Exploring the Potential Relationship Between the Worth-Teaching

Index Score and Student Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT

In 21st century America, students are coming to school with greater social, emotional, and behavioral needs (Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health, 2000). The education profession identifies many of these children as at-risk of failing or dropping out of school ". . . due to circumstances that jeopardize their ability to complete school" (At-Risk, The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013, p. 1).

The at-risk student's world-view is dichotomous; it is one of mistrust paired with the need to belong (Fisher, 2013). At-risk students experience toxic shame (Bradshaw, 1988). The shame-based person suffering from toxic shame has an adversarial relationship with oneself. Toxic shame says one is flawed and defective as a human being. It is not an emotion but rather a core identity (Bradshaw, 1988).

Codependency comes from loss. At-risk students' relationships and circumstances cause them to experience loss daily. Boss (2003) has termed the effect of the kind of loss that has no closure as ambiguous grief.

The authoritarian approach to discipline since the 1990s, based upon a dualistic theological/philosophical world view, has not met the needs of at-risk students.

The challenge of the 21st century educator is to connect, motivate, and teach students who are angry, attracted to negative socialization, adopt physical, social, and emotional self-destructive risk-taking behaviors, and believe they are damaged, unloved, and possess attitudes devoid of hope for future success.

A Trinitarian world view recognizes that what makes a student valuable is they are more than their minds. They are endowed with a human spirit and therefore are valued at a spiritual level creating the potential for building a relationship of acceptance (Lerner, 2000).

This study utilized a non-experimental correlational research design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A Worth-Teaching Index survey was created by the student researcher. Staff from one urban and one suburban school participated in the survey. An insufficient number of surveys were able to be collected to achieve a strong data set.

The SPSS program was used to run the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test. With an "N" of 105, the Student Final Grade mean score was 87.26 with the standard deviation of 10.478. The minimum score was 40 and the maximum score was 100. The mean score for the Worth-Teaching Index final score was 50.89 with a standard deviation of 7.040. The minimum score was 36 and the maximum score was 60. More detailed descriptive statistical data regarding each individual subscale and each statement within each subscale is provided in chapter IV.

There is a statistically significant, negative correlation between the Worth-Teaching Index score and the Student Final Grade score. Two of the four subscale scores were also negatively, statistically significant: Historical Development of Teacher Perspective and Psycho/social Influences. The remaining two subscale, Professional Cultural Conditions and Spiritual Influences were not statistically, significantly correlated to Student Final Grade.

Applying regression analysis through SPSS the Model Summary did not identify any subscale grouping that had a statistically significant effect on Student Final Grade.

However, continuing to use SPSS and applying the ANOVA analysis, it was discovered that all of the models were statistically significant and validated the R-Square values of each model.

Looking at the Coefficient chart (Table 4.23), the only model with any subscale that was statistically significant was model three: TOTAL, HDT, PCCT. Out of this model HDT was not significant, leaving only TOTAL and PCCT. The PCCT subscale did not correlate with Student Final Grade (Table 4.3).

The conclusion that can be reached is that only the Worth-Teaching Index Survey total score has a statistically significant level of relationship with the student's Final Grade score and a statistically significant level of reliability (regression analysis).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teachers and students enter the classroom as individuals. The assumption is for one to teach and the other to learn. Many students face countless circumstances and situations that negatively impact them emotionally, socially, academically, and economically which impedes their progress. These students have been identified as being At-Risk students. The following information identifies, in part, the nature and frequency of two of the risk factors that engender some of these challenges.

Background

The psycho/social/emotional issues that at- risk students bring into a school and their classrooms also have a impact of teacher effectiveness. One of the major causes for teacher burnout is constant and/or extreme student conflict (Chang, 2009). The historical pedagogical response to this conflict has been for schools to adopt and enforce a zero-tolerance policy, the goal of which was school safety and to create a healthy learning environment (DeRidder, 1991). Research has shown that this authoritarian approach was not successful at creating a safe or a healthy learning environment (Evenson, 2009; Monahan, Vanderhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014; Skiba, 2008). This study proposes that zero-tolerance failed because it did not consider extenuating circumstances and student emotional needs in the application of the school discipline policies (Monahan et al., 2014; Ziba, R., 2014).

The further assumption of this study is that the reason for the adoption and insensitive application of the humanistic, authoritarian zero-tolerance policy is that education philosophy has operated from a world view of the human being as a body and

soul being. In other words, the child is at best thought of in terms of their emotional/ intellectual state. The tendency is to value students on what they can do or how well they behave (Lerner, 2000). Whereas, the holistic, Trinitarian framework recognizes that, "spiritual functioning has equal relevance to physical, mental, and emotional functioning; the interdependence between spirt, soul, and body" (Westgate, 1996, p. 26).

The final assumption of this study is that by adopting an authoritative approach, based upon a theological/philosophical world-view of the human being comprised of body, soul, and spirit, students are valued because they are an "embodiment of Spirit" (Lerner, 2002. p. 7); that "which cannot be quantified or subjected to repeated observation – the realm of ultimate freedom" (Lerner, 2000, p. 24) and, being so valued, held accountable with understanding, to both appropriate social interactions and high academic expectations (Blomberg, 2015; Gregory, 2010; Lerner, 2000).

Background - Economic

Students who live in poverty have significant barriers to their early development which may affect them throughout their life (Tran, Luchters, & Fisher, 2017). The National Center for Children in Poverty reports, in 2015, 39 percent of children ages 12 through 17 live in poverty (*Basic Facts About Children in Poverty*, 2018). The impact of poverty on children is significant and is something to consider in our approach to education.

Background – Family

Family is the glue that holds society together. The familial understandings, relationships, and commitments that are taught and developed in family either contributes or diminishes the ecology of society (Bubolz, 2001).

Research has long shown that there are negative outcomes for students whose

parents have divorced (Amato, 2005). Even divorce between grandparents has proven

associated with a variety of problematic outcomes (Amato & Cheadle, 2005). About 40%

to 50% of first-time marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate for subsequent marriages

is even higher (Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2000). According to the 2010 Census Briefs

the following statistics indicate the structure of the family across our nation: out of

116,516,212 households in the United States, 54, 493,232 households are comprised of

just husband and wife; 12,900,103 households are comprised of with just wife; and

4,394,012 households with just husband. The traditional family unit has changed and

significantly affects our children.

Background - Societal/Cultural/Psychological

The instability of today's society is a significant factor affecting the ability of

teachers and administrators to create a school and classroom culture that is accepting of

all students. Zins and Elias (2006) pointed out:

> With today's technology students are easily aware of the turmoil and
> confusion that defines the United States today. A threat of preemptive war,
> worldwide terrorism, civil liberties unrest, personal eroded by national
> security pressures, school shootings, abortion, a definition of marriage,
> affirmative action and immigration just to mention a few
> social/cultural/political issues. (p. 2)

All teachers and students share psychological and social pressures that shape their

existence. Some students are personally impacted by the above pressures on an

experiential level, not just on a psychological and social level. These students have been

identified as students *at-risk* of dropping out of school and/or becoming involved with the

legal system (Evenson, Justine, Pelischek, & Schultz, 2009).

Students who are identified as at-risk and are living within these and other
societal conditions often experience feelings of shame and grief and develop a
codependent personality (Bradshaw, 1988; Boss & Carnes, 2012). Students who develop
a codependent personality have a strong tendency to focus on the perceived expectations
of others to the neglect of their own feelings or sense of self (Fisher, 1991).
Codependency is further defined by Laign (1989), "as a pattern of compulsive behaviors
that is motivated by a dependence on another's approval and is designed to find a sense
of safety, identity, and self-worth" (pp. 1-3). A brief list of other symptoms of
codependent behavior may include a loss of self-esteem, dysfunctional communications,
and several anti-social and personally negative attitudes and feelings (Lancer & Read,
2016; Lynda, 1991; Springer, Britt, & Schlenker, 1998).

Most descriptors of codependency are listed as observable behaviors. This study
was concerned with two introspective, self-assessed, and psychological perspectives of
one's self – shame and grief. The at-risk student who experiences lack of acceptance
from home and community internalizes the idea that they cannot measure up. John
Bradshaw linked codependency and internalized shame (Bradshaw, 1988). He introduced
codependency by pointing out that the codependent has no inner life. They are spiritually
bankrupt. Happiness, good feeling, and self-validation come from the outside (Bradshaw,
1988). Bradshaw identified an internalized sense of shame as toxic. Codependent persons
believe they are flawed, innately defective, and consequently, a mistake! Their belief
system is circular in that the codependent acts out internalized shame then feels shame
about his/her actions. Toxic shame presupposes a view of self as flawed and defective. It
is not an emotion but a core identity (Bradshaw, 1988; Grannon, 2017).

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Many at-risk students live daily with small and large losses from failing grades to significant personal physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. The typical method of handling loss is to grieve, find closure, and move on (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Okun, 2011). The research on grief and loss has evolved beyond that scenario. Boss and Carnes (2012) have identified a facet of grief that they call *ambiguous grief*. The two scenarios when this condition exists are "a unique kind of loss when a loved one disappears in body or mind" (p. 456). Boss and Carnes (2012) cited incidences when family members or loved ones disappear or are kidnapped, missing in action, and the like (not when a loved one's reason for absence is known, namely, death). The other condition sponsoring ambiguous grief is when these persons are physically present but not psychologically available. An example of this type is Alzheimer's disease, where the person is present but cannot relate or interact in a cohesive way. With ambiguous grief, the concept of grief and the process is inherently complicated. Closure is impossible and can be described as: "mystery persists with ambiguous loss, . . . people desperately search for meaning in the unrelenting confusion; the mind tries to make sense of the nonsensical" (Boss & Carnes, 2012, p. 456). Although there is no research on at-risk students experiencing ambiguous grief due to their persistently negative environment and circumstances, this study is suggesting that their condition is very similar and that their grief is complicated, with no immediate solution available.

Background - Student Behavioral Response

Students, whose significant relationships are unsupportive and who are placed in challenging environment, are put in a state of despair where feelings of hopelessness

propagate. Because of the feelings of abandonment and neglect, they display a lack of respect for authority or attitudes of pure rebellion (Evenson et al., 2009).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) illustrates the at-risk students' response to the dysfunction in our society. In 2010, of student ages 16 to 24, 28.1% of the discipline referrals were racially motivated. Bullying accounted for 23.1%. There were 16.4% related to gang incidents. Disrespect of teacher and others totaled 8.5%, with 4.8% for verbal abuse, 3.2% for sexual harassment, and 2.5% were for widespread classroom disorder. In the United States, 352,900,000 teachers were threatened and 209,800,000 teachers were physically attacked (NCES, 2013, pp. 83-86).

