to all community members (Fischer; Tesluk, Vance, & Mathieu, 1999).

Teachers and Participative Management

In order for administration to make better decisions which include employee involvement, Shadur et. al. (1999) conclude that the analyses of the organizational
climate and of the current employee affective attitudes can be used to assess the success of participative decision making approaches. By identifying areas of the organizational climate that could produce negative responses from employees and produce negative attitudes toward various school programs and systems already in place, proposed initiatives could be achieved (Shadur et. al.).

Teachers who perceive that they are highly involved in school decision making are inclined to have a positive view of the school’s leadership. However, the issue of cause and effect is uncertain due to teachers not wanting to seek greater involvement in school decision making or not being given the opportunities to participate. As Duke and Gansneder (1990) state, administrators need a process of careful matching of opportunities for involvement with individual interest in involvement (Duke & Gansneder). Teacher participation in decision making is a powerful school management tool for enhancing teachers’ work with students and effectiveness in the classroom (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994).

For schools to be judged to be good at participative decision making and teacher empowerment, it is important to note that some teachers prefer lower levels of involvement in school decision making than others. In general, elementary teachers are more likely to be satisfied with their level of involvement than are secondary teachers. Teachers with a negative view of school leadership are likely to desire a more active role in managerial decisions than teachers with a positive view of the administration (Duke & Gansneder, 1990).

Supervisors, who are perceived as engaging in feedback, participating in goal-setting behaviors, and allowing employees to have the authority to make decisions about
their jobs, foster employees to be more committed to the organization. At high levels of supervisor support, women’s organizational commitment was greater than men’s commitment (Kidd & Smewing, 2001).

In explaining the participation-organizational citizenship behavior relationship, by researching the professional and organizational commitment of teachers, Bogler and Somech (2002) found that both organizational commitment and professional commitment were positively associated with participatory decision making in the managerial domain. With involvement in managerial issues such as school policy, hiring staff, and budget allocation, teachers see themselves as both instructors and members of the whole, school organization. Professional goals as well as organizational goals are strengthened with the teachers’ sense of identification (Bogler & Somech).

Bogler’s and Somech’s (2005) findings report that teachers’ participation in decision making on their organizational citizenship behavior indicate that teachers are more involved in students and instruction or technical managerial components in opposition to the operational aspects of the school or the managerial domain. New avenues for teachers to participate more in the managerial domain should be made available to teachers by the administrators, which would possibly have an impact on teacher empowerment as a mediating variable (Bogler & Somech, 2002, 2005). In the development of teachers’ existing skills and potential skills to improve teachers’ attitudes toward their work and contributing to school effectiveness, administrators can redesign teachers’ roles to enhance skill flexibility. A way in doing this is in job rotation. Teachers should have the opportunity to rotate their roles with program coordinators, department heads, and school management. Participatory decision making opportunities and methods
can be implemented with this strategy, creating long-term teacher motivation, career ladders for teachers, and a higher quality of decision making structure (Conley et. al., 1988; Rosenblatt, 2001).

A school’s culture benefits from the use of the full range of skills these multiple roles provide through flexibility of the administrative and the teaching staff. Teachers who feel more competent in their roles will aim for experiences with higher probability of success. A teacher’s extra role behavior provides an opportunity for gaining self-efficacy (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000). However, it is noted in the research that redesign of the workforce including multiple roles and skill flexibility can cause role-related stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Rosenblatt, 2001).

Teacher Participation in Decision-Making and Job Satisfaction

Teacher participation in school decision making has a positive effect on first-year teacher retention and its contributing factors. Teacher influence over school policy within the school culture can mitigate first-year teachers’ probability to leave the teaching profession. As teacher influence and participation in decision making changes from no influence to a strong amount of influence within the teacher empowerment process, Liu (2007) asserts that teacher attrition can decrease from 19% to 4%. A school culture characterized by strong teacher influence might be a factor in nurturing a bond between first-year teachers and their school’s culture (Liu, 2007).

Within their school’s culture, first-year teachers can foresee increased professional opportunities for participating in leadership roles within the organization. Also conducive to first-year teacher retention is the development of shared decision
making in setting discipline policy, which is inductive to creating a collegial work environment (Liu, 2007).

With respect to how teacher empowerment can be enhanced and constructed, Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2005) find evidence to support the importance of teacher job satisfaction. High levels of job satisfaction influenced by teachers’ shared decision making can shape school culture and influence teachers’ sense of empowerment (Zembylas & Papanastasiou).

The research findings of Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2006) focus on the dissatisfaction of teachers in the profession and their disempowered situation. The teachers in the study were found to have motivational dissent which is affected by social problems, students’ misbehavior and lack of interest, a decline in teacher status, and a lack of participation and teacher voice in the educational decision making process. The teachers also experience a sense of neglect by the administration and the centralized governance system, which is indicated in the collaborative feeling of alienation from the process of school reform (Zembylas & Papanastasiou). In the positive relationship between participative management and high levels of job satisfaction, it is demonstrated that there be effective supervisory communication in strategic planning for organizations (Kim, 2002).

**Summary**

The research shows that empowerment of teachers involves the participatory management of school administrators. Teachers who are genuinely empowered participate in the decision making processes in order to carry out the mission of
instructional reformation to benefit all the students. To be useful as a school reform strategy, teacher empowerment must focus on the instructional vision and professional collaboration of the teachers. Empowered teachers who become involved in participatory decision making are professionally focused, use the opportunity to improve their instruction, and improve student performance (Marks & Louis, 1997).

Empowered teachers perceive themselves to have control over their work schedules and classroom instruction practices. They also feel a high level of teacher competency. The six dimensions of teacher empowerment identified in the research include: (a) participatory decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) teacher status among colleagues, (d) teacher self-efficacy, (e) teacher autonomy, and (f) impact on the organization of the school (Short & Rinehart, 1992). Teacher empowerment is perceived as a crucial factor in the progression and affect of school effectiveness (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Somech, 2005).

In relationship to organizational and job commitment, empowered teachers experience openness to improvement, trust and respect from the administration, access to expertise, and supportive leadership and socialization. The school culture exhibits a focus on learning, reflective dialogue between teachers and administrators, and collaborative, school-based decision making (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Wu & Short, 1996).

Empowerment theory predicts that when programs are personally meaningful to teachers as defined by their personal beliefs and values, the more committed to new programs and curriculum the teachers will become. The meaningfulness of a new program or idea can be influences by how well it fits the teachers’ beliefs about teaching, based on the teachers’ previous experiences with the students (Cherniss, 1997).
Administrators and teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the sociobehavioral expectations required of students in middle school and high school. Teachers need to explicitly state their expectations of social skill competency behaviors to students, so that the students are able to adjust their academic, social, and behavioral performances to meet those expectations. Through participatory, collaborative decision making on idea about behavioral expectations in the classroom, teachers and administrators might improve the transition for students from middle school to high school (Lane et. al., 2004).

Participative administrative practices encourage teachers to discover new opportunities and challenges and learn through acquiring and collaborating knowledge about school issues. Participation can be critical to an organization’s or a school’s culture. Teachers in participative environments can increase the pool of ideas, materials, and methods, which will result in a higher quality of instruction for the students. Participative decision making also encourages an open communication between school administration and teachers seeking to lower barriers. Participative leadership of a school can create an atmosphere where innovative ideas are express by empowered teachers, who strive to express opinions and propose solutions because they know that their expertise is valued and expected of their colleagues and administration (Somech, 2005b).
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methods that were used in the study and is divided into the following five subsections: (a) research design, (b) validity and reliability, (c) participants, (d) instrumentation, (e) procedures, and (f) data analysis.

Research Design

The research design is non-experimental using correlational statistics, independent t-tests, and descriptive statistics. This research sought to compare teachers’ perceptions of empowerment in a middle school and teachers’ perceptions of empowerment in a high school located in the same district, and how the empowerment stage is related to teachers’ perceptions of importance and teaching of social competency skill at these levels. Also, the study identified the use of participatory leadership demonstrated by the administration participants according to gender and years of experience. The study used correlational statistics, independent t-test, and descriptive statistics to assess teachers’ perceptions of empowerment and their role in participatory governance and expectations of students’ social competencies. The correlational design provided information concerning the degree of the relationship between the variables being studied.
Validity and Reliability

The threat to internal validity of this study was primarily a subject characteristic threat that may have existed because teachers inherently differ from one another in a variety of ways. These different characteristics of the teachers could have affected the results of the research. The administrators also differ along with their attitudes towards teacher empowerment and participative decision making processes. A teacher’s age and years of teaching experience could have affected the perceptions of teacher empowerment, school culture, and expectations of social skill competency of students in the classroom.

External validity or generalizability of the results to a population of a single school district’s teachers and administrators in both middle school and high school is subject to the representativeness of the actual respondents. To encourage responses and increase possibility of representativeness, a follow-up distribution and collection of surveys was conducted at the high school.

Participants

A pilot study was conducted prior to collecting research for the main study. A population of 10 high school teachers from a school district in Mississippi separate from the district in which the main study was conducted, were asked to participate voluntarily in the pilot research on the open-ended questionnaire distributed only to the teachers. All 10 of the respondents participated and completed the pilot study questionnaire.

A population of 50 middle school teachers teaching 7th and 8th grade and 64 high school teachers teaching grades 9-12 were asked to participate from the same school
district in Mississippi in this voluntary study by completing two surveys about school participant empowerment and school culture. The teachers were also asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire about their expectations for students concerning social skill competency in the classroom and demographic information identifying them as either a teacher at the middle school or a teacher at the high school.

The survey response rate from the middle school teachers was 94%. The survey response rate from the high school teachers was 67.2%. The response rate from the open-ended questionnaire from the middle school teachers was 94%. The response rate from the open-ended questionnaire from the high school teachers was 57.8%.

Participants in the study from the schools’ administration included the three principals from the middle school and two principals from the high school. All three administrators from the middle school responded to the survey. One administration participant from the high school chose not to participate in the study. The administration participants were asked to complete demographic information and a survey on participation management and inclusion of teachers in decision-making processes.

Of the three participants from the middle school administration, two were female and one was male. The two participating respondents from the high school administration were a male and a female. Number of years experience as an administrator for study participants ranged from 0-4 years of experience, 5-8 years of experience, and 13-16 years of experience.
Instrumentation

Teachers completed the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS). The teachers also completed a three question, open-ended questionnaire, the Social Skills Survey (SSS), on expectations of students’ social skill competency. School administrators completed the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ). Demographic data on school identification, years of experience, and gender were also collected from the survey issued to the administration participants.

The School Participant Empowerment Scale

Data from the teachers on their overall perceptions of empowerment was collected from the information on the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). The SPES is a 38-item, Likert-type-type-scale, providing information about the degree to which conditions in the school’s environment foster teacher empowerment. The subscale composite scores were computed separately from the total composite score of the instrument. The dimensions of teacher empowerment measured are: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact (Short, 1994).

The five dimensions of teacher empowerment as defined by Short (1994), are represented on the scale. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales measuring the dimensions were reported as: (a) decision-making, .79, (b) professional growth, .66, status, .84, self-efficacy, .83, autonomy, .83, and impact, .91. Alpha reliability for the total scale was .94 (Short & Rinehart, 1992).
Short (1994) defined decision-making as it relates to the participation of teachers in critical decisions that directly affect their work such as decisions involving budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, and curriculum. Professional growth refers to teachers’ perceptions that the school in which they work, provides them with opportunities to grow and develop as professionals and to expand one’s own knowledge and skills through the work life of the school. Short defined status as teachers’ perceptions created by professional respect and admiration from colleagues. The status dimension also measures the degree to which others respect their expertise and knowledge. Self-efficacy measures the degree to which teachers perceive they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and have command of the subject content and teacher skills. The autonomy dimension measures the degree to which teachers believe they can control certain aspects of their work life, such as, instructional planning, scheduling, and curriculum (Short). The impact dimension will measure the degree to which teachers perceive they have and effect and influence on school life and this impact is acknowledged (Short).