Looking forward to the 2015-16 school year, statistics clearly identify the existence, depth, and breadth of the need for school safety in order to support learning (NCES, 2018):

- 508,500 serious crimes without a weapon were reported out of 57,600 reporting schools.

- 28,000 serious crimes with a weapon were reported out of 12,500 reporting schools.

- 166,00 incidents of theft were reported out of 32,400 reporting schools.

- 350,400 other incidents were reported out of 48,900 reporting schools. ("other incidents" include possession of a firearm or explosive device; possession of a knife or sharp object; distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol; vandalism; and inappropriate distribution, possession, or use of prescription drug).

- 17.5 students out of 1,000 committed a severe act of violence against fellow students and their teachers on school property (NCES, 2018, p. 163).

Aggression is rampant is schools. There are increasing incidences of violent behaviors perpetrated by students.

Background - School Safety

A safe environment is critical for learning (Gonzales, 2002; Lerner, 2000; Skiba, 2014). For the past 40 years, safety was the first priority in establishing the school culture (Skiba, 2008). In an effort to make the school environment safe and conducive to learning, a zero-tolerance policy was devised for the purpose of removing students from schools who caused trouble (DeRidder, 1991). Specifically, the zero-tolerance policies are defined as school or district-wide policies that stipulate punishments which are specific, consistent, and harsh regardless of the circumstances, reasons for the behavior, or student's history (Evenson et al., 2009). However, zero-tolerance has most often resulted in indiscriminate use of suspension and expulsion and has not been proven effective in creating a healthy school culture (Evenson et al., 2009) but often has led to cultural bias (Gonzales, 2002), and push outs (DeRidder, 1990; Monahan et al., 2014).

The term *push-out* applies to at-risk students who get signals from schools that they are neither worthy nor able to graduate and are frequently encouraged to leave (DeRidder, 1990). The resultant feelings and beliefs of students who did not meet the traditional schooling cultural and academic standards was low self-esteem, powerlessness, helplessness, resentment, suspicion, withdrawal, and the feeling of being stigmatized by administration, teachers, and parents (Seiler, 2009).

Research corroborated two extremely negative, unintended effects of dropping out of school: increased risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system (Monahan et al., 2014; Whitaker, 2018); and, emotional trauma of depression leading to antisocial behavior and suicidal ideation (Sundiur & Farmer, 2008). It is sad to note that the educational profession was not concerned about the negative emotional self-assessment students experienced. Paradoxically, education claimed safety for the sake of learning was the reason for zero-tolerance to the detriment of many students. At the same time, schools also adopted standardized testing. Standardized tests, created by the state departments of education analyzed by subject and grade level, resulted in districts and buildings being graded. Furthermore, every child in select grades ultimately had to pass various tests if graduation was to be realized. The focus became the student as performer not viewing the student as a person.

Education pedagogy emphasizes the left brain, intellectual, inductive/deductive way of learning and knowing stemming from the left brain, body/soul philosophical influences. This unbalanced way of knowing actually hinders student learning (Vrugtman, 2009). Emanating from a dualistic world view which denies the existence of the human spirit, the apparent philosophical outcome leads to an authoritarian approach in developing the building level culture. Authoritarian culture values performance and safety vs. understanding and accountability (Baurmind, 2012).

Safety is not the only catalyst for creating a learning environment. Students who are at-risk are given to rebellion and self-destruction. The power and control, reactionary responses of zero-tolerance policies confirm the at-risk students believe that they are

isolated and not valued. Consequently, they are poorly motivated to choose to learn (Skiba, 2008).

A Trinitarian world view recognizes that man is three parts: spirit, soul, and body (Nee, 1986); that spirit is the underlying entity which sustains them (Kumari 2013). What makes a student valuable is they are more than their minds (Swartz, 2012). They are endowed with a human spirit and therefore, are valued at a spiritual level (Srivastava, 2014). For this reason, the author proposes the term *spiritual worth* as a more accurate term expressing the core of one's value versus the term self-worth. Speaking to a student's spiritual worth increases the potential for building a relationship of acceptance, belonging, and purpose (Lerner, 2000). Trinitarian culture tempers policy and procedure with understanding and accountability. Consequently, the authoritative Trinitarian approach increases the opportunity to build relationships and provide a culture of safety.

Problem Statement

Zero-tolerance policies evolved into an authoritarian approach to school discipline and culture (Skiba, 2008). An authoritarian approach administers the school policies without considering the extenuating circumstances and student's relevant emotional needs. The purpose was to make schools safe and to establish a healthy learning environment. However, the zero-tolerance approach has failed to make schools safe or create a healthy learning environment in many districts (Evenson et al., 2009; Monahan et al., 2014; Skiba, 2008). Blum and Libbey (2004) found that "many students lack social-emotional competencies and become less connected to school as they progress from elementary to middle to high school, and this lack of connection negatively affects their academic performance, behavior, and health" (p. 405).

Research has documented the value of adopting an authoritative pedagogy in developing positive school climate (Gregory et al., 2010). The authoritative approach respectfully confronts inappropriate student behavior taking into account the understanding of the students' emotional needs and social circumstances. A concerted effort is made to interact with genuine warmth, respect, and the valuing of each student and their autonomy. When students are codependent, confrontational, and ill motivated, the question becomes how do you make authoritative pedagogy work? The theory chosen and the hypothesis put forth in this study is that speaking to the spiritual worth of a student is potentially a significant way to connect with all students, including at-risk students. Therefore, this study sought to explore the capacity of teachers to build positive relationships by speaking to the spiritual-worth of students.

Purpose of the Study

The authoritarian approach of zero-tolerance is a dualistic mind/body philosophical approach influenced by elementalism, which is the idea that mind and body are independent of each other, and humanistic reasoning that sees that man is of prime importance rather than God (Westgate, 1996). Research regarding authoritarian school culture and zero-tolerance policies focuses on safety over relationships, understanding, and learning as opposed to the authoritative school culture that focuses on discipline through positive, supportive school climate as the path to safety and learning (Baumrind 2012; Jennings, 2009). Within this framework, the psycho/social effects of codependency (Beattie, 1987 & 1989; Bradshaw, 1988; Cermak, 1985; Laing, 1989; Whitfield, 1987), ambiguous grief (Boss & Carnes, 2012), and toxic shame (Bradshaw, 1988; Whitfield, 1987) on the values, beliefs, self-concepts of students, teachers, and administrators are

defined. The disparity between the goals of students and teachers/administrators caused by these psycho/social conditional life experiences hinders safe school culture and the teaching/learning relationships.

The results often are students pushed out of the system. Push out applies to at-risk students who often have failing grades and who are regularly suspended or expelled from school and feel they are not worthy or able to graduate (Bock et al., 1998; DeRidder, 1991). Instead students knowing they are valued, accepted, belong, and have purpose takes place in schools with authoritative school culture (Fisher, 2013; Lerner, 2000). Teacher burnout is also greater in a school that adopts an authoritarian approach (Blaze, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Teacher burnout is defined as the psychological stress caused by conflict between teacher-student, teacher-administration, or teacher-environment that the teacher perceives as overbearing and believed to be beyond her/his resources and possibly endangering her/his well-being (McKensie, 2009). The most frequent cause for teacher burnout is disruptive behavior (Chang, 2009).

The coercive, authoritarian approach fails to develop relationships with many students. According to the research, students are engaged in learning when a teacher relates well with them, has fair and consistent classroom procedures, and provides for student autonomy (Roorda, 2017). Conversely, an authoritative Trinitarian (spirit, soul, and body) philosophic approach provides an understanding, restorative, and outcome-based climate that fosters relationships, holds students accountable, and creates a safe learning environment (Baumrind & May 2012; Gregory et al., 2010).

The task is to improve teacher-student relations and increase student engagement for the sake of increasing academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to

attempt to determine the capacity of teachers to positively relate to students by comparing the final grades of teachers' students to the final scores of the Worth-Teaching Index four constructs: Historical Development of Teacher Perspective, a psycho/social, life experience approach to exploring the development of teacher worldview; Professional Cultural Conditions, exploring teacher tenacity or her/his need for tenacity and the level of healthy emotional acceptance of and within school culture; Psycho/social Influences, exploring the level of teacher understanding regarding building relationships with her/his students; Spiritual Influences, exploring the intuitive sense of a students' spiritual worth; and the Worth-Teaching Index score.

Conceptual Framework

School Climate

School climate is the heart and soul of a school (Freiberg & Stein, 1999). It is the feeling of the building that attracts or rejects principals, teachers, students, and parents to remain connected with the school (Cobb, 2014). In a recent cross-sectional and longitudinal study of seventh grade students in California which explored the relationship between school climate and academic performance across schools and over time (2004 – 2010), the study found that "schools with a more positive school climate have higher average test scores than do schools with a less positive school climate" (Voight & Hanson, 2017, p. 2).

School climate and higher test scores have a direct association. Therefore, the challenge is how to create a positive school climate. One approach is a schoolwide prevention approach that supports student social and emotional learning (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). In an attempt to meet this challenge, "a summary of student

social and emotional learning program impacts found that such programs and practices have similar beneficial impacts on social behavior and academic performance, suggesting that both outcomes are linked" (Voight & Hanson, 2017, p. 3).

However, the association between school climate and academic performance "vary greatly from school to school" (Voight & Hanson, 2017, p. 3). In one school there appeared to be a relationship between school climate and academic performance. In another school there did not appear to be a longitudinal association. In school number two, the school climate was stable over time but there were increases in test scores (Voight & Hanson, 2017).

Based on this research, this study was proposing that developing an authoritative culture based upon a Trinitarian theology/philosophy may be the paradigm shift necessary to create a stable culture over time. The authoritarian humanistic approach tends to develop prevention or social/emotional learning programs that are effective as long as they can be maintained.

The Trinitarian theological/philosophical theory proposes a healthy school culture that recognizes the whole person and thereby intrinsically values every student involved within that cultural community. The recognition and embracing of the spiritual worth of every student is a step beyond social/emotional learning programs or prevention programming, which produces healthy outcomes so long as the theory or program is maintained. This study proposed that recognizing the whole student by valuing each student and helping each student find their personal sense of purpose creates a school culture of belonging. Teachers who develop their capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a child will innately utilize the strategies of prevention and social/emotional learning

programs but will be focused on the teacher/student relationships within the classroom versus on the procedures of a program.