**The School Culture Survey**

The teachers also completed the School Culture Survey (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). The SCS is a 35-item Likert-type-type-scale, which provides information about the shared values/beliefs, the patterns of behavior, and the relationships in the school. The subscale scores were computed separately from the total composite score of the instrument. Each of the six factors measures a unique aspect of the school’s collaborative culture. The six factors include: (a) collaborative leadership, (b) teacher collaboration, (c)
professional development, (e) collegial support, (f) unity of purpose, and, (g) learning partnership (Gruenert & Valentine).

The development of the SCS was based upon an extensive review of the school culture literature, the creation of an initial band of 79 survey items from that literature, the administration of the survey to a sample 632 teachers, and the use of factor analysis for derivation of the instrument (Gruenert, 1998). In this study, the SCS measured teachers’ perceptions of the following six factors included in the construct of school culture:

1. **Collaborative leadership**: the degree to which school administrators establish and maintain collaborative relationships with teachers; administrators value teachers’ ideas, seek their input; engage them in decision-making, and trust their professional judgments; and administrators support and reward risk-taking, innovation, and sharing of ideas and practices. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha) of .91 (Gruenert, 1998).

2. **Teacher collaboration**: the degree to which teachers engage in constructive dialogue that furthers the educational vision of the school; teachers evaluate programs; and develop an awareness of the practices and programs of other teachers. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha) of .83 (Gruenert, 1998).

3. **Unity of purpose**: the degree to which teachers work toward a common mission for the school; teachers understand, support, and perform in accordance with that mission. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha) of .82 (Gruenert, 1998).
4. **Professional development**: the degree to which teachers value continuous personal development and school-wide improvement; teachers seek ideas from current knowledge about instructional practices. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha of .87 (Gruenert, 1998).

5. **Collegial support**: the degree to which teachers work together effectively; trust each other’s ideas and work to accomplish the tasks of the school organization. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Chronbach’s alpha) of .80 (Gruenert, 1998).

6. **Learning partnership**: the degree to which school participants work together for the common good of the student; parents and teachers share common expectations and communicate frequently about student performance; students generally accept responsibility for their schooling. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of .66 (Gruenert, 1998).

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**The Social Skills Survey**

*The Social Skills Survey*, is an open-ended questionnaire that includes three questions administered to the teachers regarding their perceptions and expectations of their students’ social skill competency and how these skills relate to at-risk students specifically. A pre-test pilot study was conducted on 10 teachers with a five question instrument. The responses were analyzed and revisions were made to the questions to ensure clarity of wording and non-repetitiveness. The administered questionnaire in the main study consisted of three combined and revised questions from the original questionnaire administered in the pilot study.
The Participative Management Questionnaire

Participants from the schools’ administration completed the *Participative Management Questionnaire*. The *Participative Management Questionnaire* is a 35-item questionnaire Likert-type-type-scale, consisting of five specific subscales. The subscale scores were computed separately from the total composite score of the instrument. Item choices for responses were not designated by the author in the literature for the instrument. For the purposes of the cross tabulations in this study, “4” was considered to be average degree to a high degree. The 35-item, Likert-type-type scale questionnaire measures participative management across five specific subscales, which include: (a) decision domain, (b) degree of participation, (c) structure, (d) rationale, and (e) participation target. Somech (2002) designed the questionnaire in order to investigate the definition of participative management as a multidimensional construct (Somech).

The decision domain asks participants to indicate how often they actually involved their teachers in 10 decision issues, such as establishing general instructional policies or in allocating budget, materials, and equipment to subject departments. Items have five response choices from 1= very seldom to 5=very often. Using Cronbach’s alpha in the original administration of the test, the reliability estimate was .83 for this subscale. The second subscale measures degree of participation. Participants are asked to assess how often overall, they actually use different, specified strategies in the process of decision making. The items have five response choices from 1=very seldom to 5=very often. Using Cronbach’s alpha in the original administration of the test, the reliability estimate was .79 for this subscale. The third subscale assesses the extent of formal
structured participative management systems and also has a five response choice structure from 1=very seldom to 5=very often. Cronbach’s alpha in the original administration of the test for this subscale, produced a reliability estimate of .79. The fourth subscale or the rationale subscale, measures the dimension of participative management, which essentially answers the question, “What is the justification for participative management?” Participants are asked to indicate the importance of nine reasons for participative management. Items have five response choices from 1=not important to 5=very important. Cronbach’s alpha in the original administration of the test for this scale set produced a reliability estimate of .77. Participation target is the fifth subscale in which the participants are asked to indicate the importance of nine factors for determining who should be invited to participate in the decision-making process. A teacher’s seniority might determine whether or not the teacher is included in the decision-making process. Items for this subscale have five response choices from 1=not important to 5=very important. The reliability level of Cronbach’s alpha was .69 in the original test administration (Somech, 2002). Demographic data for the school administrators was collected through self-report questionnaires included in an appended section of the survey.
Procedures

Protocol was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University for review of application and IRB approval was obtained (#08-143). The protocol submitted included a clear research design appropriate to the major of School Administration in the College of Education at Mississippi State University and a definition and equitability of the appropriate group of subjects to be included for the research. A copy of the consent forms, a written description of the research, copies of all surveys and the questionnaire, a description of methodology, and written permission from the pilot study’s school district’s superintendent and the main study’s school district’s superintendent to conduct the research were included.

Permission to conduct the pilot study in a school district separate from the school district in the main study was obtained from both the superintendent and the high school principal. The principal at the high school involved in the pilot study, distributed and collected the instructions for completion, the informed consent forms, and the open-ended questionnaires and separate envelopes to ten high school teachers. The researcher received the separately sealed envelopes containing the signed informed consent form and the completed, open-ended pilot study questionnaire from the principal’s office.

Permission to conduct the research from the principals at the main study’s middle school and the main study’s high school were requested by phone. The middle school teachers received their surveys in group meetings at the school from the principal. The high school teachers were issued their surveys at a teacher meeting where the written and oral summary of the information was presented by the researcher. A follow-up survey collection was presented at the high school by the researcher at a second teacher meeting.
Each subject was provided with instructions for completing the surveys, a short form written, informed consent stating that the elements of consent and subject confidentiality were understood and authorized, the surveys, and separate envelopes for the signed, consent form and the completed surveys.

The completed surveys and signed consent forms were collected in sealed envelopes by the principal at the middle school during a teacher meeting and put in a box for the researcher to receive. The completed surveys and signed consent forms, signed in separate, sealed envelopes were turned in by the teachers and collected in a box in the principal’s office at the high school for the researcher to receive.

Research subjects were told at the beginning of the study which individuals involved in the research had access to data. Once the research data had been collected, the researcher ensured that no unauthorized persons have access to the information, and that privacy of individuals to whom the data applied was protected, anonymous, and confidential. Personal demographic information was submitted by the subjects anonymously.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher used correlational statistics, independent t-tests, and descriptive statistics to describe the data collected and to make suppositions about teacher empowerment, teacher expectations of social skill competency for students, school administration participative management, and characteristics of a given population of teachers and administrators. The collected data was placed into a data table in the
Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 so that the data could be analyzed and the research questions could be answered.

A pilot study was conducted on the questions for the teachers’ open-ended questionnaire. Data from five questions were analyzed from a pilot study conducted on ten high school teachers. Questions that appeared to be unclear or repetitive to respondents were omitted and re-written for the main study’s open-ended questionnaire.

The Pearson r correlation coefficient was calculated to determine a positive, negative, or non-existent relationship between the data. An alpha level of .01 was used to determine significant differences between variables. The descriptive statistics included frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores on selected variables that established the priority or importance of the various variables. An independent t-test was used in the evaluation of the mean differences involving the two treatment conditions of the middle school and the high school. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine significant differences between variables. Assumptions for the Pearson r correlation and the independent t-tests were met.

The following are the research questions, the specific number on the instrument that collected the data necessary, and a discussion of how each of the questions was addressed statistically in this section. See Appendix A for the surveys.

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in middle school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)? This question was answered using items
A composite score was computed for each respondent on both surveys using the following scores on the five-point Likert-type scale: “Strongly Agree”= 5; “Agree”= 4; “Neutral”= 3; “Disagree”= 2; “Strongly Disagree”= 1. A composite score was computed for the SPES was completed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores for items 1-35.

Frequency, mean, and percentage responses were calculated and statistical tables prepared to answer this question. The Pearson correlation coefficient \( r \) was used to determine the relationship that exists between the teachers’ personal empowerment score and the school’s collaborative, culture factors score.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in high school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)? This question was answered using items 1-38 on the SPES and items 1-35 on the SCS. A composite score was computed for each respondent on both surveys using the following scores on the five-point Likert-type scale: “Strongly Agree”= 5; “Agree”= 4; “Neutral”= 3; “Disagree”= 2; “Strongly Disagree”= 1. A composite score was computed for the SCS was completed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores for items 1-38.

Frequency, mean, and percentage responses were calculated and statistical tables prepared to answer this question. The Pearson correlation coefficient \( r \) was used to
determine the relationship that exists between the teachers’ personal empowerment score and the school’s collaborative, culture factors score.

**Research Question 3**

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the *autonomy* subscale in the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)? This question was answered using items 5, 11, 17, and 23 on the SPES. A score was computed for each respondent using the following scores on the five-point Likert-type scale: “Strongly Agree”= 5; “Agree”= 4; “Neutral”= 3; “Disagree”= 2; “Strongly Disagree”= 1.

The *autonomy* subscale on the SPES consisted of items 5, 11, 17, and 23. These items were then computed to form the *autonomy* subscale score. The *autonomy* subscale composite score was computed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores from items 5, 11, 17, and 23.

Once the data was collected, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of teacher *autonomy* from the middle school and the mean scores of teacher *autonomy* from the high school. Alpha level was set at the .05 level of significance for the analyses.

**Research Question 4**

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the *collaborative leadership*
subscale in the School Culture Survey (SCS)? This question was answered using items 2, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, and 34 on the SCS. A score was computed for each respondent using the following scores on the five-point Likert-type scale: “Strongly Agree”= 5; “Agree”= 4; “Neutral”= 3; “Disagree”= 2; “Strongly Disagree”= 1.

The collaborative leadership subscale on the SCS consisted of items 2, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, and 34. These items were then computed to form the collaborative leadership subscale score. The collaborative leadership subscale composite score was computed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores from items 2, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, and 34.

Once the data was collected, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores for the collaborative leadership scores of the teachers at the middle school and the mean scores for the collaborative leadership scores of the teachers at the high school. Alpha level was set at the .05 level of significance for the analyses.

Research Question 5

What are the middle school teachers’ perceptions and expectations and the high school teachers’ perceptions and expectations of students’ social skill competency and student success as measured by the Social Skills Survey (SSS)? Responses to the questions were analyzed and synthesized in a coherent description of the teachers’ expectations of classroom behavioral skills and their perceptions as to what social competency skills they deemed necessary for their students.
Research Question 6

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ *strategies in the process of decision making* at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)? This question was answered using the data from items 1-10, Section I on the PMQ. A score was computed for each administrator respondent using the following scores on the 5-point Likert-type scale: “Very Often”= 5; “Often”= 4; “Occasionally”= 3; “Seldom”= 2”; “Very Seldom”= 1.

The *strategies in the process of decision making* subscale on the PMQ consisted of items 1-10, Section I. These items were then computed to form the *strategies in the process of decision making* subscale score. The *strategies in the process of decision making* subscale composite score was computed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores from items 1-10, Section I.

Cross tabulation was used to examine respondents’ gender and years of experience. Frequency, mean, and percentage responses were computed and statistical tables prepared to answer this question.

Research Question 7

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ perceptions of the *formal structured participative management systems* at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)? This question was answered using the data from items 1-3, Section III on the PMQ. A score was computed for each administrator respondent using the following scores on the 5-point Likert-type
scale: “Very Often”= 5; “Often”= 4; “Occasionally”= 3; “Seldom”= 2”; “Very Seldom”= 1.