Student Engagement

Research has identified student engagement as a mediating role between teacher-student relationships and academic achievement (Roorda, 2017). Although research has clearly documented the positive relationship between teacher-student relationships and student academic achievement, research has also found that teacher empathy and warmth were stronger predictors of student engagement than teacher instructional behaviors such as encouragement of learning and higher order thinking (Cornelius-White, 2007).

More specifically, when teacher-student relationships are positive, the mediating role of student engagement, along with students' satisfaction with school, were partial but positive factors on student academic achievement (Wooley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009). Brun (2005) explored negative teacher-student relationships and reported a direct negative link between teacher-student role strain and academic achievement.

<center>**Research Design**</center>

A quantitative survey research design was utilized. It utilized data from the Worth-Teaching Index survey, which was created and designed from a review of literature on the topic. The survey is comprised of four subscales: Historical Development, Professional/Cultural Conditions, Psycho/Social Conditions, and Spiritual Influences. Each construct asked teachers to respond to three questions from their own past and present experiences. The responses to each question were indicated by a 5-point Likert scale response. The total score of each set of questions equals the individual

subscale score, and the sum of all four subscales scores equals the Worth-Teaching Survey score of each teacher. SurveyMonkey was used to administer the survey.

A standard test of internal consistency, the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) was used to check whether the items were consistent. The Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0 – 1.0. The WTI should be at least 0.07 or higher. However, 0.60 to 0.70 is acceptable. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was used to determine the relationship between the WTI score and the student grades by teacher.

Research Questions

Given the Worth Teaching Index score is an indication of the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student, and that the level of which that capacity is utilized by the teacher may or may not have an effect on student academic achievement. Thus, the research questions were used to investigate the linear dependence between a teacher's Worth-Teaching Index scores, and her/his students' academic achievement.

The research questions for the study were:

1. Is there a relationship between student's final grade and the teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score?
2. Is there a relationship between student's final grades and the teacher's Worth-Teaching Index subscale scores: Historical Development, Professional Cultural Conditions, Psycho-Social Condition, and Spiritual Influences?

Procedures

A quantitative survey research design was chosen. It utilized data from the Worth-Teaching Index survey that was created and designed from a thorough review of the

literature. The survey is comprised of four subscales: Historical Development, Professional/Cultural Conditions, Psycho/Social Conditions, and Spiritual Influences. Each construct asks teachers to respond to three questions from their own past and present experiences. The responses to each question are indicated by a 5-point Likert scale response. The total score of each set of questions equals the individual subscale score, and the sum of all four subscales scores equals the Worth-Teaching Survey score of each teacher.

Teachers who voluntarily chose to participate in the survey did so by clicking on the link provided in the invitational email that opened the Worth-Teaching Index survey.

Upon completion of the Worth-Teaching Index survey, student grade data were collected. An internet-based software program, Ren-Web, was used to collect the student grade data in the two schools participating in the study. A Dashboard program was created and utilized to digitally create a report of all student grades from Ren-Web using Teacher ID number. Only total number of As, Bs, Cs etc. were recorded for each teacher. No student names were used in the data collection. Once the data for both Worth-Teaching Index survey and student grades by teacher ID number were recorded on a composite spreadsheet, the teacher ID numbers were digitally altered to a new random teacher ID number. Consequently, it was not possible to identify either a specific teacher or a specific student. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation instrument was used to aid in establishing the correlation between the WTI scores and the student grade data.

Significance of the Study

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education (2009-2015), defended the need for national Common Core Standards. He stated that prior to No Child Left Behind, out of

thousands of schools across the nation, only 10% of students were operating at grade level in reading and math (Duncan, 2013). As well, out of a hundred low-income students only 29 would attend college; and, of those only nine could expect to graduate (Duncan, 2013). The rationale for academic accountability is obvious. National Common Core Standards are a natural response to the academic problem. In an effort to guarantee that the school culture was safe and conducive for learning, a zero-tolerance policy approach has been adopted. On both counts of safety and learning, the result of the past 40 years of zero-tolerance school pedagogy has been more than disappointing (Skiba, 2008).

Regarding academics, since the 1970s to the present, there have been short-term positive effects on underserved students from the fourth grade to the eighth grades. There have not been positive long-term effects for students nearing the end of the eighth grade through high school (McClusky, 2015). According to this year's Brown Center Report on American Education:

> 4th and 8th grade students in states that adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) outperformed their peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress between 2009 and 2013. But between 2013 and 2015, students in non-adoption states made larger gains than those in common-core states. (Heitin, 2018, p. 6)

It is significant that the states that adopted the CCSS immediately outperformed those that did not from 2009 to 2013. But from 2013 to 2015 states that did not adopt CCSS outperformed those who did. One assumption that can be made from these data is that during the years of 2009 to 2013 states that adopted CCSS early on benefited from a greater emphasis upon content. However, the pressures of federal, state, and local accountability changed education pedagogy from student-centered to content-centered.

While those who did not adopt CCSS immediately did not have those external pressures and possibly remained more student-centered.

There is no research on the effects of CCSS on teacher-student relationships. There is significant research on the effects of CCSS on teachers' stress levels. There is also significant research on teacher stress on student academic achievement and student behavior. "When teachers are highly stressed, children show lower levels of both social adjustment and academic performance" (Hoglund, Klingle, & Hosan, 2015, p. 337).

In today's culture students are coming to school with greater social, emotional and behavioral needs (Anderson & Cardoza, 2016). Longitudinal research has shown that students with these identified needs are significantly hindered in their ability to learn and solve problems in a non-violent manner (Elias, 1997; Zins, 2004). The maladjusted family, school, and community interactions, and conditions that shape individual student values and behaviors have become identified as risk factors that negatively affect the social and emotional competencies necessary for students to be successful in the school culture (Elias, 1997; Zins, 2004).

Regarding safety, Kevin Jennings, former assistant deputy secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, takes the needed attributes of school culture a step further. Safety is only part; students need to feel both valued and that they belong. They need to have meaning and purpose in their lives (Department of Education, 2009). Michael Lerner (2000) stated that the social and emotional competence to successfully interact with teachers and peers, to form meaningful relationships, depends largely upon the students' perception of being loved, accepted, and valued. "Children are emotionally attuned to be on the lookout for caring, or a lack thereof, and they seek out and thrive in

places where it is present. The more emotionally troubled the student, the more attuned he or she is to caring in the school environment" (Elias, 1997, p. 6).

This study suggested an alternate theological/philosophical approach of interpreting humanity as a holistic being – spirit, soul, and body. It recognizes the human being as tri-part which includes spirit. Recognizing spirit with its component functions of conscience, intuition, and creativity (Harvey, 1999; Lerner, 2000; Nee, 1968) is synonymous to recognizing a student's self worth (Srivastava, 2014). Students are attuned to who does and who does not value them at the spiritual-worth level (Roorda et al., 2017). The psychosocial response to being valued is a student's global self-esteem. Global self-esteem is a positive or negative view one has of one's self (Owens, 1994). For example, students who see taking a test as a threat and a challenge develop their sense of self-esteem with a performance goal approach. They see themselves with either negative or positive self-esteem, based upon passing the test or passing the test with a desired grade. Other students see test taking as mastery task goal. Passing or failing a test is an opportunity to persist and learn. The mastery goals approach buffers self-esteem against the threat of failure (Shimizu, Niija, & Shigemasu, 2016).

Owens (1994) used the terms *self-esteem* and *self-worth* interchangeably. "The positive component of self-esteem is called self-worth and includes not only self-assured in one's capabilities, but also the degree one believes in one's moral worth and value" (p. 393). Crocker et al. (2006) recognized self-esteem differently. It is not a factor effected by self-worth. Self-esteem is positive when a student has experienced success, and poor self-esteem is when a student experiences failure or loss. Self-worth is not a factor in the state of one's self-esteem.

Part of the potential value and rationale for this study stems from the notion that research does not recognize clearly a definitional difference between self-esteem and self-worth. Note that according to Owens, self-worth is a component of self-esteem. It is the proposal of this work that the cyclical interpretation of these two concepts is due to the dominate body-soul theoretical/philosophy that does not recognize the human spirit.

Note that self-esteem is understood from an approach modality. One approach is to see life from a performance goal-oriented perspective which has the potential for one to fail, creating a sense of low self-esteem. The other approach is a mastery goal approach which accepts failure as a part of accomplishment, creating a sense of higher self-esteem. Yet, in the case of mastery approach and positive self-esteem, the term self-esteem becomes self-worth. Owens described then, self-worth as "the degree one believes in one's moral worth and value" (Owens, 1994, p. 393). The latter portion of his definition of self-esteem no longer is relevant to either performance or mastery goal approaches. However, it is still self-esteem by another name! In this case, the body-soul, humanitarian philosophy is limiting, since it fails to recognize self-worth as an entity unto itself.

This study proposed the potential value of recognizing the Trinitarian view of humanity. Recognizing that one is in essence spirit (Murrell, 1999; Srivastava, 2014). It is the breath of life (Genesis 2:7) that cannot be added to or diminished. since it is who we are expressed through the body and soul (Lerner, 2000). Therefore, "From the stand point of spirit, what's valuable about you is not your morality or personal sense of value; but that you already are an embodiment of Spirit and you already deserve to be loved, cared for, and respected" (Lerner, 2000, p. 24). Thus, this study attempted to identify the

capacity of teachers to approach their students with the pedagogy of teaching and connecting with students on a spiritual-worth level and to explore the potential relationship with the academic success of their students as measured by their final grades.

Assumptions

The Worth Teaching Index is a 12-question survey divided into four constructs. Because of the size of the survey and the potential relevance of each question both to the construct it is assigned to and to the total score of the Worth Teaching Index, the following two assumptions are critical in determining if there is any correlation to the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student (WTI score) and the student's final grades.

1. It is assumed that teachers will take enough time to reflect upon the meaning of the question before answering.

2. It is assumed that teachers will answer honestly.

In view of these assumptions, the student researcher has verified in an invitational letter and in the Intent to Inform Protocol that all participants were volunteers with no repercussions for choosing not to participate. In both documents, they were also assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, the survey was made available only online and taken on their own devices at a time and place of their choosing.

Limitations

Only staff from two schools were given the opportunity to volunteer to take the Worth Teaching Index survey. This was not a random sampling. Consequently, the findings of this study cannot be generally applied to a larger population making the

Worth Teaching Index survey available to a broader population would enhance its validity.

Since only student grades are compared to the Worth-Teaching Index survey scores indicating the validity of the study, only one outcome can be measured and that is academic achievement. However, behavior data were not available in a consistent format to allow a comparison between WTI survey scores and the number of office referrals by teacher.

Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to suggest a global change in approach to education theology/philosophy. Traditionally, education theology/philosophy has understood the human being as a humanistic (body-soul) creation and not recognizing the human spirit in education (Lerner, 2000). The suggested change in approach to education is a Trinitarian theological/philosophical view that includes the human spirit (Harvey, 1999; Lerner, 2000; Nee, 1968). Such an endeavor gives opportunity for the student researcher to view reality subjectively, objectively, or both (Simon, 2011).

Although of the breadth of this study has the potential to elicit several areas of inquiry, only one objective is chosen to fulfill the purpose of this thesis; that is to determine the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of a student as indicated by the results of the Worth-Teaching Index survey. The hypothesis is that the higher the Worth Teaching Index survey score, the greater the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of a student and the greater their students' academic achievement will be. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient was run to discover the linear

dependence between the Worth-Teaching Index scores, and student final grades by teacher.

Definitions and Operational Terms

Ambiguous grief – The emotional state of grief that has no closure. It occurs when one or more family members or loved ones disappear, are kidnapped, missing in action, and the like. This is in contrast to when the reason for family members' absence is known, namely death (Boss, 2012).

At-Risk – Students who experience unhealthy family, school, and community interactions and conditions that shape their values and behaviors (Hawkins et al., 1992).

Authoritarian – Is the imposition of severe policy sanctions for even minor violations of school rules, regardless of circumstances or student intentions (Gregory et al., 2010).

Authoritative – Is the balance between firm enforcement of school rules and in a culture of communicating warmth and well-being for staff and students (Gregory et al., 2010).

Belonging – Is an intuitive knowing that one is valued, needed, and accepted within the group. It is an individual's experience of feeling (1) valued, (2) needed, and (3) accepted by a social system (Hagerty et al., 1992).

Burn Out – Is defined as "an erosion of engagement that what started out as important, meaningful, and challenging work, becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless" (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 416).

Codependency – Is a dysfunctional state of being that is experienced when a person has, "let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior" (Beattie, 1987, p. 31).

Communion - Communion is the fellowship of feelings that emanate from a community of relationships. (Soderstrom et al., 2006). Community and communion come from a derived form of the verb communis, meaning ''fellowship or community of relations or feelings'' (The Dictionary of Old English, p. 600).

Conscience - The function of the spirit that affirms when we are right or wrong with our-selves, relationships, and environment (Nee, 1968).

Intuition - Is a function of the intuitional ability of the human spirit to know what cannot be known intellectually. It is this ability that also allows us to know who we are in and of ourselves and who we are in relation with others (Harvey, 1999).

Protective Factors - The Protective Factors are prevention conditions and strategies that work to ameliorate the risk factors and prevent the early symptoms or behaviors from becoming intensified to the point of diagnosis (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 1994 & 2009)

Push-out - Students who drop out of school because their experiences with education convince them they are not worthy or able to graduate and neither are they encouraged to remain in the system, due largely to the strict application of the zero-tolerance policy (DeRidder, 1991).

Risk Factors – Family, school, and community interactions and conditions that shape the individual student values and behaviors. Originally the term used to identify precursors of alcohol and other drug abuse behaviors (Hawkins et al., 1992). Many of

these factors negatively affect the social and emotional competencies necessary for students to be successful in the school culture. (Elias, 1997; Zins, 2004).

Self-esteem - a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self. (Owens, 1994, p. 393)

Self-worth – a spiritual dimension of the individual that intuitively increases the student's internal motivation to choose healthy versus negative risk behaviors (Ormond, 2012). "From the stand point of spirit, what's valuable about you is that you already are an embodiment of Spirit and you already deserve to be loved, cared for, and respected" (Lerner, 2000, p. 24).

Socializing agent - Teachers and administrators are socializing agents (Pellerin, 2005). The interrelated, interdependent relationships of teachers and administrators that establish the school culture in regard to school discipline (Gregory et.al., 2010).

Spirit – The breath of God (Nee, Vol I. p. 23). "spirit (is) the forms of organization and communication of all open systems of matter and life" (Moltman, 1985, p. 263). "Man is essentially a spirit. Spirit in man is the central reality. It is not the physical body or vital organism, the mind or the will, but something which underlies them all and sustains them" (Kumari, 2013, p. 109).

Spiritual bankruptcy – Is the dehumanizing demand for a false self to cover and hide the authentic self. The psychological/emotional effects of toxic shame (Bradshaw, 1988).

Spiritual worth – The integration of the concepts of self-worth and spirit as being the essence of our value as a member of humanity and insuring our equal right to belonging (Lerner, 2000).

Toxic Shame – Is the psychological/emotional state of an internalized sense of shame brought on by extreme codependency (Bradshaw,1988).

Zero-tolerance – is the administrative philosophy that enforces school/district-wide policies and procedures in a strict, blind-justice, pre-established consequence for each specific offense (Bear, Cavalier, & Manning, 2002; Cohn & Canter, 2004).

Summary

Many students experience the trauma of negative risk factors in either the family, school, and/or community. The social, emotional, and academic outcomes of these experiences often mean that these students cannot be successful socially or academically within the dominate, present day school culture (Elias, 1997; Zins, 2004). Research has identified protective factors that have the potential to ameliorate the negative effects of these risk factors (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. 2009). However, in spite of the research, schools have chosen to ignore the proven strategies that the protective factors identified. For the past 40 years, education's response to the students coming to school from these cultural conditions was one of zero-tolerance. The theological/philosophical underpinning of this national pedagogy is an authoritarian, body-soul world-view. Safety and performance were thought to be sufficient to create a healthy learning environment. However, zero-tolerance policies led to discipline devoid of understanding and a strict administering of school policy to the degree of excessive suspensions and expulsions, often creating a push-out mentality. Safety and performance were the goal often preventing the opportunity to provide guidance and build relationships with students.

Research is beginning to find that a more authoritative pedagogy is more effective to providing both safety and a healthy learning environment. Authoritative pedagogy confronts inappropriate behavior with understanding, creates a culture of belonging, and recognizes student autonomy. Administrators and teachers are socializing agents (Gregory et al., 2010); that is, the quality of acceptance, interrelatedness, and interdependent relationships they maintain establishes the school culture, especially in the area of school discipline (Soderstrom et al., 2006). When the socializing agents operationalize a Trinitarian school pedagogy of authoritative culture creating a community of accountability, acceptance, and understanding, a spirit of communion can be created. Communion is defined by the Dictionary of Old English as, a fellowship of feeling that emanate from a community of relationships. In general, communion is an expression of belonging (Soderstrom et al., 2006).

This study proposed that the theological/philosophical underpinning of authoritative pedagogy is the Trinitarian, spirit, soul, and body world-view. It is suggested in this study that recognizing the whole student and the effects the environment has on their values, beliefs, and sense of belonging speaks to their spiritual worth (spirit). The ultimate environment for safety and learning is when there is a fellowship of feeling that emanate from a community of positive relationships (Cornelius-White, 2007). This study utilized the Worth Teaching Index survey administered to the staffs of two schools. The scores of each teacher's survey were correlated with that teacher's students' final grades. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient determined if there was a linear correlation between the survey scores and the final grades. The results of the data are intended to begin to answer the question, what is the capacity of a teacher to speak to

the spiritual worth of her/his students and which potential effect that may have on students' academic attainment.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Systemically, the culture of education in the United States is self-destructive. The external pressures regarding student achievement by both state and local Departments of Education's oversite is extremely stringent (Gewertz, 2014). In answer to poor student achievement across the nation, the federal and state law makers created No Child Left Behind and the Common Core State Standards. The authoritarian, top down, standards setting approach was not concerned about the pressures it caused for either students or teachers. The only demand was for student and teachers to dig deep and meet the established cut scores (Gewertz, 2014).

The weight of this external accountability from the federal and state levels is passed down to the local school districts. This authoritarian approach where the task is more important than the person results in internal pressure from within the local district. They in turn, create a culture that diminishes the importance of students' emotional and spiritual needs that, in turn, compromises the teaching and learning relationship to a culture of valuing performance over the worth of each student.

The above situation is no better illuminated than in the words of a California high school student reported in the study, *Voices from the Inside: A Report on Schooling from Inside the Classroom*, where she commented, "This place hurts my spirit" (Poplin & Weeres, 1992, p. 11). The accuracy of her statement is astounding; however, the idea of incorporating the concept of spirit into our ideas about learning is marginalized in our current approach to teaching and learning in schools. In fact, the recognition of the human spirit in the processes of teaching and learning is largely missing in education

pedagogy (Lerner, 2000). Schools that have adopted a more authoritarian administrative style focus mainly on developing safety protocols and have a learning environment focused on adherence to rules without consideration of student perceptions, values, or spirituality (Baumrind, 2012; Bear, 2002; Cohn & Canter, 2004).

In 21st century America, students are coming to school with greater social, emotional, and behavioral needs (Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health, 2000). Longitudinal research has shown that students with these identified needs are significantly hindered not only in their ability to learn but also to solve problems in a non-violent manner (Evenson et al., 2009; Zins, 2004).

Elias (1997) spoke directly to the idea of the socio-emotional effects on the ability of students to learn. He defined social and emotional learning (SEL) research as:

> Social and emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development. (p. 2)

He further stated, "Children are emotionally attuned to be on the lookout for caring, or a lack thereof, and they seek out and thrive in places where it is present. The more emotionally troubled the student, the more attuned he or she is to caring in the school environment" (p. 6).

Negative family, school, and community interactions and conditions that shape individual student values and behaviors have been identified as risk factors that hinder the necessary development of the social and emotional competencies necessary for students to be successful in the school (Zins, 2004). Students who are subject to the dysfunction and poverty of fragmented families, the rejection and shame felt from school

suspension and expulsion, and the lack of identity in a larger community have been identified as at-risk students. They are negatively affected socially, emotionally, and consequently, academically by these circumstances (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hustedt, Vu, & Bargreen, 2017; McConnell, Brestkreus, & Savage, 2011; Tetzner, Becker, & Baumert, 2016)

A risk and protective factor approach to prevention is an elemental philosophy that negatively affects student's self-image and self-esteem and is narrow-minded in its understanding of the whole person. The focus on strategies is a result of not recognizing the spirit, mind, and body as actively interdependent (Moltman, 1985).