The formal structured participative management subscale on the PMQ consisted of items 1-3, Section III. These item scores were then computed to form the formal structured participative management subscale score. The formal structured participative management subscale composite score was computed by multiplying the number of individual respondents’ answers to each corresponding scale score and then adding the scores from items 1-3, Section III.

Cross tabulation was used to examine respondents’ gender and years of experience. Frequency, mean, and percentage responses were computed and statistical tables prepared to answer this question.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived existing empowerment of middle school and high school teachers; the perceptions of the teachers’ autonomy and collaborative leadership characteristics within each school culture; their perceived needs for teaching social skills in the classroom, as the students’ learned skills might contribute to student progress, success, and limitation of the overall student drop-out rate in the school district; the differences and similarities of the participative leadership formal structure existing within the school cultures and the existing impact that the participative leadership style of the administration on the empowerment of the middle school and high school teachers.

This chapter focuses on statistical analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the purpose of answering the seven research questions. Data were collected primarily through two surveys and an open-ended questionnaire sent to middle and high school teachers in the same rural, Mississippi public school district, and through a survey sent to the administrators at both schools.
Analysis of Data

Descriptive and inferential statistics including correlational statistics and independent t-tests were used to analyze the survey data. Responses for each question were coded with a 5-point Likert scale. The open-ended questionnaire asked teachers three questions on teaching social skills within the classroom. Data were analyzed in SPSS v. 16.

The instrument response rate included 94% for the SPES, the SCS, and the SSS for the middle school teachers. The instrument response rate included 67% for the SPES and the SCS for the high school teachers. The instrument response rate at the high school for the high school teachers on the SSS was 58%. Demographic data on the middle school and the high school teachers was not included.

The instrument response rate on the PMQ included 100% for the administrators at the middle school and 67% for the administrators at the high school. Of the administrators that participated from the middle school, 67% were female and 50% had 5-8 years experience. The other 50% respondents had 13-16 years experience. Of the administrators that participated from the high school, 50% were female and had 5-8 years experience. The other 50% respondents had 0-4 years of experience. Table 4.1 indicates the response rate for each instrument.
Table 4.1 Percentage Response Rates for Instruments

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<td>67%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>67%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in middle school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)? The following 5-point Likert scale was used on both the SPES and the SCS: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. For the purpose of this analysis, on the SPES, teacher empowerment was considered 4.0. On the SCS an existing collaborative culture between teacher and administrator was considered 4.0. According to the Shapiro Wilkes test of normality, normality was met at the significance of .11. The assumption for linearity was met according to the scatterplot that was conducted. Figure 4.1 shows the general direction of the data.
The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r$) was used to determine the relationship that exists between the teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture for the middle school. A positive correlation was found ($r = .60$) at the .01 alpha level between the teachers’ personal empowerment and the school culture in middle school. The descriptive statistics for teacher empowerment and school culture for the middle school are shown in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in high school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)?
and the School Culture Survey (SCS)? The following 5-point Likert scale was used on both the SPES and the SCS: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5. According to the Shapiro Wilkes test of normality, normality was met at the significance of .05. The assumption for linearity was met according to the scatterplot that was conducted. Figure 4.2 shows the general direction of the data.

![Figure 4.2  Scatterplot of Empowerment and Culture in High School](image)

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r$) was used to determine the relationship that exists between the teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture for the high school. A positive correlation was found ($r=.57$) at the .01 alpha level between the teachers’ personal empowerment and the school culture in high school. The descriptive
statistics for teacher empowerment and school culture in high school are shown in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2  Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Empowerment in Middle School and High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>152.47</td>
<td>19.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>142.51</td>
<td>19.31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3  Descriptive Statistics: School Culture Assessment in Middle School and High School

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>138.68</td>
<td>20.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>127.40</td>
<td>17.86</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the *autonomy* subscale in the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)? The following 5-point Likert scale was
used: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5. The normality assumption for the independent t-test was not met on the data for the high school teachers. The data was screened and four outliers skewed the data as shown in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4. However, the researcher elected to leave in the cases.

Figure 4.3   Normal Q-Q Plot of Autonomy in Middle School
Figure 4.4  Normal Q-Q Plot of Autonomy in High School

The independent t-test was administered to examine the statistically significant differences between the middle school teachers and the high school teachers. As seen in Table 4.4, there was a statistically significant difference between the middle school teachers’ perception of autonomy ($M=14.60$, $SD=3.44$), $df=88$, $t(2.35)$ and the high school teachers’ perception of autonomy ($M=12.90$, $SD=3.18$), $df=88$, $t(2.35)$. 
Research Question 4

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the collaborative leadership subscale in the School Culture Survey (SCS)? The following 5-point Likert scale was used: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5. The normality assumption for the independent t-test was met on the data for both the middle school teachers and the high school teachers as shown in Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6. However, normality was low on the data for the middle school teachers due to an outlier.

### Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Autonomy and Collaborative Leadership in Middle School and High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
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<td>14.55</td>
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<td>2.35</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td>3.18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Leadership</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43.62</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38.51</td>
<td>7.59</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .05 level.
Figure 4.5  Normal Q-Q Plot of Collaborative Leadership in Middle School

Figure 4.6  Normal Q-Q Plot of Collaborative Leadership in High School
The independent t-test was administered to examine the statistically significant differences between the middle school teachers and the high school teachers. As seen in Table 4.4, there was a statistically significant difference between the middle school teachers’ perception of collaborative leadership ($M=43.62, SD=7.63$), $df=88$, $t(3.18)$ and the high school teachers’ perception of collaborative leadership ($M=38.51, SD=7.59$), $df=88$, $t(3.18)$.

**Research Question 5**

What are the middle school teachers’ perceptions and expectations and the high school teachers’ perceptions and expectations of students’ social skill competency and student success as measured by the Social Skills Survey (SSS)? The pilot study revealed similarities and repetitive answers to questions 1, 2, and 3, which asked about how teachers viewed student social skill competency as necessary for the classroom for activities including general behavioral skills, interpersonal skills, self control, and assertion. Questions 1, 2, and 3 were combined and rewritten on the survey presented to the teachers in the final study. The new question 1 asked, Do your general expectations in the classroom include social skills competency for students’ success, which include behavioral skills, interpersonal skills, etc.? Why? Or, Why not? Responses are reported in Appendix F. Teachers responses indicated that their general expectations in the classroom included social skills competency from students and that they planned the students’ activities, group work, and assignments in conjunction with the students having to incorporate and use the social skills in order to achieve success no only during their developmental years in school, but also in the students’ future lives outside of school.
Teacher remarks for general expectations in the classroom including social skills competency for students’ success included these:

…social skills are necessary for success within a public school setting. Being able to interact with others, work in groups to solve problems, and being tolerant of other’s views will make school less stressful and more productive.

…the environment in school is no different from the social environment adults face. In all situations, whether the person is an employer or an employee, a neighbor, etc. the environment the students face outside of school requires social skills to succeed. The school environment is a good practice field.

…how one deals with each other socially affects the way one interacts with other students and instructors. Education relies on successful interaction for the transfer of knowledge.

I have basic behavioral objectives, which lead to the students achieving academic objectives. . .a student must be able to socially adapt to each class seating and placement to achieve success.

I do expect and require students to work in small groups and with partners to complete various assessed activities. I require them to show mutual respect and to adhere to guidelines for each assessed activity. Peer evaluations are sometimes used.

Question 2 of the instrument asked teachers, “Are skills such as assertion and cooperation, responding appropriately to aggression to peers, self-control, and attending to instruction being taught in the classroom? Please explain. Responses are reported in Appendix F. The teachers’ responses indicated that sometimes the students do not recognize skills involving self-control as important. However, the students are being indirectly taught skills such as self control and responding appropriately to aggression to peers. The teachers indicated that they viewed social skill competency as important in students respecting themselves and well as other students in the class. They indicated these skills as critical to student success.
Teacher remarks for social skills being taught in the classroom included these:

…The students are taught assertion and cooperation and self-control at every level of school. Parents need to take more responsibility in teaching these skills at home.

I continually model appropriate responses and remind my classes of our expectations and the reasons for our expectations. The students that refuse to learn appropriate social skills prevent everyone from learning.

…I teach…children how to deal with frustration and anger. I believe in teaching the whole child- not just the academic child. This should be done in every classroom. When I see my students upset, I spend time talking to them and not just disciplining them.

…all the skills such as assertion, and responding appropriately to aggression are modeled. School is not only a place to teach subject areas, but a place to teach life-long skills.

To some degree self-control and assertion are being taught in the classroom. At the high school level this behavior should already be in place. It is the teacher’s job to set boundaries for assertion and aggression.

Question 3 of the instrument asked teachers, “Do you perceive teaching social skill competency to be an intervention for at-risk students? Responses are reported in Appendix F. Teachers indicated that many of the problems with at-risk students are due to their poor social skills and that their lack of social skill training resulted in poor student achievement for all the students. Some of the teachers indicated that the intervention was disrupted by the home environment outside of school and that this caused an obstacle where social skill competency was not being reinforced. Responses from the teachers included:

Yes. Social skills enable at-risk students to be able to reach out to others for help and guidance. It also makes others want to help these students.

Many of our school’s problems are due to poor social skills. If they are not taught this at home (like it is expected) then they behave poorly at school and are punished. It is very difficult to reinforce social skill competency with the at-risk students when they are in the home environment.
Yes. A significant number of students are at-risk due to behavioral issues alone. Poor social skills learned at home keep students from adapting to society.

Research Question 6

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ strategies in the process of decision making at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

Questions 1-10, Section I of the PMQ asked the administrators if there existed explicit attention to and advocacy of enhanced participatory leadership, and whether the administrators tended to involve teachers not only in the technical domain, but also in the managerial. The following 5-point Likert scale was used: Very Seldom=1, Seldom=2, Occasionally=3, Often=4, Very Often=5. For the purpose of this analysis, “advocacy of participative decision making” was considered 4.0. In general, administrators at both the middle and the high school advocated participative decision making occasionally too often ($M=38.60$, $SD=4.98$).

Cross tabulation analysis was done to examine statistical differences in each respondent’s gender and years of experience in administration. This assessment revealed that the administrators at the middle school advocated participative decision making less frequently than the administrators at the high school. Overall, female administrators incorporated decision making at times greater than at others. Male administrators advocated participatory leadership most of the time.

According to years of experience as an administrator, administrators with 0-4 years of experience and 13-16 years of experience incorporated advocacy of participative
leadership and decision making most of the time, while administrators with 5-8 years of experience advocated delegated decision making less than others.

Research Question 7

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ perceptions of the *formal structured participative management systems* at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

Questions A, B, C, Section III of the PMQ asked the administrators to access the extent of formal structured participative management systems. The following 5-point Likert scale was used: Very Seldom=1, Seldom=2, Occasionally=3, Often=4, Very Often=5. For the purpose of this analysis, “explicit procedures existed in the school concerning who participated in decision making, what decisions were open to participation, and how participation occurred” was considered 4.0. In general, administrators at both the middle and the high school accessed that explicit procedures were sometimes used in the school concerning who participated in decision making, what decisions were open to participation, and how participation occurred ($M=10.20$, $SD=2.68$).

Cross tabulation analysis was done to examine statistical differences in each respondent’s gender and years of experience in administration. This assessment revealed that the administrators at the middle school indicated that explicit procedures do exist in the school as to who participates in the decision making and as to what degree it was clear as to what decisions were open to participation and how participation occurred.
At the high school level, administrators indicated that the explicit procedure did not exist in the school as to who participates in the decision making and as to what degree it was clear as to what decisions were open to participation and how participation occurred. Overall, female administrators from both schools indicated that the structure did exist in the school to support explicit procedures concerning who participated in the decision making process, to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning what decisions were open to participation, and to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning how participation occurred.

Male administrators indicated that the structure did not exist in the school to support explicit procedures concerning who participated in the decision making process, to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning what decisions were open to participation, and to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning how participation occurred.