More holistically, proponents of this point of view believe there is a need to consider how spirit affects the teaching and learning relationship. The notion is that each part of the human being has a separate function, yet they do not act independently (Nee, 1968). Not recognizing the role of spirit in the teaching and learning relationship may limit our ability to build relationships with our students. According to Lerner (2000), "From the stand point of spirit, what's valuable about you is that you already are an embodiment of Spirit and you already deserve to be loved, cared for, and respected" (p. 24). Thus, this standpoint recognizes the student self-worth. A shift in the epistemological approach to teaching and learning from one of manipulative, authoritarian power, and control, to one of holistic, reasonable, authoritative acceptance and belonging is needed.

At-risk Defined Within a Cultural Framework

At-risk students have been identified by their non-conforming response to societal and cultural factors that solicit expectations (both legal and normative) and for behavior and responses to interpersonal environments such as families, school environment, and peer groups (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). The relevancy of this definition of at-risk students is the phenomenon of belonging. The at-risk student's world-view is dichotomous; it is one of mistrust paired with the need to belong. Belonging is an individual's experience of feeling valued, needed, and accepted by a social system (Fisher, 2013). With the traditional culture in education being one of performance as a means of earning value, recognition, and acceptance, it is possible that the relationship between student and teacher has the potential to become adversarial.

The at-risk paradigm is a cross-cultural, psycho-social concept, which means that persons from every culture experience emotional and relational dysfunction The term at-risk is used in the educational paradigm to identify students who have a higher probability of failing or dropping out of school "due to circumstances that jeopardize their ability to complete school" (At-Risk, The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013, p. 1). The emotional and psychological effects from an environment that fails to relate to its children in a supportive and safe way can propagate at-risk youth. The challenge of the 21st century educator is to connect, motivate, and teach students who are angry, attracted to negative socialization, adopt physical, social, and emotional self-destructive risk-taking

behaviors, and believe they are damaged, unloved, and possess attitudes devoid of hope for future success.

Disparity Between At-Risk Students and School Culture

Cultural conditions constitute the environmental and relational circumstances that define the at-risk student's perspective of life and self. In 2011, according to the National Center of Education Statistics, the marriage rate was 6.8% per thousand while the divorce rate was 3.6% per thousand. Further, the median income of Whites was $51,959, Hispanics $40,963, and Blacks $34,598. There are still 45,318,000 people living in poverty in the United States. More significantly, within this 45 million people there are 9,130,000 families under the strain of insufficient income to provide adequately for the family. In addition, within this 54 million, 4,646,000 are single women and 1,008,000 are single men (Snyder & Dillow, 2015). From this seedbed of familial instability and poverty we find ourselves as educators grappling with the behavioral/attitudinal dysfunction and academic failure creating the phenomenon of being considered at-risk. Child poverty produces an opportunity gap for our children.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2013) illustrates the at-risk students' response to the dysfunction in our society. In 2010, discipline referrals were identified by the following percentages and categories: 28.1% racially motivated, 23.1% bullying, 16.4% gang incidents, 8.5% teacher disrespect, 4.8% verbal abuse, 3.2% sexual harassment, and 2.5% widespread classroom disorder. Across the U.S. 352,900,000 teachers were threatened and 209,800,000 teachers were attacked.

Safety is the first priority in establishing a positive school culture (Skiba, 2008). In an effort to make the school environment safe and conducive to learning, administrations have used zero-tolerance policies to remove troubled students who are disruptive in schools (Skiba, 2008). In 2006, 3,328,750 students were suspended from school and 102,080 were expelled. In 2012, 38,800,000 students dropped out of school (OCR, National School Civil Rights Data). Many students who drop out of school do so because of their experiences with education convinces them that they are not worthy or able to graduate. In essence, they are not encouraged to remain in the system; thus, a new term has been coined: push-out. The term push-out applies to at-risk students who get signals from schools that they are neither worthy nor able to graduate and are frequently encouraged to leave (DeRidder, 1990).

The adverse side effects to zero-tolerance policies are the problems caused by at-risk students. The consequences of these behaviors are exacerbated by shifting the responsibility to the legal system, where there is less opportunity for students to become positively involved in society. Research corroborated two extremely negative, unintended effects of dropping out of school: increased risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system (Monahan et al., 2014) and depression leading to antisocial behavior and suicidal ideation (Sundius & Farneth, 2008).

Students whose significant relationships and environments propagate feelings of hopelessness through abandonment and neglect have taken on demeanors that display no respect for authority or behaviors of pure rebellion

(Gregory et al., 2010). However, rarely are the adults responsible for building or classroom management considered in the task of creating a safe learning environment.

Student conduct and misbehavior research indicates a critical need to address the safety of students in our schools in order to support learning (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). However, indiscriminate use of punishments such as suspension and expulsion are not effective in creating a healthy school environment (Evenson et al., 2009). Finding the balance between strictly enforcing discipline policies and creating a relational culture of understanding will more successfully prevent the disintegration of school culture and provide support for an environment that is conducive to learning. Research is beginning to suggest that understanding students' emotional and social needs paired, with a safe school environment to create an effective school climate (Gregory et al., 2010).

Internal versus External Locus of Control

Categorizing student at-risk factors by locus of control as opposed to large categorical universal identifiers like, individual, family, peer, and school/community, will lead us toward a more student-centered approach. In consideration of the 12 family-domain-related risk factors, is it possible that the individual risk factors are the result of family circumstances and poor relationships? Is this then the impetus for students to engage in peer domain risk factor relationships? Then, more specifically and germane to the focus of this work, notice the risk factors related to the school and community domain that demonstrate an internal locus of control: poor academic focus, low commitment to school, low educational aspirations, and poor motivation.

What values, beliefs, and feelings does one adopt from experiencing life

delineated by these risk factors? There are two states of mind in reaction to living out

these conditions. One is codependency that creates a shame based, insecure, victimized

personality (Bradshaw, 1988). The other is loss that creates emotional depletion,

depression, and isolationism that stems from social and emotional upheaval (Gilbert,

1996).

The effect of a person experiencing one or more of the above risk factors, even at

the pre-DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Disorders) diagnosis level, is the

construct of codependency (Beattie, 1987 & 1989; Bradshaw, 1988; Whitfield, 1987).

Codependency is defined by Laign (1989) "as a pattern of compulsive behaviors that is

motivated by a dependence on another's approval and is designed to find a sense of

safety, identity, and self-worth" (p. 1). The codependency bibliotherapist Beattie (1987)

defines "a codependent person as one who has let another person's behavior affect him or

her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior" (p. 31). According to

Spann and Fischer's (1990) review of the literature, codependency has three recurrent

themes: "1. extreme focus outside of self; 2. lack of open expression of feelings; [and] 3.

attempt to derive a sense of purpose through relationships" (p. 27). As a teacher, keeping

these three themes in mind will often give insight to students' motivation and behavior.

Bradshaw (1998) deepened our understanding of codependency when he links

codependency and internalized shame. He introduces codependency by pointing out that

the codependent has no inner life. Happiness, good feeling, and self-validation come

from the outside. He quotes Melody's definition of codependency as "a state of disease

whereby the authentic self is unknown or kept hidden so that a sense of self . . . of

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mattering . . . of esteem and connectedness to others is distorted, creating pain and

distorted relationships" (as cited in Bradshaw, 1988, p. 14). Bradshaw identifies the

similarity of the feelings and beliefs between shame and co-dependency. In essence, an

internalized sense of shame is toxic. Without intervention, the condition has the

characteristic of being irremediable; meaning, the codependent person believes he is

flawed, innately defective; a mistake! It is circular in that the codependent acts out

internalized shame then feels shame about his/her actions (Bradshaw, 1988).

Prevention and Healing

The propensity to see the negative circumstances and the pressures to

alleviate the negative effects of those factors have spurred the research leading to

quantifying the risk behaviors of at-risk youth (NCES, 2015). To date, research of

protective factors or prevention has not been as extensive or rigorous as the

research of risk factors or intervention (CDC, 2015). Indeed, when one researches

prevention, the literature immediately highlights programs based on the risk and

protective factors (Hawkins et al., 1992). There is not a common definition for

prevention as a clear category of strategies. It appears as a phenomenon that is

described, but not defined, providing specific strategies intended to prevent or

alleviate specific risk factors. In this sense, prevention strategies become

intervention strategies (Breton et al., 2015).

The Institute of Medicine (1994) defined prevention by category. They

categorize prevention by targeting populations into three dimensions. The first

dimension is universal prevention which addresses the entire population including

school system, local community, and nation. The second dimension is selective

prevention which provides strategies to address subsets of the population. The third dimension is prevention which provides strategies targeting individuals who demonstrate early onset negative behaviors such as failing grades, alcohol or drug use, or bullying. Applying the protective strategies at an early onset of the identified risk factors constitutes the task of prevention (Breton et al., 2015). Restoring protection by focusing on the positive decreases the probability of continued risk-taking behaviors (Breton et al., 2015).

The focus on external risk factors through the use of programs, activities, and literature/media that targets self-image or self-esteem has positive short-term effects (Greenberg et al., 2003). However, prevention strategies are effective as long as they can be utilized and/or supported (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Motivation on the student's part is external. Although religion is identified as a prevention strategy, spirituality is not (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2009). According to Lerner (2000), "The hunger for meaning and purpose is as strong and central to human life as the hunger for food or for sex" (p. 10). "From the stand point of spirit, what's valuable about you is that you already are an embodiment of Spirit and you already deserve to be loved, cared for, and respected" (Lerner, 2000, p. 24). Referring to Table 1, the at-risk student responds to the external motivations of the prevention strategies because, being unaware of their spiritual worth, they can only recognize external sources of validation. Thus, utilizing the risk and protective factor modality for identifying risk factors in students, and protective strategies factor by factor or target population by target population, is a short-term intervention that requires ongoing

external support. Recognizing self-worth, a spiritual dimension, creates a culture

of belonging, meaning, and worth, thereby increasing the student's internal

motivation to choose healthy versus negative risk behaviors (Bloomberg, 2013).

The risk and protective factor prevention strategies is beneficial for teachers who

want to help their students overcome their barriers to learning that stem from risk

factors.