According to years of experience as an administrator, administrators with 0-4 years experience and 13-16 years experience indicated the least amount of existence for formal decision making structure within the school system. Administrators with 5-8 years experience indicated that there existed a formal decision making structure within the school system.
Summary

In summary, this research found that the middle school teachers perceived themselves to be more likely than the high school teachers to be empowered professionals in relation to their school culture of participative decision making, shared with the administration. A positive correlation was found \( (r=0.60) \) at the .01 alpha level between the teachers’ personal empowerment and the school culture in middle school. The high school teachers perceived themselves to be less likely than the middle school teachers, to be empowered professionals in relation to their school culture of participative decision making, shared with the administration. A positive correlation was found \( (r=0.57) \) at the .01 alpha level between the teachers’ personal empowerment and the school culture in high school. Both positive correlations indicated that there was a degree of relationship between the perceived empowerment of the teachers directly related to the existing school culture. Within each school’s culture there existed a level of participative leadership and collaborative decision making with the administration.

When asked about their autonomy within the school culture, middle school teachers’ perception of autonomy and ability to teach and make decisions in professional environments \( (M=14.60, SD=3.44) \), included a statistically significant difference when compared to the high school teachers’ perceptions of autonomy \( (M=12.90, SD=3.18) \).

A statistically significant difference was indicated between the middle school teachers and the high school teachers for collaborative leadership. The results indicated that the middle school teachers \( (M=43.62, SD=7.63) \) perceived the existence of procedures and decision making to be more collaborative with the administration than the high school teachers \( (M=38.51, SD=7.59) \).
An open-ended questionnaire indicated that teaching social skill competency as a complement to at-risk student intervention within a collaborative teaching environment, was considered crucial for both the students and the success of the school. Teachers indicated that students constantly encounter social skill behavior enhancement in the classroom and are engaged in activities involving practicing assertion, self-control, cooperation with peers, and self-esteem. These skills, as indicated on the questionnaire, were considered valuable for the students to succeed not only in the classroom but in their lives outside of school in their future. Several responses indicated the acknowledgement of the relationship between practiced and well-executed social competency skills and the success of an individual in the workforce.

Administrators responded to the analysis of advocacy of participative decision making with the teachers from each school. In general, administrators at both the middle and the high school advocated participative decision making occasionally to often ($M=38.60$, $SD=4.98$).

A cross tabulation analysis was done to examine statistical differences in each respondent’s gender and years of experience in administration in accordance with their responses to how their perceived decision making as a participatory event. Overall, the female administrators advocated participatory leadership skills most of the time. According to year experience as an administrator, administrators with 0-4 years of experience and 13-16 years of experience incorporated the advocacy of participative leadership into decision making most of the time, while administrators with 5-8 years of experience advocated delegated decision making less than others.
Overall, female administrators from both schools indicated that the a formal structure did exist in the school to support explicit procedures concerning who participated in the decision making process, to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning what decisions were open to participation, and to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning how participation occurred.

Cross tabulation analyses indicated that male administrators indicated that the structure did not exist in the school to support explicit procedures concerning who participated in the decision making process, to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning what decisions were open to participation, an to what extent explicit procedures existed in the school concerning how participation occurred.

According to years of experience as an administrator, administrators with 0-4 years experience and 13-16 years experience indicated the least amount of existence for formal decision making structure within the school system. Administrators with 5-8 years experience indicated that there existed a formal decision making structure within the school system.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher empowerment and participative leadership in education provides opportunities for competence to be developed and innovative programs to be started with limited resources. Research has shown that through teacher empowerment the momentum of school improvement and restructuring organizational learning and higher student achievement has increased. It is the school administrators’ responsibility for teacher empowerment and the facilitation of participative and shared decision making processes within the school (Rinehart et. al., 1998).

In restructuring schools and implementing programs that provide success strategies for at-risk students, empowered teachers believe that they have the skills and knowledge to improve drop-out rates. Administrators who provide teachers with this enabling experience, foster teacher autonomy, teacher choice, and teacher responsibility. It is the belief that teachers, because they are closest with the individual students, they should be making the decisions about teaching and the types of learning their students should be receiving (Short, Johnson, & Hall, 1994; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005).

Middle and high school students with deficient academic, social, and behavioral competency skills have an advantage to succeed when both teachers and administrators
have a comprehensive understanding of sociobehavioral expectations. With the improvement of social skills competency, teachers and administrators within the culture of the school, can facilitate the transition from middle school to high school in the form of improved educational outcomes. Adaptive relationships with student peers and adults within society are also results of sociobehavioral skill competency (Lane et. al., 2004).

In order to make schools into more equitable cultures, research confirms the affective links between teacher and administrator collaboration and decision making and an indirect influence on student achievement and school effectiveness (Lavie, 2006). Participation management of schools promotes commitments to decisions affecting the school and the students and an increase in willingness of the teachers to carry out their teaching objectives. It is the teachers’ sense of ownership and the initiation of respected, experimental ideas enhanced by the shared responsibilities of participating in the decision making process that is main component of progressive, school improvement (Somech, 2005b).

This study was designed to investigate perceptions of teacher empowerment, teacher expectations and perceptions of social skill competency of their students, especially those students-at risk, and the participative, facilitative management practices of the school administrators in both a middle school and a high school.

The data collection for this study was through three instruments. The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was used in measuring teacher perception of empowerment. The School Culture Survey (SCS) was used in measuring teacher perceptions of school culture. The Social Skills Survey (SSS), a three open-ended
question instrument created by the researcher, measured teacher perceptions and expectations of sociobehavioral competency skills of their students. Administrators’ perceptions of participative management procedures, in existence at the schools, were measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ). The data was collected directly from the teachers and the administrators at the middle school and at the high school in the study.

The instrument response rate included 94% for the SPES, the SCS, and the SSS for the middle school teachers. The instrument response rate included 67% for the SPES and the SCS for the high school teachers. The instrument response rate at the high school for the high school teachers on the SSS was 58%. Demographic data on the middle school and the high school teachers was not included.

The instrument response rate included 100% for the administrators at the middle school and 67% for the administrators at the high school. Of the administrators that participated from the middle school, 67% were female and 50% had 5-8 years experience. The other 50% respondents had 13-16 years experience. Of the administrators that participated from the high school, 50% were female and had 5-8 years experience. The other 50% respondents had 0-4 years of experience.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study to describe the data collected and to make suppositions about the comparisons between the middle school and the high school for teacher empowerment, teacher perceptions and expectations of social skill competency, and participative management procedures in existence. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to analyze the data. This
chapter focuses on a discussion of the findings, the conclusions, and the recommendations that were identified as a result of this study.

**Summary and Discussion of Findings**

Seven research questions were used to determine the comparisons between the teachers’ sense of empowerment and school culture, teachers’ expectations and perceptions of social competency skills, and the administrations’ perceptions and acknowledgments of participatory procedures in existence at a middle school and a high school.

**Research Question 1:**

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in middle school as measured by the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)?

The Pearson r coefficient found a positive correlation ($r=.60$) between teachers’ personal empowerment ($M=152.47$, $SD=19.39$) and school culture ($M=138.68$, $SD=20.68$) for the middle school. This suggests that a relationship between the teachers’ personal perception of empowerment and the school culture in terms of an existence level of a participative decision making culture is present at the middle school.

**Research Question 2:**

What is the relationship between teachers’ personal empowerment and school culture in high school as measured by the School
Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the School Culture Survey (SCS)?

The Pearson r coefficient found a positive correlation \( (r=.57) \) between teachers’ personal empowerment \( (M=142.51, SD=19.31) \) and school culture \( (M=127.40, SD=17.86) \) for the high school. This suggests that a relationship between the teachers’ personal perception of empowerment and the school culture in terms of an existence level of a participative decision making culture is present at the high school.

Research Question 3:

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the autonomy subscale in the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)?

The independent t-test found a statistically significant difference between the middle school teachers’ perception of autonomy \( (M=14.60, SD=3.44), df=88, t(2.35) \) and the high school teachers’ perception of autonomy \( (M=12.90, SD=3.18), df=88, t(2.35) \). This suggests that the higher autonomy perceived by the teachers at the middle school than the autonomy perceived by the teachers at the high school is in relation to the higher empowerment the teachers at the middle school perceive. The higher the perception of autonomy that exists, the higher the perception of teacher empowerment exists.

Research Question 4:

Is there a statistically significant difference between middle school teachers and high school teachers as measured by the mean scores of the collaborative leadership subscale in the School Culture Survey (SCS)?
The independent t-test found a statistically significant difference between the middle school teachers’ perception of collaborative leadership ($M=43.62$, $SD=7.63$), $df=88$, $t(3.18)$ and the high school teachers’ perception of collaborative leadership ($M=38.51$, $SD=7.59$), $df=88$, $t(3.18)$. This suggests that the teachers at the middle school perceived themselves as having a more collaborative decision making association with the school administration than the teachers at the high school perceived themselves as having with the administration at the high school. The higher the perception of collaborative leadership that exists, the higher the perception of teacher empowerment exists.

**Research Question 5:**

What are the middle school teachers’ perceptions and expectations and the high school teachers’ perceptions and expectations of students’ social skill competency and student success as measured by the Social Skills Survey (SSS)?

Teacher responses indicated that their general expectations in the classroom included social skills competency from students. The teachers generally planned their classroom activities, student group work, and assignments in conjunction with the students having to incorporate and use the social skills in order to achieve success during in both the developmental school years, but also in the students’ future lives and future occupations.

Teachers indicated that the students do not always recognize skills involving self-control as important. However, the students at both the middle school and the high school
are being taught skills such as self-control and responding appropriately to aggression to peers. Overall, the teachers perceived social skill competency as important in students respecting themselves and others within the classroom.

Problems with at-risk students due to their deficiency in social skills and lack of social skill training were indicated by the teachers to result in poor student achievement for all students in a classroom. Intervention obstacle was indicated by activities within the students’ home environment outside of school. The main reason teachers gave for the existence of this obstacle included lack of reinforcement of social skill competency in the students’ homes.

Research Question 6:

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ strategies in the process of decision making at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

Administrators at both the middle school and the high school responded that they advocated participative decision making occasionally to often ($M=38.60$, $SD=4.98$). The descriptive statistics for the decision making domain on the PMQ, for the individual questions, indicated degree of participative decision making procedures existing in the following: (1) student discipline ($M=4.60$, $SD=.55$); (2) hiring staff ($M=4.20$, $SD=.45$); (3) instructional policies ($M=3.80$, $SD=.84$); (4) school goals ($M=4.20$, $SD=.84$); (5) teacher leader selection ($M=3.60$, $SD=.89$); (6) budget decisions and managerial ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.30$); (7) teacher evaluation ($M=2.20$, $SD=.84$); (8) instructional methods
(M=4.00, SD=1.41); (9) student achievement report (M=3.40, SD=.89); and (10) selection of instructional material and curriculum (M=4.80, SD=.45).

Cross tabulation was done to examine differences between the middle school administrative procedures and the high school administrative procedures, each respondent’s gender, and years of experience in administration. Overall, female administrators incorporated participative decision making at times greater than at others. The male administrators advocated a participative leadership style most of the time.

The cross tabulation done according to years experience as an administrator indicated that administrators with 0-4 years of experience and administrators with 13-16 years of experience incorporated participative leadership advocacy and shared decision making procedures with the teachers most of the time. Administrators with 5-8 years of experience advocated shared decision making less than others.

Research Question 7:

What is the descriptive profile of the principals’ perceptions of the formal structured participative management systems at the middle school and at the high school as measured by the Participative Management Questionnaire (PMQ)?

Overall, administrators at both the middle school and the high school accessed that explicit procedures were sometimes used in the school concerning who participated in the decision making processes, what decisions were open to participation, and how participation occurred (M=10.20, SD=2.68). The descriptive statistics for the formal structure domain on the PMQ, for the individual questions, indicated that administrators perceived that explicit procedures often exist at the schools concerning who participates
in the decision making process \((M=3.40, SD=.89)\), administrators perceived that explicit procedures often exist at the schools concerning what decisions were open to collaborative participation \((M=3.40, SD=.89)\), and that administrators perceived that explicit procedures often exist in the schools concerning how participation occurred \((M=3.40, SD=.89)\).