Risk Factors: Contextual, Individual, and Interpersonal

One approach to understanding the disparity between a student and the

school culture is described by Burris as the personality system (1999). A

personality system examines the inconsistency between societal norms and an

individual's values, expectations, attitudes, beliefs, and orientations towards self

and others" (Burris, 1999; Jessor & Jessor, 1977). Inconsistencies between

societal and individual values have been identified as risk factors for alcohol and

drug abuse (Hawkins et al., 1992). Although the original research was focused on

factors that lead to potential chemical abuse, these same factors can and often do

explain other adolescent deviant behaviors (Burris, 1999).

Risk factors are categorized several ways: contextual factors, individual

and interpersonal factors (Hawkins et al., 1992), perceived environmental

systems, and behavioral systems. The National Academies Press and the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (2009) categorize and delineate risk factors in Table 1.

The purpose of prevention is to discover best practices that would help

professional counselors and others either prevent students from aberrant behaviors

or ameliorate the effects of the conditions/relationships that put a student at risk. These strategies have become known as protective factors.

Protective Factors

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2009) have defined prevention with the following typology: "universal interventions" (identifying the population at large), "selective interventions" (identifying target groups or individuals with an elevated risk), and "indicated interventions" (identifying individuals with early symptoms or behaviors that are precursors for disorder but not diagnosable.) The IOM committee categorizes these disorders and behaviors as "mental, emotional, and behavioral (MEB) disorders as opposed to the DSM terminology of mental disorders based on the comprehensiveness, relevance to multiple audiences, and reduced stigma" (O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009, p. 1).

The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2009) have summarized the risk and protective factor literature in chart form. The chart has three columns: left column titled *Risk Factors*, middle column titled *Domain*, and right column titled *Protective Factors*. Each risk factor and correlated protective factor are divided and categorized. For example, early antisocial behavior and emotional factors such as low behavioral inhibition is a risk factor listed in the left column that can be positively affected by facilitating the youth's involvement in a religious or club affiliation which is listed in the right column (see Table 2.1). This pairing of risk and protective factors is grouped and categorized by the domain of *Family* listed in the center column titled *Domain*. Similarly, the risk factor, *inadequate or inappropriate child rearing practices*, a risk factor listed in the left column is positively affected by the protective factor

providing a positive adult (ally) in the family to mentor and be supportive which is listed

as a protective factor in the right column.

Table 2.1

Risk and Protective Factors by Domain

Risk Factors	Domain	Protective Factors
	Individual	
Early antisocial behavior and emotional factors such as low behavioral inhibitions		High IQ
Poor cognitive development		Positive social skills
Hyperactivity		Willingness to please adults
		Religious and club affiliations
	Family	
Inadequate of inappropriate child rearing practices		Participation is shared activities between youth and family including siblings and parents
Home discord		Providing the forum to discuss problems and issues with parents
Maltreatment and abuse		Availability of economic and other resources to expose youth to multiple experiences
Large family size		The presence of a positive adult (ally) in the family to mentor and be supportive
Parental antisocial history		" " "
Poverty		" " "
Exposure to repeated family violence		" " "
Divorce		" " "
Parental psychotherapy		" " "
Teenage parenthood		" " "

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A high level of parent-child conflict	" " "
A low level of positive parental involvement	" " "

<center>Peer</center>

Spending time with peers who engage in delinquent or risky behavior	Positive and healthy friends to associate with
Gang involvement	Engagement in healthy and safe activities with peers during leisure time (e.g. clubs, sports, etc.)
Less exposure to positive social opportunities because of bullying and rejection	

<center>School & Community</center>

Poor academic performance	Enrollment in schools that address not only the academic needs of youth but also their social and emotional needs and learning
Enrollment in schools that are unsafe and fail to address the academic and social and emotional needs of children and youth	Schools that provide a safe environment
Low commitment to school	A community and neighborhood that promote and foster healthy activities for youth
Low educational aspirations	" " "
Poor motivation	" " "
Living in an impoverished neighborhood	" " "
Social disorganization in the community in which the youth lives	" " "
High crime neighborhoods	" " "

Note. (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2009).

Toxic Shame

The codependent student who exhibits toxic shame is not able to undergo continual self-examination in an effort to live in reality because that would require a healthy relationship with oneself (Bradshaw, 1988). The shame-based person suffering from toxic shame has an adversarial relationship with oneself. Toxic shame binds you. Toxic shame says one is flawed and defective as a human being. It is not an emotion, but rather a core identity (Bradshaw, 1988).

As a result, codependents experience low self-worth; they are extremely self-conscious, both publicly and privately; they doubt their ability to make favorable impressions on others. They exaggerate and are deceptive when trying to make favorable impressions on others (Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Schlenker & Weigold, 1990). In order to survive in a social setting, there is a conflict between the inner self regarding who they know they are and how they act. The codependent will utilize a number of means to feel accepted (Cermak, 1991).

Codependency is directly related to internalized shame. It is a matter of self-esteem being driven by an external locus of control. To be codependent is to make choices depending upon the perceived desires of others, developing a personality that is not able to be true to self. This conflict with the true self creates a sense of defectiveness and inadequacy, resulting in a shame-based personality (Boss, 2004; Wells et al., 1999).

The problem of toxic shame and co-dependency is of a spiritual nature. Bradshaw has termed this construct spiritual bankruptcy (Bradshaw, 1988). Spirituality is the opposite of toxic shame and codependency. The former is the essence of human existence where spirituality is about growth, expansion, newness, and creativity. "Toxic shame

with its dehumanizing demand for a false self to cover and hide the authentic self, necessitates a life dominated by doing and achievement. Everything depends on performance and achievement rather than on being" (Bradshaw, 1988, p. 22). The intuitive knowledge of belonging to the universe and having unique connectedness and value to the sum total of reality, creation, and Omnipotence is largely absent from our western society. The result is a pervasive sense of meaninglessness (Frankl, 1978) and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Seligman, 1990). The natural reaction to this state of emotional poverty is the phenomena of grief.

Grief

Both Bradshaw (1988) and Whitfield (1989) have broadened the context of codependency from its origin. The arena of alcohol and other drugs include all other contexts that create dysfunctional relationships. In all codependent dysfunctional relationships, the one common condition that the codependent experiences are loss. Kubler-Ross (1969), in her work with the terminally ill as a medical doctor, has identified the emotional, psychological, and intellectual processes that one goes through as they experience traumatic loss.

She identified five stages or coping mechanisms surrounding grief. She did not intend to stage the grieving process as though there was a beginning and an end to each stage with a definite and final closure. These stages are fluid with boundaries that overlap and often fluctuate in regression and advancement (Kubler-Ross, 1969). These psychological defense mechanisms can be observed in the student who has experienced personal trauma in their lives. The process of

grief is helpful in understanding and supporting the shame-based codependent at-risk student.

Kubler-Ross observed five defense mechanisms. The first is denial and isolation where a person takes the attitude of "No, not me, it cannot be happening to me" (1997, p. 93). The second mechanism is anger. During the anger stage a person may ask "Why me!" and when the reality cannot be denied any longer, the "feeling of anger, rage, envy and resentment" is their next reaction. The third mechanism is bargaining. A person may ask themselves, "If God did not . . . respond to my angry pleas, He may be more favorable if I ask nicely" (1997, p. 93). If we have been unable to face the sad reality, maybe we can find an alternative agreement and solution to the situation. The fourth mechanism is depression. In this stage a person faces the reality of the situation and can no longer remain in denial or bargain for a different outcome. All reactionary mechanisms turn to a sense of great loss and acceptance. When sufficient time has passed the patient (student) will reach a stage of neither depression nor anger. The fifth mechanism is loss of feeling. In the final stage, a person experiences a psychological reaction void of all feeling.

Historically, the research on grief and loss has evolved. Boss (2003) is credited with the identification of a facet of grief that fits my experience with at-risk students. She has written extensively on what she calls ambiguous grief. Ambiguous grief is when there is loss that one has no way to find closure regarding the loss. One situation is when a loved one is close by but does not have the capacity to interact (i.e., Alzheimer's). The other is when someone is missing, but there is no contact nor any reason why they are

gone (Boss & Carnes, 2012). These may include situations when family members or loved ones disappear, are imprisoned, missing in action, and the like. Ambiguous grief occurs when people are physically present but not psychologically available. One example is Alzheimer's disease, where the person is present but cannot relate or interact in a responsive way. Grief is inherently complicated. Not because those who grieve in this manner are not willing to do the work of grieving, but because the ambiguity of the situation is without reasonable solution or understanding. Each person who is affected by loss reacts, evaluates, and problem solves differently. Under such conditions, meaning is lost, relationships are broken, and family conflicts increase (Boss, 2012). Whether one experiences a definitive loss that is true and final or one that is ambiguous and without closure.

It is not enough to identify risk factors that categorize life's situations. The first step is to recognize that our students are not just grieving, but that the kind of grief they are experiencing is truly complicated and devastating. Closure is impossible. "Mystery persists with ambiguous loss. . . . People desperately search for meaning in the unrelenting confusion; the mind tries to make sense of the nonsensical" (Boss, 2012, pp. 456-469). Again, as a teacher, when it is recognized that a student is experiencing ambiguous grief, it is an opportunity to develop a meaningful and healthy relationship.

In a unique way, ambiguous loss describes the condition that many at-risk students experience daily. If someone is missing, physically or psychologically, they are missing and the ambiguity is centered on that one circumstance. With many students, the circumstances themselves change such as who they reside

with, an estranged parent returning, or a sibling who was dealing drugs and providing a level of income is killed on the street corner. The at-risk student experiences ambiguous grief not only because of physical or psychological loss, but circumstantial ambiguity as well.

In the case of ambiguous loss, closure is difficult if not impossible and certainly not the goal. The goal is to find meaning, not closure. There are two differences between earlier researchers. First, early research studied a definitive loss, usually death. More recent research is reacting to complicated loss that is not definitive, but dubious and confusing, like physically missing or psychologically missing people. Students who have experienced one or more risk factors in the four main domains for youth are considered at risk (Hawkins & Catelino, 1970). They are experiencing either definitive grief (Bradshaw 1988; Kubler-Ross, 1969) or ambiguous loss (Boss & Carnes, 2012). In the case of definitive loss, students can, with support, find meaning and closure. However, in the case of ambiguous loss, the conditions in which at-risk students live and breathe make closure impossible and meaning illusive. From this culture of meaninglessness (Frankl, 1978), helplessness, and hopelessness (Seligman, 1990), Michael Lerner (2000) has summarized the need for belonging. Belonging is the need for hope of a safe and secure future; the need for an opportunity to develop a healthy personal identity; and finally, the deep need for purpose.

Current School Climate: Teacher

The education profession has developed policy, school climate, and classroom management strategies largely devoid of the relevant psychosocial factors that shape behavior. Consequently, schools driven largely by authoritarian

administrative practices have ostracized both at-risk students and teachers who experience burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) defined burnout as "an erosion of engagement that what started out as important, meaningful, and challenging work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless" (p. 416). The factors that caused this erosion of meaningful engagement are many and varied. Blaze (1982) identified that teacher burnout is mainly a function of "prolonged job strains that results from the inadequacy of coping resources and the absence of suitable rewards in relation to the demands of work-related stressors" (p. 97).

Burnout is caused by a long-term experience of emotionally damaging situations. It is the consequence of physical and mental stress leading to anxiety and frustration, especially for human service professionals (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Different theories have ascribed the situations that harm the individual to different causes: protracted demands on the individual's resources (Janssen, 1999); lack of resources such as support (Lee & Ashforth, 1996); injustice such as lack of reciprocity in worker–client relations (Truchot & Deregard, 2001); and inefficiency and lack of productivity when trying to serve others (Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Gold 1996).

Maslach and Jackson (1981) have developed an instrument to measure teacher burnout. They identified three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization, and inefficacy. The emotional demands teachers experience diminishes the energy and will teachers have to become involved and responsive to the behavioral and emotional needs of their students. According to Maslach (2001), teachers who experience burnout also become less responsive

and connected to their peers. Only a few studies have examined the relationship between teacher emotions and burn-out (Carlson, 2006). A natural, emotional response of withdrawing, losing self-esteem, and operating in isolation occurs when an aspiring professional teacher enters the profession with ideals of selfless giving that stems from the passion and purpose of making a positive difference in the lives of their students, but they experience "progressive loss of idealism, energy, purpose, and concern, as a result of work conditions" and negative unresponsive/non-supportive relationships (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980, p. 92).

Bandura (1997) posited that self-efficacy reflects the teachers' beliefs in themselves to be able to do the task. Maslach (2001) suggested that "the lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of relevant resources, whereas exhaustion and cynicism emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict" (p. 403). Both teacher burnout and student behavior are on continuums of severity. However, both are real conditions found within pedagogy that significantly and adversely affects student and teacher performance.

A teacher who is cynical and impersonal because of the amount of work demands, who is in social conflict with peers and/or administration and has a strong feeling of being inefficient will eventually experience burnout and may not flourish as a professional. The student who is experiencing ambiguous loss in his/her classroom also cannot flourish as a member of the classroom/school climate. The relationships are disastrous and the learning environment is equally ineffective (Boss, 2002). The pedagogy of the classroom becomes one of top

down, authoritarian, isolationistic culture that should be the exact opposite (Baumrind, 2012).

The word describing the disparity identified in previous paragraphs is clearly, loss. Little thought or action is given to the losses that both teacher and student are experiencing in the traditional classroom. When the at-risk students' life circumstances and experiences create significant or ambiguous personal loss, it can lead to a codependent (Boss, 1986) shame-based (Bradshaw, 1988) life style that diminishes self-efficacy. It creates a personal belief structure that devalues one's true self (I do not make mistakes, I am a mistake) making it seem impossible to belong, have personal value, or purpose.

Although rarely thought of in this light, teacher burnout is a by-product of loss. We have neither considered the loss that accompanies multi-generational aspects of codependency in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of teachers and staff. Consider the documented causes of burn out from research:

- Long term demands on personal resources (Jenssen, 1999)

- Lack of support (Lee & Ashforth, 1996)

- Injustice in inter-relationships (Truchot & Deregard, 2001)

- Inefficiency and lack of productivity when trying to serve others (Gold, 1996).

Each of these causes of burnout is a definite and particular loss that seemingly has no solution and over time has the same effect as traumatic ambiguous loss in such situations. Self-efficacy is greatly diminished resulting in feelings of hopelessness, absenteeism, increased turnover, and decreased job

performance (Farber, 2000; Friedman, 2000; Lowenstein, 1991; Terry, 1997). Not all teachers are codependent or are experiencing even minimal burnout, as not all students are at-risk students. But for those students who are at-risk, the predominant culture has not been conducive to their being meaningfully included.

Current School Climate: Students

Under President George H. W. Bush, the first standards-based education reform was ratified, No Child Left Behind. In 1989, an education summit was convened consisting of governors of all 50 states and President Bush. The result was the adoption of national education goals in the year 2000. Building upon this national effort, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) created the Common Core State Standards, which were launched in 2009.

Presently, two consortiums, Smarter Balance and Partnership for the Assessment of College and Careers (PARCC), have created the computer-based assessment programs intended to accurately measure student readiness and potential success in college or future careers. The theory is that high-quality assessments will contribute to the ongoing improvements in instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education, stated in his remarks at the American Society of News Editors Annual Convention (2013), the clear and compelling need and rationale for national Common Core Standards. He pointed out that in thousands of schools, only 10% of students were operating at grade level in reading and math and that out of a hundred low-income students, only 29 would attend college, and of those, only nine could expect to graduate. He stated:

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I worry about the one in four young Americans who don't graduate from high school—and the three out of four young people who are ineligible to serve in the military. I worry about the 90 million American adults with below-basic or basic reading skill" … "In that effort, the Common Core standards mark a sea-change in education. Not only do they set the bar high, they give teachers the space and opportunity to go deep, emphasizing problem-solving, analysis, and critical thinking, as well as creativity and teamwork. They give teachers room to innovate. (Duncan, 2013)

This is an unbalanced approach to the problem of student achievement and staff development because it is task-oriented with little thought about the relational nature teaching and learning. The effort to raise the bar of academic expectations and single out curriculum development with teachers is half the understanding needed to solve the problem. The other considerations are the cultural, racial, gender, socio-economic, and psycho-social considerations associated with students. The balanced approach is to recognize the problem through assessment and to come to an improved solution through understanding the human condition.

Several external, systemic factors, impact student commitment to schooling and learning and contribute to student apathy (Monahan et al., 2014). One of the most telling outcomes of systemic failure is the excessive use of suspension and expulsion, as well as other punishment methods that can label students as troublemakers. They effectively isolate them from school—effectively transferring the problem from the school to the community where there is less supervision and no accountability (Adams, 1992). Suspension and expulsion as a form of punishment is ineffective in that it has apparently little effect on misbehavior, either in correcting present behavior or preventing future misconduct (Bacon, 1990).

There is a clear relationship between failing grades and the use punishments such as suspensions and expulsions (Bock, 1998). In 2012, 52% of students who had been suspended or expelled had failing grades. Out of 49 million students in 2011 -2012, 1.9 million students were suspended one time. In addition to the systemic isolation of disruptive students through suspension and expulsion, 260,000 students out of 49 million were referred to law enforcement, with 92,000 students subjected to school-related arrests (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Monahan et al. (2014) found a relationship between disciplinary problems and school dropouts. Excessive use of suspension and expulsion, usually from the policy of zero tolerance, increases the above-mentioned school-to-prison statics, higher dropout rates, and continued aggressive behavior (Freeman, 2007). According to DeRidder (1990), suspension and ultimately expulsion leads to increased dropout rates or worse, "pushout" rates. The term pushout describes at-risk students who continually receive signals from their schools that they are neither able nor worthy to continue to graduation and are frequently encouraged to leave (DeRidder, 1991).

Zero tolerance policies are defined as school/district-wide policies and procedures that require strict, blind-justice determined by a pre-established set of consequences aligned with specific offences (Bear et al., 2002; Cohn & Canter, 2004). The misuse of zero tolerance has served to exacerbate the disparity between accountability and a teaching learning relationship. Traditionally, administrators have adopted the authoritarian paradigm in an effort to solve negative behavior problems and create a safe environment. The motive for executing such disciplinary policies appears to have been for the benefit and convenience of administrators who were tasked with meeting the

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behavioral and emotional needs of children. According to Bock (1998), "The primary

reason for application of disciplinary procedures should be to aid students; that is,

applying discipline should be done in an appropriate manner so as to assist students'

functioning and learning" (p. 69). Zero tolerance policies and a reliance on a punishment

mentality have unintended consequences for children, families, and communities

(Evenson, 2009).

After 20 years of zero tolerance, the data show that our streets, schools, and

neighborhoods are not safer (Skiba, 2008). In fact, the data indicate that suspension and

expulsion, along with increased use of law enforcement in school settings, are creating

their own set of risk factors (Skiba, 2014). Some of the negative outcomes from zero

tolerance that have been identified are: increased dropout rates, negative school climate,

discriminatory school discipline practices, increased school-related arrests, and continued

aggressive behavior (Evenson, 2009; Freeman, 2007; Skiba, Cohn, & Canter, 2004).

Research shows that suspension negatively impacts the mental health and physical

wellbeing of students (Evensen, 2009). According to the American Academy of

Pediatrics (2003), suspension of school aged youth with behavioral problems is

associated with high rates of depression, drug addiction, and home life stresses. In

addition, suspension may predispose children to antisocial behavior and suicidal ideation

(Sundius & Farneth, 2008).

An authoritative, healthy, safe environment is one that pedagogically

recognizes spiritual-worth as inherent in all people. Given that ontological

underpinning, students thrive because they believe and experience three intrinsic

cultural conventions: value, belonging, and meaning. Given the cultural

conventions of current school climate, societal disintegration, and racial

disesteem, our students and teachers experience the three opposing cultural

conventions of being devalued, isolated, and worthless (Roorda, 2017).

Preferred School Climate

School climate research purports that discipline policy is both the key and

the cross of school culture development. Regardless of the approach to discipline,

whether authoritarian (strict zero tolerance philosophy) or authoritative (providing

support through a balance of structure and limit setting) (Braumrind, 2012), the

motive is the same: safety. The apparent misunderstanding is these approaches

tend to be mutually exclusive. Authoritarian leadership is, "coercive (arbitrary,

preemptory, domineering and concerned with marking status distinctions."

Authoritative administration employs, "confrontation (reasoned, negotiable,

outcome-oriented, and concerning with regulating behavior)" (Baumrind, 2012, p.

35). There is no dispute that discipline is necessary for a safe and healthy learning

environment. Being socially, emotionally, and physically safe is a fundamental

human need (Cobb, 2014). Students who are fearful and insecure are hindered in

their ability to perform to the best of their ability (Maslow, 1943).