Cross tabulation analysis was done to examine differences in each administrator respondent’s gender and years of experience in administration from both the middle school and the high school. Analysis indicated that administrators at the middle school considered there to be a formal structure of participative decision making in existence. Analysis indicated that administrators at the high school considered the existence of a formal structure of participative decision making procedures to be very few and limited.

Cross tabulation analysis indicated that overall, female administrators perceived that a formal structure of participative decision making did exist at both the middle school and the high school. Male administrators indicated that a formal structure of participative decision making barely existed or did not exist in both the middle school and the high school. Administrators with 0-4 years experience and administrators with 13-16 years experience indicated the least amount of existence for a formal structure of participative decision making within the school system. Administrators with 5-8 years experience indicated that there existed a formal structure of participative decision making within the school system.
Conclusions of Comparisons for the Middle School and the High School

The following are conclusions based on the findings of the study as they relate to the seven research questions for the middle school and the high school teachers, school cultures, and administrators:

The correlations suggest that there exists a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of personal empowerment and the existence of a school culture at the middle school and at the high school, in which there exists a shared decision-making environment with the administration. Due to a level of empowerment perceived by the teachers, it can be suggested that they feel a socio-political support system facilitated by the administration within the school culture.

The middle school teachers ($r=0.60$) perceive themselves to be more empowered within the existing school culture than the high school teachers ($r=0.57$) perceive themselves to be empowered with the existing school culture at the high school. Rinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley (1998) assert that school cultures where the administration exhibits the attributes of expertness and trustworthiness facilitate teachers who perceive high levels of teacher empowerment. The existence of the higher levels of teacher empowerment within the school culture can be indicated by high levels of greater collaborative teacher autonomy, high levels of teacher involvement in decision making, and greater teacher efficacy (Rinehart et. al., 1998). Barriers to teacher empowerment reflect the hierarchical organizational structures between the administration and the teachers (Johnson & Short, 1998).
As implied by the existence of a correlation between teacher empowerment and school culture and a higher level of empowerment than the high school teachers indicate, the middle school teachers possibly have more opportunities facilitated by the school administration, for developing competence to take charge of their own growth, are motivated, have a sense of professionalism, and resolve their own problems related to students’ collective learning skills. Short (1994) finds that an empowering school culture is able to create opportunities for competence to be developed proactively and displayed (Short, 1994).

As responses to the *SPES* indicate, the middle school teachers’ involvement in decision making might be characterized as potential problem finder and problem solver. Short (1994) states that as teachers feel more empowered, they perceive themselves as having the ability to identify problems and to take responsibility for solving the problem (Short). For empowered teachers, self-efficacy is related to an individual’s sense of opportunity for development in the teaching field. The middle school teachers might sense a greater level of self-efficacy than the high school teachers.

A lack of acknowledgment and support from the administration at the high school may exist in which the teachers effect change to a certain degree. Soodak and Podell (1996) confirm that teacher efficacy is important in the relation to the sense of personal efficacy for teachers. Their research maintains that a supportive environment within the school culture needs to be created whereby teachers can effect change within the school (Soodak & Podell).
The teachers’ perceptions for autonomy differed between the middle school 
\((M=14.60, \ SD=3.44), \ df=88, \ t(2.35)\) and the high school \((M=12.90, \ SD=3.18), \ df=88, \ t(2.35)\). As Pearson and Moomaw (2005) indicate, as teacher autonomy increases on the SPES, teacher empowerment and professionalism increase (Pearson & Moomaw). Teacher autonomy is an empirically derived dimension of teacher empowerment (Friedman, 1999). The teachers at the middle school perceive themselves to be working in a more professional teaching environment than the teachers at the high school report. Possibly, the teachers at the middle school are freer to make decisions about instruction in their own classrooms, therefore, feeling more autonomous and empowered than the teachers at the high school perceive themselves as having this freedom.

On the collaborative leadership subscale of the SPES, the middle school teachers \((M=43.62, \ SD=7.63), \ df=88, \ t(3.18)\), perceived themselves to have more of a voice with colleagues and support of the administration than the teachers at the high school \((M=38.51, \ SD=7.59), \ df=88, \ t(3.18)\), perceived themselves as having. Irwin and Farr (2004) suggest that when administrators give teachers respect for differences, teacher inclusion, and, involvement in consensual decision making, a collaborative school culture is able to exist. However, the collaborative school culture is viewed as fragile and can be ongoing due to possible staff turnover, canceled meetings, and changes in district priorities (Irwin & Farr).

The teachers at the middle school sense of collaborative leadership with the administration might be a factor in school improvement due to a more collective responsibility than the teachers at the high school perceive there to exist. Collaborative
leadership can improve the school by managing conflicts in a productive manner and promoting teacher commitment to become a collective responsibility. These actions become factors in the value of school improvement and progression (Lavie, 2006).

The open-ended questionnaire indicated that the teachers were generally receptive to teaching social skill competency as a complement to interventions for at-risk students and students in general. A summary of the responses to the SSS indicated that students in middle school and high school constantly encounter social skill behavior enhancement in the classroom. Teachers are willing to add behavioral and sociobehavioral skills to their instruction which include assertion skills. If added to their instructional practices in the classroom, the teachers indicated that the students’ behavior skills and discipline skills would improve. The teachers also indicated that social skill competency is considered valuable for the students to succeed not only in the classroom but in the students’ lives outside the environment of the school. Also, teachers acknowledged the relationship between well-executed social skill competency and the success of the individual in the workforce.

As Short (1994) states, empowered teachers believe that they have the knowledge and the skills to act on a situation and develop programs to improve the organization of the school and the organizational outcome (Short). As indicated on the SPES, the teachers at both the middle school and the high school are empowered. As a result of analysis their responses to the SSS, it can be concluded that these empowered teachers know their students individually and sense that they have the competence and knowledge to best
serve the students in the form of incorporating social skill competency into their daily instruction.

Short (1994) also states that the empowered school climate and culture is able to create opportunities for competence of teachers to be developed proactively and displayed (Short). Cherniss (1997) suggests that empowerment theory implies a sense of competency necessary for teachers to feel empowered. Thus, the more teachers feel empowered, the more they are receptive to innovation and become more experimental in the classroom (Cherniss, 1997).

Teachers indicated the importance and legitimacy of teaching social skill competency in relation to future occupational goals of the students. This indication by the responses highlighted the social validity of teaching social skill competency in the classroom. Luiselli et. al. (2005) indicates that students’ social skill competencies are legitimate learning objectives equivalent to the way that academic skills are taught and mastered in the classroom. When designing interventions for at-risk students, social validity of the intervention, treatment integrity of the teaching, and generalization and maintenance must all be addressed (Luiselli et. al).

In regard to the types of social skills that the teachers indicated most important, the responses to the SSS appeared to be supported by the research. Lane et. al. (2004) indicated that teachers did not specifically report assertion skills as critical for student academic success. However, this may suggest that teachers tend to promote self-advocacy and assertion skills in an effort to encourage students to manage their own interpersonal relationships with peers (Lane et. al.).
Administrators from both the middle school and the high school indicated that advocacy of participative decision making was incorporated occasionally to often ($M=38.60$, $SD=4.68$). However, more specifically, the middle school administrators indicated that they advocated participative decision making less frequently than the administrators at the high school indicated with their responses. Positive correlations between teacher empowerment and school culture at both schools were indicated at both schools. Administrators that have more years experience incorporated participatory decision making at times greater than others. The correlations may imply that the administrators with more experience are more familiar with types of school problems, which can possibly be solved more effectively through shared decision-making processes.

The middle school teachers indicated a stronger level of empowerment facilitated by the administration due to shared decision-making responsibilities on the SPES. The difference in possible, specific perceptions of the middle school administrators and the high school administrators might be due to varying degrees of participative leadership and how each individual respondent defines levels of participative decision making and perceives participative decision making with the teachers. Somech (2002) indicates four different, varying degrees of participative decision making: (a) autocratic; (b) information sharing; (c) consultative; and (d) democratic (Somech).

The administrators at the middle school may be basing their responses to the PMQ on their experience that the teachers, even though they are given the opportunity to participate in decision making, might not actively be seeking involvement in the school
decision-making processes. Duke and Gansneder (1990) state that teachers who perceive that they are highly involved in school decision making are inclined to have a positive view of the school’s leadership. However, there are issues with cause and effect, which are uncertain due to teachers not wanting to seek greater involvement in school decision making. Some teachers prefer lower levels of involvement in school decision making (Duke & Gansneder).

The teachers at the middle school might not desire an active role in the administrative, managerial decisions in the domain of the administrators at the school. Therefore, teachers are not actively involved in managerial decisions they may be involved with the participative decision making on the instructional level. Teachers with a negative view of school leadership are likely to desire a more active role in managerial decisions than teachers with a positive view of the administration (Duke & Gansneder, 1990).

In general, administrators at the middle school and the high school reported that explicit procedures were sometimes used to define a formally structured participative management system within the schools’ cultures ($M=10.20, SD=2.68$). More specifically, at the high school, administrators indicated that the explicit procedures do not exist in the school as to who participates in the decision making and as to what degree it was clear as to what decision were open to participation and how participation occurred even though there was an acknowledgement of a participative management system in existence at the high school. However, it is important to consider that there are different degrees and levels of participative management engagement. Somech (2002) that
participative management can be informally structured as well as formally structured depending on the perception of the administrators. Informally structured participative management involves very few explicit rules concerning who participates, what decisions are open to participation, and how participation is to occur (Somech).

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Because of the limited number of respondents, a study should be conducted with a random sampling of middle school and high school teachers and administrators in the state of Mississippi and in the Southeastern part of the United States, including males and females.

2. Further study should be considered for the longitudinal relationship between teacher empowerment and the existing implementation of programs for at-risk students. A possible direct link between teacher empowerment and success status of a new school program could be assessed. A focus for this study would be an intervention involving teaching specific social skill competencies.

3. Since the study was conducted in middle and high schools, it may be worthwhile to investigate elementary schools to determine teacher empowerment and participatory leadership.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS
School Participant Empowerment Scale (Copyright 1992 Paula M. Short and James S. Rinehart)

Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel. Rate each statement on the following scale:

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

1) I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.
2) I function in a professional environment.
3) I believe that I have earned respect.
4) I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.
5) I have control over daily schedules.
6) I believe that I have the ability to get things done.
7) I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.
8) I am treated as a professional.
9) I believe that I am very effective.
10) I believe that I am empowering students.
11) I am able to teach as I choose.
12) I participate in staff development.
13) I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.
14) I have the opportunity for professional growth.
15) I have the respect of my colleagues.
16) I feel that I am involved in an important program for children.
17) I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.
18) I believe that I am having an impact.
19) I am involved in school budget decisions.
20) I work at a school where kids come first.
21) I have the support of my colleagues.
22) I see students learn.
23) I make decisions about curriculum.
24) I am a decision maker.
25) I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers.
26) I am given the opportunity to continue learning.
27) I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.
28) I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.
29) I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.
30) I can determine my own schedule.
31) I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.
32) I perceive that I am making a difference.
33) Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.
34) I believe that I am good at what I do.
35) I can plan my own schedule.
36) I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students.
37) My advice is solicited by others.
38) I have the opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.
### SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY
**Form 4-98**

To what degree do these statements describe the conditions at your school?

**Rate each statement on the following scale:**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leaders value teachers' ideas.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers trust each other.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teachers support the mission of the school.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers spend considerable time planning together.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Parents trust teachers' professional judgments.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Teachers are involved in the decision-making process.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Teachers take time to observe each other teaching.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Professional development is valued by the faculty.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Teachers' ideas are valued by other teachers.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Teachers understand the mission of the school.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My involvement in policy or decision making is taken seriously.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Teachers work cooperatively in groups.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. The school mission statement reflects the values of the community.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. The faculty values school improvement.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Teaching performance reflects the mission of the school.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Administrators protect instruction and planning time.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments.</td>
<td>①</td>
<td>②</td>
<td>③</td>
<td>④</td>
<td>⑤</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed at Middle Level Leadership Center, University of Missouri by Steve Grunert & Jerry Valentine. Use by written permission only.
SOCIAL SKILLS SURVEY

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS:
MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER   HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Do your general expectations in the classroom include social skills competency for students’ success, which include behavioral skills, interpersonal skills, etc.? Why? Or, Why not?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Are skills such as assertion and cooperation, responding appropriately to aggression to peers, self-control, and attending to instruction being taught in the classroom? Please explain.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Do you perceive teaching social skill competency to an intervention for at-risk students?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
Participative Management Questionnaire
Developed by Anit Somech

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

Rate each statement by putting a circle around the number on the following scale:
1=Very Seldom; 2=Seldom; 3=Occasionally; 4=Often; 5=Very Often

I. How often do you actually involve teachers in the following situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Very Seldom</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Hiring staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Establishing general instructional policies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Setting and revising the school goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Selecting department chairpersons or team leaders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Allocating budget, materials, and equipment to subject departments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Determining the procedures to be used for the evaluation of teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Specifying the learning objectives and methods</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Developing procedures for assessing and reporting student achievement in subjects or courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Overall, how often do you actually use each of the following strategies in the process of decision-making?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Very Seldom</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Makes decisions on your own</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Obtains the necessary information from the subordinate, then makes the decisions on your own</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Shares the problems with subordinates, getting their ideas and suggestions, then you make decisions, which may or may not reflect their influence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Shares the problems with subordinates, and together they analyze the problems and arrive at mutually acceptable solutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rate each statement by putting a circle around the number on the following scale:

1=Very Seldom;  2=Seldom;  3=Occasionally;  4=Often;  5=Very Often

III.

Please indicate to what extent explicit procedures exist at the school concerning who participated in the decision-making process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate to what extent explicit procedures exist in the school concerning what decisions were open to participation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate to what extent explicit procedures exist in the school concerning how participation occurred?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate each statement by putting a circle around the number on the following scale:

1=Not Important; 2=Not Very Important; 3=Neutral; 4=Important; 5=Very Important

IV. INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH STATEMENT:

1. Increase teacher's motivation  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
2. Reduce principal's workload to manage time Better  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
3. Share responsibility  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
4. Increase teacher's commitment  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
5. Improve decision quality  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
6. Encourage teacher's acceptance of the decision  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
7. Improve principal's work efficiency  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
8. Improve teacher's skills  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
9. Develop teacher's confidence  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

V. INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH STATEMENT:

1. Teacher's professionalism and expertise  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
2. Teacher's seniority  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
3. Teacher's education  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
4. The teacher really wanted to participate  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
5. Teacher's human relations  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
6. The teacher was dependable and trustworthy  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
7. The teacher expressed an independent thinking Style  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
8. The teacher expressed a different way of thinking  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
9. Teacher's motivation at work  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
Administration Demographic Information:

Gender: Female_________ Male_________

Years experience as an administrator: ________________

Middle School ________________ High School ________________

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.
APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
May 14, 2006

Rebecca Beattie
108 Old West Point Rd. #23
Starkville, MS 39759

RE: IRB Study #08-143: A Comparison Between Middle School and High School Participative Leadership, Teachers’ Perceptions of Empowerment, and Teaching Social Competency Skills

Dear Ms. Beattie:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 5/14/2008 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please refer to your IRB number (#08-143) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact irb@research.mstate.edu or 325-3294.

Sincerely,

Katherine Crowley
Assistant IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: Dr. Connie Forde
July 1, 2008
Principal Researcher: Rebecca J. Beattie
Addendum to Procedure only on IRB form-data collection script
For teachers at Starkville High School

1. Itemize requested changes and justification:

I collected data via surveys to the teachers at Starkville High School their final week of school in May. I placed 87 survey packets in their mailboxes at Starkville High School in the principal’s office. The return rate was 14/87 teachers. I need the data from the teachers to proceed with the data analysis for my dissertation. So, I am planning to do a follow-up collection of data on the teachers.

The plan for the follow-up data collection for the teachers is to attend a teachers’ meeting at the beginning of the school year 2008-09 in either July or August, present the information about the research project and the surveys to the teachers—asking them to complete the surveys if they have not already. I feel that my presence at the teachers’ meeting and explanation of the project in-person, might trigger a more complete response rate to the surveys. Also, the time that I present the surveys to the teachers might make a difference as opposed to when they are busy receiving students and working within the school year. I received verbal permission to do this (as a suggestion) from the principal of Starkville High School on July 1, 2008.

2. “Yes” is checked on this item only because there are changes in the actual physical presence of the principal researcher being at the teachers’ meeting to collect the data.
There are no changes on the consent statement/form or any of the surveys.

SCRIPT TO TEACHERS- TO BE PRESENTED AT TEACHERS’ MEETING:

Hello, my name is Rebecca Beattie and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Mississippi State. Currently, I am working on collecting data for research on a dissertation project, which has to do with teacher empowerment. I would very much appreciate your response to completing the surveys and then taking them to the principal’s office to be collected in designated box. The consent forms will be in a separate envelope from the surveys in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process and the data will be destroyed at the end of the research period.

Again, I would greatly appreciate your participation in completing the surveys for this important research project on teachers and public education.

Thank You.
Procedural Modification/Addendum Request Form

Please note: This form may NOT be used for personnel changes or time extensions.
Please complete a Personnel Modification form for personnel changes or a Continuing Review Request form for time extension requests.

IRB Study# 08-147

Principal Researcher/Investigator: Rebecca J. Beattie

Study Title: A Comparison Between Middle School and High School Participative Leadership Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Social Competency

Do changes require a REVISED CONSENT statement or procedure? [ ] Yes - If yes, attach a revised consent form with the changes tracked, and a clean copy for the IRB approval stamp.

3. Do changes require revisions to the assessment of risk of harm to the subjects?
   [ ] Yes - If yes, explain.
   [ ] No

4. Do changes require revisions to the methods of ensuring anonymity or confidentiality?
   [ ] Yes - If yes, explain.
   [ ] No

Rebecca J. Beattie 7-1-08
Principal Investigator

Ann Lieble 7-2-08
Research Advisor (if applicable)

Kathleen Cavanaugh

Version 06-24-08

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APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTERS
May 5, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Permission is granted for Rebecca Beattie to conduct research for her dissertation research project at West Point High School. I understand she will be asking teachers to complete a questionnaire to provide information for her project on teacher empowerment and teaching social competency skills to at-risk students.

If additional information is needed, please feel free to contact my office at 662-494-4242.

Sincerely,

Steve Montgomery
Superintendent
Dear Teachers:

I am pleased to announce that West Point High School is participating in a research study designed to gain information on Teacher Empowerment and Teaching Social Skills. This information gained from the research will be valuable to academic institutions in Mississippi and nationwide.

Very little is known about teacher empowerment and even less is known about the role social skills teaching methods may play in intervention programs for at-risk students. This research will help educators to understand teacher perceptions on participative leadership, teacher empowerment, and the value of teaching social skill competency.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and will be greatly appreciated. You may choose not to answer any specific question, and you will not be identified in any way in the analysis and reports resulting from the study.

Sincerely,

Steve Montgomery
Superintendent
May 7, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is for the purpose of granting written permission to Rebecca J. Beattie, to do educational research for a dissertation, "A Comparison Between Middle School and High School Participative Leadership, Teacher Perceptions of Empowerment, and Teaching Social Competency Skills," at Armstrong Middle School and Starkville High School in the Starkville School District, Starkville, Mississippi.

The research will include as subject participants, three administrators and 50 teachers from Armstrong Middle School and four administrators and 87 teachers from Starkville High School.

The participants will voluntarily be completing a letter of consent and surveys for the research.

Sincerely,

Phil Burchfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent

/ds
May 7, 2008

Dear Administrators and Teachers:

I am pleased to announce that the Starkville Public Schools are participating in a research study designed to gain information on Teacher Empowerment and Teaching Social Skills. The information gained from the research will be valuable to academic institutions in Mississippi and nationwide.

Very little is known about teacher empowerment and even less is known about the role social skills teaching methods may play in intervention programs for at-risk students. This research will help educators to understand teacher perceptions on participative leadership, teacher empowerment, and the value of teaching social skill competency.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and will be greatly appreciated. You may choose not to answer any specific question, and you will not be identified in any way in the analysis and reports resulting from the study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Phil Burchfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent
APPENDIX D

LETTERS OF CONSENT AND ASSENT
INSTRUCTION SHEET

1. CONSENT FORM:

AFTER SIGNING CONSENT FORM, PLEASE PUT IN ATTACHED ENVELOPE AND SEAL. RETURN ENVELOPE TO THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE AND PLACE IN DESIGNATED BOX.

CONSENT FORMS MUST BE RETURNED SEPARATELY FROM COMPLETED SURVEYS TO ASSURE ANONYMITY.

2. SURVEYS

AFTER COMPLETING SURVEYS, PLEASE PUT IN ATTACHED ENVELOPE AND SEAL. DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME TO ANY OF THE SURVEYS OR TO THE ENVELOPE. RETURN ENVELOPE TO THE PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE AND PLACE IN DESIGNATED BOX.

PLEASE COMPLETE CONSENT FORMS AND SURVEYS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE DATA NEEDS TO BE COLLECTED BY THE END OF THIS WEEK.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN COMPLETING THE SURVEYS.

Rebecca J. Beattie
Graduate Student
Instructional Systems, Leadership, and Workforce Development
College of Education
Mississippi State University
INFORMED CONSENT

Your signature at the bottom of this sheet indicates that you have been informed of the following:

1. Your participation in this research project "A Comparison Between Middle and High School Participative Leadership, Teachers' Perceptions of Empowerment, and Teaching Social Competency Skills" is voluntary.

2. Rebecca Beattie, Doctoral Student, at Mississippi State University in the College of Education, is conducting the research with the endorsement and support of Mississippi State University and the Starkville Public Schools.

3. You will be asked to complete three surveys. One is the School Participant Empowerment Scale, one is the School Culture Survey, and the other is the Social Skills Survey.

4. The School Participant Empowerment Scale requires 10-15 minutes to complete, the School Culture Survey may require 5-10 minutes, and the Social Skills Survey may require 15-20 minutes. None of the surveys are timed.

5. Do not sign your name on the questionnaire or the survey. Your answers are anonymous. The signed consent forms will be collected separately from the survey answer sheets so that individual signatures cannot be matched with the approximately 100 teachers participating in this research.

6. If you need additional information regarding this research, please contact Dr. Connie Forde, Instructional Systems, Leadership, and Workforce Development, Mississippi State University, at 662-325-7258 or the MSU IRB office, at 662-325-3294.

7. You may stop at any time during this research and skip any items that you do not wish to answer. There are no risks or any anticipated risks involved with the research.

8. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding this research.

____________________  ____________________
Signature of Participant   Date
INFORMED CONSENT

Your signature at the bottom of this sheet indicates that you have been informed of the following:

1. Your participation in this research project “A Comparison Between Middle and High School Participative Leadership, Teachers’ Perceptions of Empowerment, and Teaching Social Competency Skills” is voluntary.

2. Rebecca Beattie, Doctoral Student, at Mississippi State University in the College of Education, is conducting the research with the endorsement and support of Mississippi State University and the Starkville Public Schools.

3. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire and a survey. The questionnaire is the Participative Management Questionnaire and the survey is the School Culture Survey.

4. The PMQ requires 15-20 minutes to complete and the SCS may require 5-10 minutes. Neither the questionnaire nor the survey, are timed.

5. Do not sign your name on the questionnaire or the survey. Your answers are anonymous. The signed consent forms will be collected separately from the survey answer sheets so that individual signatures cannot be matched with the approximately 6 administrators participating in this research.

6. If you need additional information regarding this research, please contact Dr. Connie Forde, Instructional Systems, Leadership, and Workforce Development, Mississippi State University, at 662-325-7258 or the MSU IRB office, at 662-325-3294.

7. You may stop at any time during this research and skip any items that you do not wish to answer. There are no risks or any anticipated risks involved with the research.

8. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding this research.

______________________________    ____________________
Signature of Participant           Date
APPENDIX E

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES FROM SURVEY QUESTIONS
**Question 1:**

Do your general expectations in the classroom include social skills competency for students’ success, which include behavioral skills, interpersonal skills, etc.? Why? Or Why not?

*Middle School Teachers:*

1. Yes. Students must be able to associate with peers and teachers. Students must have mature social skills to know what is appropriate and inappropriate at school and during class time.

2. I expect students to know how to behave in class. Some in class begin the necessary assignment, talk with peers if they have a question, and keep the talking volume at a minimum.

3. Yes. Social skills are important. If one has good social skills he/she will more than likely be a success in school.

4. As a teacher we must focus daily on behavioral issues that can disrupt the learning environment.

5. Yes. All children need guidance and encouragement. Social skills are necessary in order to work with other students and teachers.

6. Yes—many students do not get the guidance at home needed to be the best they can be at school.

7. Yes, because it is very important that you have good social skills to deal with other people.

8. Social skills are essential for school success because they make it easier to work with all types of learners, i.e., ethnic and socioeconomics.

9. Social skills are a major part of my class and classroom management because we are focusing on producing good citizens.

10. Yes, students who do not have the necessary social skills often face undue stress that can affect academic performance as well.

11. In order to manage a classroom of middle school students, socialization, needed everyday in order to manage!

12. I believe that social skills are a vital part of life.
13. Teaching the whole student is important and all these skills make up the student.


15. Somewhat. It helps to be able to talk to people and find out information. Poor social skills hamper that.

16. Absolutely; Students must be able to communicate w/teachers.

17. Yes. Because most students who aren’t versed with these skills do not get along well with other children and do not respect authority figures.

18. No.

19. Yes, students must understand how to appropriately interact w/adults and peers in order to function in school and society. If they do not then these problems get in the way of their learning and cause gaps in their education b/c they are spending time out of the classroom for fighting.

20. Yes – Students need to learn manners, appropriate behavior, and relationship skills in order to meet expectations in any setting of society or school.


22. No.

23. Completely agree. The lack of social skills and manners not only conflicts with instruction and classroom, it hinders our students future success. Social skill instruction could only be a positive for all members of the education profession. Dealing w/students would greatly deter the many fights. They need to learn appropriate behavior.

24. Yes. Expectations are given as well as procedures. Socialization assists in the maturity of students.

25. Yes. Those skills are how people interact with the world around them. They must possess those skills to effectively interact and thus learn.

26. Yes, because social skills are a part of the development for our students to be productive in the real-world.

27. Yes. The more social skills you have the more comfortable you are in the learning environment.
28. Yes. Behavioral skills greatly effect learning. I have basic behavioral objectives, that lead to the students achieving academic objectives. Also, a student must be able to socially adapt to each class seating and placement to achieve success.

29. Absolutely—without appropriate and acceptable social skills, children and adults alike struggle. Social skills are essential to functioning successfully.

30. Yes, In middle school children need good social skills to become successful and develop relationships.

31. Yes-being successful is more than academics-getting along with others, (helping, sharing, caring will help in today’s workforce).

32. I value social skills because simply having a knowledge base of a subject area does not mean you can get that knowledge across to other people.

33. A lot of time is spent on behavioral skills and outcomes to show students about their futures.

34. Yes, you must be able to communicate and function socially to make it in any environment of life.

35. I expect students to interact well with each other and people in authority.

36. Not necessarily-I have some students who have no social skills but they are very successful in the classroom. They are not concerned about being popular or making friends but are more focused on school.

37. Absolutely-Students as well as teachers must be able to work well collaboratively as well as independently to achieve a goal.

38. Yes. Students are given expectations of behavior and expected to follow.

39. Yes. You must be able to function in the classroom or you will not be able to function in the workforce w/o difficulty.

40. Yes. Social skills are necessary for success within a public school setting. Being able to interact w/others and be tolerant of other’s views will make high school less stressful and more productive.

41. Yes, the environment in school is no different from the social environment adults face. Whether an employer, employee, employee/employee, neighbor/neighbor, etc., the environment the students face outside of school requires social skills to succeed. The school environment is a good practice field.
42. I do view social skills as necessary for school success because schools are about people. In order to work with people, one must be able to socialize and to develop interpersonal skills at every level.

43. Yes-School is to prepare students for life (“real world”) life outside school walls requires social skills.

44. Yes because those skills will help them more in the real world than some of the other core subjects.

45. Yes-I expect them to start developing skills for the real world in my class. Those are all skills necessary for future success and I try my best to prepare them for the future.

46. Yes. I believe that how one deals with each other socially effects the way one interacts with other students and instructors. Education relies on successful interaction for the transfer of knowledge.

47. Yes. I as the instructor expect there to be a certain basic level of politeness in my room. When I witness a students interactions with others I attempt to request at the minimum level, politeness.
Question 2:

Are skills such as assertion and cooperation, responding appropriately to aggression to peers, self-control, and attending to instruction being taught in the classroom? Please explain.

Middle School Teachers:

1. We have peer mediation as a school program. In the classroom it really is part of our day, every day, all year. They are adolescents!

2. Yes—they are adolescents this is always addressed all day all year long.

3. All of them.

4. Yes, because cooperation is a big part of kid focus and attention in the classroom.

5. Peer interaction will help in learning how to relate to other.

6. Somewhat. I do teach these skills.

7. Basic manners, respect for others, taking care of your own self, self control.

8. These skills are very important especially working with teams.

9. Skills for academic success are respect, cooperation, following directions and doing what’s expected to name a few.

10. Not on a regular basis, but it is mentioned at the beginning and periodically as the need arises.

11. Teamwork. This a skill that students need in order to work together in classroom situations and this is a skill that employees expect students to have as an employee when they make that step.

12. Respect, motivation, enthusiasm, cooperation, responsibility, patience, dependability—these are just a few skills students need to be successful in school and ultimately in life.

13. Taught no—mentioned from time to time yes.

14. Behavioral—getting along w/others how to deal w/conflict—how to talk appropriately to authority.
15. Yes. Responsibility for actions is always discussed.
16. Stop teaching the test and get back to the basics.
17. Probably not to the extent that they should be.
18. No.
19. Yes-from the very beginning. Getting along with other peers.
20. Yes-daily skills such as tone of voice, body language, chivalry, respect. In the middle school, we encounter these moments opportunities daily.
21. Communication, anger management, self control, cooperation. It is being taught not always taken in by students but definitely presented.
22. No. Students generally come to Middle School w/o these skills and it’s difficult on the middle school teacher to “teach” these skills so students are effectively having these problems.
23. Yes. Discussed daily. Cooperation, tolerance, and acceptance. All of these are vital to the success of the students. Students must know how to control themselves.
24. Active listening is pivotal. When a student listens actively and questions appropriately based on what has been said the student shows a higher tendency towards understanding the concept.
25. I don’t believe they are being recognized as important by the student and/or being ignored. It isn’t that they are not taught in the classrooms.
26. Yes, I spend a good time with this b/c a lot of my students use fighting as their means of solving problems.
27. I think getting along and learning to accept responsibility for your life are important.
28. Communication. In my class, absolutely. I make sure to encourage acceptable social behaviors.
29. Yes.
30. Respect, basic respect and cooperation ability to discuss and resolve conflicts. I think it truly depends on the teacher-part of the hidden curriculum-very critical.
31. Ability to get along with other, ability to express themselves in a positive and non-aggressive way. Ability to express themselves verbally.

32. Yes. Self control and aggression. If a student misbehaves I give them a second to see if they can understand that they are wrong.

33. Yes. Communication-manners-respect for others-being on time with assignments are skills needed for success. Group projections-students rate their own and their peer contributions.

34. Yes. Self worth-striving for achievement, feeling apathy, behavior-respect for self, peers, and staff.

35. Yes. Those skills that allow students to be able to communicate with those who can help them or motivate them. These skills are being taught through constant reminder and modeling from those who project these skills in the classroom.

36. Self-control is needed by all students to achieve success. Personally in my class they are being incorporated within my teaching daily.

37. Yes.

38. Yes- I think common courtesy ability to get along with others and respect for others are important in the classroom. We have a group discussions and exercises (role playing) about working together.

39. Yes. Cooperation and communication. Most teachers have group projects or presentations that help the students learn these skills.

40. For the most part-all these are addressed daily! Support is everywhere and professionals handle these with great care.

41. Not directly. But teachers are putting these “pearls of wisdom among the regular curriculum.

42. Yes. All the skills such as assertion, and responding appropriately to aggression are modeled. School is not only a place to teach subject areas, but a place to teacher life-long skills.

43. Yes. Respect for self and others.
44. Yes. Respecting teachers, asking questions, communicating with peers, behavior, self-control. As students misbehave in class, teachers have the opportunity to address these issues with students. Also, this is taught and the beginning of school as well.

45. No. Behavior skills.

46. Probably not to the extent that they should be.

47. Cooperation, appropriate response to disagreement, acceptance of one’s own mistakes, and self control.
Question 3:

Do you perceive teaching social skill competency to an intervention for at-risk students?

Middle School Teachers:

1. Yes! They are not taught these skills at home. I definitely think the addition of social skills to the curriculum could assist many student who have behavior issues that translate to academic as well.

2. I could see how it would be beneficial for at-risk students who struggle with such skills.

3. Yes.

4. No. They need to focus more on basic skills.

5. Yes. Many problems of at-risk students can be attributed to a lack in some social skills.

6. No. I believe that is something that should be taught at home by the parents. Teachers should not be doing a parent job at school.

7. Yes.

8. Yes. They need relationships badly to grow.

9. Yes. Because this would make these students more adjusted to the real world.

10. Yes. Social skills can determine how a student handles him/herself in spite of and in lieu of their each of success in classroom setting. Academics are not a determination or judgment upon ones value.

11. Yes. Because it helps them deal with real world issues.

12. Yes. Because sometimes if these students had social skills to be able to get along with others, they might perform better in the classroom.

13. Yes. They become more tolerant of others by working with them.

14. Yes, because all students should be well rounded to be successful within the classroom and outside the classroom and in the community.
15. Definitely. They should not only have to learn and be successful but also must get along with peers, staff, and family.

16. Yes. So they can get along with others-this makes them trainable at something!

17. Yes. So they can understand that their voice has influence, praise, and power.

18. Yes.

19. Absolutely-before one attempt to intervene one must discover the root of the issue-more than likely social issues.

20. No.


22. Yes.

23. Yes. Many times the at-risk students are the same students who do not have a strong family background that would normally be teaching these skills as they grow.

24. Yes. At-risk students generally are not taught these skills at home so it becomes our job to teach them how to function in society.

25. Yes. This will help them understand how to act and react and might encourage respect for the knowledge they’re getting in the classroom.

26. Yes. A lot of at-risk students simply don’t know how to ask for help and how to work well in an environment where there are tutors or people willing to help them.

27. I do because some children simply need to realize HOW to communicate. Then they see some success and continue to communicate correctly.

28. Yes. If the child is struggling in this area.

29. Yes, students must be able to function in society. They must be well rounded.

30. It should not be used JUST for instruction. It should be taught to all students.

31. I think it might help-yes.
32. Yes, because many times this skill will help the at-risk student conform to usual social skills and expectations.

33. I agree because for some students, this may be their only opportunity.

34. Yes I think this would certainly not hurt but help anyone.

35. Yes, because if one gets and grasps social skills he/she will be more opt to learning.

36. Yes-most socially maladjusted children ten to be at-risk students.

37. Why would I exclude these students. They are at-risk in social situations, not just academic. This is a dumb question.

38. Yes.

39. Yes.
Question 1:

Do your general expectations in the classroom include social skills competency for students’ success, which include behavioral skills, interpersonal skills, etc.? Why? Or Why not?

*High School Teachers:*

1. Yes. A student must be able to socially adapt to each class setting to achieve success.

2. Yes-too much time is spent dealing w/students who have no social skills.

3. I expect all of my students to show respect toward me as their teacher and each other. My students work very close to each other and I not have time to deal with constant discipline issues. I do not expect my students to come to me w/interpersonal skills but I do encourage them daily. I allow my students to journal daily so that what I have to teach has meaning.

4. I view social skills as necessary for school success. Students have to be able to function socially with other people, especially other students to perform well in a learning environment. If students cannot function due to social problems, learning does not occur at its highest level.

5. Absolutely. Performance, social, interpersonal skills are all a part of learning groups and labs.

6. Good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable us to know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations. The extent to which children and adolescents possess good social skills can influence their academic performance, behavior, social and family relationships, and involvement in extracurricular activities.

7. Yes. A student needs to know how to function as a person amid people to succeed at school.

8. Ideally, yes. Practically, not necessarily. Manners get ignored and overshadowed by subject area.

9. The social skills I see are those such as fighting is great entertainment, drug selling is a career choice, Peer pressure is acting fool because your friends act a fool-school is a place you hangout with your friends. Cell phones are a nightmare and Mp3 players are too.
10. Yes—respect for each other is modeled by teacher and demanded among students w/each other—students interact w/each other in many group activities. Social skills empower teachers with a better relationship among their students.

11. Yes. Students must learn how to interact w/other others.

12. Yes. Social skills are more important than knowledge skill to succeed in most work environments.

13. Yes. All involved in school should know how and when these skills should be the focus. Students without these skills rarely do well in school.

14. Yes. I require polite behavior to others—I work on this every day in every class since so many students lack self-restraint and come to us without social skills. However, some students refuse to practice civil behaviors and must be removed from the classroom so that other may learn.

15. Yes. Students are encouraged to be courteous to others and to demonstrate civility. Teachers must be able to “engage” students in the concepts being discussed. A lack of social skills would be a strong impediment to such engagement.

16. Yes, part of “school” is to socialize the students and get them ready to be productive citizens. At my student’s age, expectations of sharing shouldn’t have to be explicit but shown through everyday actions. Whenever possible, discussions about controversies are held and opinions are voiced. However, No, I do not expect that they leave my class more mature than they came into it.

17. Yes, especially behavioral skills. Students need to act respectfully in order to succeed.

18. Yes. We do a lot of group activities when students have to be able to work with other students in the class. Behavioral skills are also important during this time because students must stay on task and keep an environment that is conducive to learning.

19. Yes—we need to practice good social content. Students need bounds—teachers need bounds also.
20. Yes. I try to not teach just the curriculum but also teach them life skills that they can use in future classes and jobs.

21. Yes. Teaching should involve the mind, body, and spirit. Students will eventually participate in the world so we should prepare them to be active members of society. Etiquette is discussed and expected. Huge part of my class.

22. I expect my students to conduct themselves in a manner that would be appropriate in a business setting. Giving them guidance is an ongoing effort.

23. I do expect and require students to work in small groups and with partners to complete various accessed activities. I require them to show mutual respect and to adhere to guidelines for each assigned activity. Peer evaluations are sometimes used.

24. Absolutely! Students do not know how to interact appropriately w/adult or fellow students. They are extremely rude to teachers, and they do not know the respectful way to treat an adult. These failings contribute to many behavior problems for my students.

25. Students have to have the above skills and more to function properly in the education setting. They also need the above skills and more to be able to support other students in their learning.

26. Yes. Each student is responsible for his/her behavior. Students should be able to function in a classroom with many other students with many other personalities.

27. Absolutely, It is necessary to get along, be polite and respectful of others so that learning is taking place.

28. Good manners and basic social skills such as taking turns are just as important to kids’ success in school as a focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic, a new book suggests students should learn charm-social skills alongside the academic subjects that teachers must pass on to meet the demands of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act.
29. You can have lesson plans, expectations, hopes, prayers and they act like clowns. They could really care less. They have their own set of plans and expectations as in playing ball all day.

30. Yes.

31. Yes.

32. Yes. Everyone in a school should know how to communicate with others in that school. If there is a breakdown in communication the school will not be successful.

33. Yes. Social skills are needed to communicate w/teachers, administrators, parents, and students.

34. I think that social skills are important to a child’s success in school because it allows him to interact with others in a cooperative atmosphere. We realize that cooperative learning is a very successful teaching strategy. Social skills are important even when talking with teachers.

35. Yes-Many of our failing students are very poorly behaved as well. Their constant disruptions hinder every one’s ability to learn. Students with the highest level of social skills (outstanding behavior to all also are the ones who achieve the most academically.
    My well behaved SPED students pass my class.

36. Yes.

37. Yes.
**Question 2:**

Are skills such as assertion and cooperation, responding appropriately to aggression to peers, self-control, and attending to instruction being taught in the classroom? Please explain.

*High School Teachers:*

1. Students are taught to respect the opinions and differences that each of us have. No question is a “dumb question.” We listen to each other. Students are taught that there is more than one way of working a problem but still coming to the same outcome.

2. Yes. I think that listening is a pivotal social skill in the classroom. Students tend to go with what they think you said or intended to say instead of what was actually said.

3. No. Classroom and school rules support these social skills. I don’t see a lot of students in high school who are having problems with this.

4. These skills are being taught in the classroom. We are trying to turn out well-rounded students.

5. Yes. Time management and interpersonal skills. I teach my children how to deal with frustration and anger. I believe in teaching the whole child not just the academic child. This should be done in every classroom. When I see my student upset I spend time talking to them and not just disciplining them.

6. Self control, listening quietly to instructions, refraining from mouthing off to others staying awake, having self discipline to complete assignments coming prepared to class with essential materials. Teachers model and encourage these behaviors, but too many students refuse to cooperate. Sometimes parents support their children’s lack of cooperation and actually encourage belligerence in the classroom.

7. Yes. Students must learn how to listen.

8. Respectful behavior to peers and teachers, ambition to succeed, insight for future. No, not by all.

9. Yes. Getting along with classmates helps develop student goals at succeeding after graduation.
10. Yes. Respecting themselves, fellow students and the teacher are critical to success.

11. Yes. The students are taught the above at every level of school. PARENTS need to take more responsibility in the aforementioned areas.

12. Yes. The ability to sit down and get to work. The ability to stay quiet when there is a thirty second transition during a lesson.

13. There are programs that are available if teachers allow them in the classroom, but the time factor is a BIG deal. Most students don’t receive these services but need them.

14. Yes. Getting along with others and anger management and taking personal responsibility are all skills that should be learned by the completion of high school.

15. Not formally.

16. Yes. Courtesy, respect for others and self discipline. These are the basics for civil society.

17. Yes. Patience-listening quietly and waiting for one’s needs to be met rather than loudly and constantly interrupting instruction and demanding instant gratification of personal wishes. Addressing others with polite language instead of shouting “shut up, Bitch” across the room and in the hall. Keeping one’s hands and feet and other body parts to one’s self instead of pushing and shoving, slapping and hitting, jumping on each other. I continually model appropriate responses and remind my classes of our expectations. The students that refuse to learn appropriate social skills prevent everyone from learning.

18. ? If not it should be. Each student needs to know how to handle situations.

19. Yes. Self control-students should be able to control their social life and other outside factors while at school. Students should also be able to control the volume at which they speak.

20. Yes. Politeness as a by-product.

21. Yes. I have a routine each day so students can come in, begin work, and be able to learn.

22. Yes. Students sit down, start work, pay attention, and lead by example. These skills are necessary for each part of life.
23. Yes. All these are modeled. School is not only a place to teach subject areas, but a place to teach life-long skills.

24. How to sit down in a classroom and get along with other people. These are expected but you have to start at home.

25. Yes. Many projects are small-group or large group and require many social skills in order to be successful.

26. Yes. Self control, work habits, cooperation, consequences, honesty, and responsibility.

27. To teach emotional competence, talk to your child about his/her feelings. Talk about your own. Discuss what kinds of situations make us feel bad and what things make us feel good. When teachers explain emotions and their causes, kids learn how to better regulate their own feelings.

28. Yes. Politeness, self discipline, cooperation, responsibility, manners, patience are all necessary when dealing with people your entire life. I make sure that when any expectations are told to classes that I include proper behavior and response to particular situations.

29. To some degree self control and assertion are being taught in the classroom. At the high school level, this behavior should already be in place. It is the teacher’s job to set boundaries for assertion and aggression.

30. Yes. Respect of others, self confidence, self reliance.

31. Yes-students need to know what is expected of them and teachers need to get control of behavior in the classroom! Follow the rules!

32. No. Organization because it can be used in life and other classes.

33. Not really, but it should.

34. Yes. Team work, respect, action/consequences, constructive feedback, behavior choices with respect to environment, hygiene, dress code, public speaking.

35. Not in a formal way, but most teachers incorporate these qualities/traits into expectations for their students.
36. Yes/no-I do not allow inappropriate aggression and I encourage attendance but I don’t necessarily teach it or harp on it. Yes—we try to model appropriate behavior and use events in texts to prompt class discussions on these.
**Question 3:**

Do you perceive teaching social skill competency to an intervention for at-risk students?

*High School Teachers:*

1. Yes. Many of our school’s problems are due to poor social skills. If they are not taught this at home (like it is expected) then they behave poorly at school and are punished. It is very difficult to reinforce social skill competency with the at-risk students when they are in the home environment. But how do we reinforce this at their homes.

2. Yes. It gives students skills for success.

3. Yes. A significant number of students are “at-risk” due to behavioral issues alone. Poor social skills learned at home keep students from adapting to society.

4. Yes. Social skills enable at-risk students to be able to reach out to others for help and guidance. It also makes others want to help these students.

5. Yes. Many at-risk students I’ve dealt with are “at-risk” because they can’t seem to control their behavior. This effects their learning environment and puts them in motion for failure outside of school as well. They won’t be able to hold down a job w/out good social skills.

6. Yes. Most students are “at-risk” due to behavioral problems, social problems, etc.

7. Yes. For them this is even more important. I would say over 90% of their problems come from inappropriate responses to situations.

8. Certainly. If students are prone to be “at-risk,” social skill competency could be an intervention because social skills and relating to people appropriately in any given situation is key to conflict resolution.

9. It can help if we are more social they are more likely to respect us and enjoy the class and have to stay in but there are so many outside influences that affect at-risk students that I don’t know if my social skills would be enough.

10. Yes. Some students have never been told NO!

11. Some students are not prepared for all aspects of school. If an intervention can be make to help students cope then it is beneficial to all involved.

12. Absolutely—to be successful at any level in life, they must have social skills.
13. This describes the role and importance of education as intervention for at-risk students through participation in performance groups while receiving mentoring.

14. Yes. Students need to pick up these skills that they have not learned otherwise. If some students learn the skills, they can be successful, since sometimes that is all they are missing.

15. Some it may work with. It may take a 2X4 for some. Some may have to drop out and get shot in the leg to wake up. Some it may take prison.

16. Yes.

17. No. Students who want to accept help do. Those that do not continue down a path that often have unfortunate consequences.

18. Yes. It has a positive effect.

19. Yes, if we as educators work with at-risk students mow, then it better prepares them for the future!

20. Yes.-Social skills are necessary for success in the classroom as well as in the work place.

21. Yes. Students in that category tend to be lacking in such skills.

22. Yes. Some students need more direct instruction in social areas. The intervention part will be seen as necessary if aligned with most school’s mission statements.

23. Yes. Poor social skills learned at home keep students from adapting to society.

24. Yes. Sometimes this is a bigger problem for education that lack of intelligence.

25. ?

26. Yes. The lack of social skills results in poor student achievement for everyone in the classroom.

27. Yes, because children need to know how to deal with anger, frustration, disappointment and stress. Social skills are not just needed for academic success but success in life.
28. Yes. They are weak in that area. I view this as the same as sex education. If no parent is teaching it at home, someone must teach them properly.

29. I believe that teaching social skills to at-risk students would prevent a lot of the problems that teachers have on a daily basis with students. Teaching them how to respect themselves and others, how to speak calmly and rationally about things, and how to cooperate with each other will add wonders for the self esteem and the academic improvement for all students.
APPENDIX F

CROSS TABULATION ANALYSES
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