Jennings (2009) took the needed attributes of school culture a step further.

Safety is only part; students also need to feel both valued and that they belong.

The National School Climate Council (2007) defined school climate as "norms,

values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and

physically safe" (p. 2). It is this valuing and belonging that is the motivation for

students, parents, teachers, and administrators to remain connected to the school (Freiberg & Stein, 1999).

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Supportive Schools identifies three constructs of school culture: engagement, safety, and environment. Educators are responsible for finding the balance between the authoritative approach and the developing of relationships between all members of that building: administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders.

Administration as Role Model

The first person to affect the three constructs of school culture at the building level is the principal. The principal drives the direction of the building level school culture (Ali & Hale, 2009) As the principal administers these constructs, they become role models. It is clear from the research that students learn the hidden curriculum portrayed by the principal's attitudes, values, concepts of justice, and, from the policies/procedures and relationships that they observe and experience in the school (Miller, 2008) Principals become the role models for acceptable attitudes and behaviors for teachers and students alike. They set the belief system of high expectations and lay the ground work for a positive trusting environment (Ali & Hale, 2009). If principals establish the building culture, teachers confirm and maintain that culture on a day-to-day, student-by-student basis.

Teacher as Guardian of School Culture

Pivotal also to developing and maintaining the school climate are the teachers. It is the teachers' expectations, perceptions, and behaviors that sustain and improve or

hinder student achievement and ultimately school climate (Le Cormu, 2009). Le Cornu identified three expectations that teachers can have that effect student performance. First is their "perception of student current performance. Teachers who believe they are interacting with bright students will most likely influence them to believe so. Yet teachers who believe the opposite will eventually be a discouraging force to a student" (p. 16). Secondly, a teacher's prediction or guess about a student's future achievement will influence how the teacher exposes the student to learning. Thirdly, the degree to which (teachers) over or underestimate students' achievement levels has a major effect on student performance.

The phenomenon that Le Cormu is referencing is known as the Pygmalion effect. The Pygmalion effect refers to the "effects of interpersonal expectancies, that is, the finding that what one person expects of another can come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Rosenthal, 2010, p. 1398). The experiment showed that teacher expectations worked as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Chang, 2011). The experiment by Schrank (1968) found that the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon exists at the group level, as well. Both Chang and Schrank's studies researched only the teachers' positive effects on student performance.

Brophy (1985) found that negative expectations can be harmful to student motivation. Brophy lists eight concrete forms of negative expectations, which lead to student failure. These include giving up easily on low-expectation students, criticizing them more often for failure; praising them less often following success, praising inappropriately, neglecting to give them any feedback following their responses, seating them in the back of the room, generally paying less attention to them or inter acting with

them less frequently; and expressing less warmth towards them or less interest in them as individuals.

There is a consensus in that the Pygmalion effect involves both positive expectations and negative expectations. In the light of a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Pygmalion effect means the "effects of interpersonal expectancies, that is, the finding that what one person expects of another, can come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Rosenthal, 2010, p. 1398). Csikszentmihalyi's comments on the effect of teacher motivation affirm the Pygmalion phenomenon,

> If a teacher does not believe in his job, does not enjoy the learning he is trying to transmit, the student will sense this and derive the entirely rational conclusion that the particular subject is not worth mastering for its own sake. If all the teachers they are exposed to are extrinsically motivated, students might well conclude that learning in general is worthless in and of itself. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 7)

Judith Alpert (2001) has brought this hypothesis into question. The specific purpose of her study was to determine whether an increase in certain teacher behaviors would affect the performance of low ability pupils. A low ability group was selected for three reasons: there is little research or theory about appropriate pedagogical strategy for this ability group, students of low ability are more affected by pedagogical strategy than pupils of high and average ability, and pupils of low ability are those usually thought to be discriminated against.

The teacher behaviors studied were good behaviors. Good behaviors identified were reading group teacher behaviors that experts judged likely to increase the academic performance of pupils. Alpert summarized her findings by concluding that there was no increased student performance because of teacher good behavior. Alpert indicated that

there is little evidence of relationships existing between teacher expectation and teacher behavior or teacher behavior and pupil performance (Alpert, 2001).

One explanation for the difference in conclusions between the Pygmalion, self-fulfilling prophecy and the work of Judith Alpert which proposes that the Pygmalion effect has not been adequately established, is the difference between the independent variables. Rosenthal (2010) based their work on suggesting that teachers' beliefs dictate teachers' expectations, which intrinsically translate into teacher behaviors, and consequently, impact student achievement. Alpert based her work on the mechanics of good behaviors, an external motivation that lacked consideration of teacher beliefs and expectations. These two approaches to student motivation leave room for the consideration of another independent variable, that being the teacher's understanding, belief in, and valuing the individual student's self-worth as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Considering the rate of suspensions, expulsions, statistics on bullying, fighting, and crime in public schools, the challenge is to, "narrow the gap between school climate research and school climate policy, practice guidelines and teacher education policy" (National School Climate Council, 2007). If school culture is the heart and soul of a school (Freiberg & Stein, 1999), then Howard and Jackson (1982) may be pointing practitioners in a more effective direction with their statement, "We need to shift the emphasis from remediating students over to remediating schools" (p. 42). With the weight of accountability and the punitive policies, the pedagogical "teeter-totter" is heavily tipped toward the authoritarian organization. To bring things into balance a more authoritative pedagogical approach is needed, which more intentionally responds to the cultural, racial,

gender, and psycho-social constructs. Performing to one's highest potential requires that one feels safe. Feeling safe socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically is a fundamental human need (Maslow, 1943).

Safety is only the foundation of creating a school culture conducive for learning. According to Kevin Jennings (2000), former assistant deputy secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, students need to feel like they are valued and belong. Michael Lerner in his book *Spirit Matters* (2000) added that students need to feel they have meaning and purpose in their lives. Furthermore, feeling valued, that you belong, and that you have meaning/purpose is confirmed in a thesis by Lauren Fisher (2013), *From the Outside Looking In: Sense of Belonging, Depression, and Suicide Risk*. She defined belonging as feeling valued, needed, and accepted. From these sources it could easily be concluded that belonging is the emotional response to being needed and accepted in essence creating a sense of community. While being valued creates a community of communion, belonging is an expression of communion.

Communion

Communion is a concept that is not used often in education pedagogy. The idea of communion in relation to learning appears to be a recent construct. The discussion emanates from online education research on the endemic relationship between communication, community, and communion. Soderstrom et.al. (2006) clarified these terms, "To communicate means to give to another as a partaker, while community and communion come from a derived form of the verb communis, meaning 'fellowship or community of relations or feelings (p. 6).

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A fellowship of feelings is more than communication and more than community. I would posit that striving to achieve this fellowship of feelings (communion) is the culminating epitome of creating a safe and learning environment in the classroom, the result of which is more than community.

The spirit in the human being is the reason that communion (fellowship of feelings) is possible. Shared feelings create community (shared values and beliefs). In the environment of both communion and community the human being experiences mutual self-health and other-awareness (belonging). When one belongs, they are assured of personal value (spiritual-worth) and supported in finding purpose.

Spirit as Key to Student Self-Worth

Greek philosophers valued and refined the rational skills of the human being. As they increasingly emphasized the rational objective side of knowledge, and deemphasized the subjective emotional side of knowledge, the human being was seen as monistic (Soccio, 2015). Descartes proposed that the human being was dualistic in that s/he subsists of a mysterious union of mind (soul) and body. Although the two are separate, body made of flesh and bone, the mind (soul) of will and reason; the body cannot act independent of the mind thus giving the mind (soul) preeminence (Soccio, 2015). Kant moved philosophy from the reason of mind to the focus of moral reasoning. Though not specifically stated, conscience becomes the categorical imperative, which dictates actions in relation to self and others in such a way as his/her actions must be a universal law of nature. Therefore, according to Kant, each person is a kingdom of ends possessing

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intrinsic worth and moral dignity that always deserves respect (Soccio, 2015, p. 328). Kumari (2013) does not give mind preeminence but recognizes this life force as spirit. According to Kumari (2013), "Man is essentially a spirit. Spirit in man is the central reality. It is not the physical body or vital organism, the mind or the will, but something which underlies them all and sustains them" (p. 109).

The pluralistic view of scripture describing humans as spirit, soul, and body more succinctly defines and describes the psychology of humanity, i.e., Thessalonians 5:23 reads in part, "and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound." Amplifying Genesis 2:7, "and Jehovah God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." As Watchman Nee (1968) writes, "When God first created man, He formed him of the dust from the ground, and then breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. As soon as the breath of life, which became man's spirit, came into contact with man's body, the soul was produced. Hence, the soul is the combination of man's body and spirit (p. 23). God the Creator calls his creatures into life and it is His Spirit that preserves and quickens them (Moltman, 1985). Moltman further recognized the human spirit, and the body-soul relationship as a perichoretic relationship after the archetype of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In his view, "modern understanding of spirit became narrow and one-sided" when the meaning of spirit became mind. And it also became narrow and one-sided when it surrendered the view of the spirit in the body and saw spirit only as mind. It is imperative to recognize the concept of cosmic Spirit, if we are to integrate

spirit in the human being and understand the perichoretic relationship of spirit, soul, and body (Moltman, 1985).

Moltman's definition of spirit, "spirit (is) the forms of organization and communication of all open systems of matter and life" (p. 263). Open systems is a concept stemming from Moltman's view of creation and is beyond the scope of this work except to recognize that the human being is one system in creation and denotes the interrelational organization of body, soul, and spirit and the communication among and between human beings, society, and nature. "It follows from this that the human being's consciousness is reflective spirit" (Moltman, 1985, p. 53). The creative spirit has pervaded, quickened and formed both body and soul: the human being is both spirit-body and spirit-soul. According to Moltman (1985), "The Gestalt of the human being, in which body and soul have become united, is a Gestalt formed by the creative Spirit: the human being is a spirit-Gestalt" (p. 263).

However, the historical western pedagogy of traditional education has been influenced by Greek and Cartesian dualism, western perspectives of health and education emanate from elemental philosophies that are humanistic. Western perspectives espouse a compartmentalization of body (soma), soul (psyche), and spirit (pneuma). These three parts are seen as functioning separately and have little effect on each other. Consequently, each part is treated separately in the effort to heal and maintain health and understand human functioning (Westgate, 1996). In contrast, a more Eastern philosophical approach is holistic. Each compartment is inextricably related to the other. Therefore, to treat a

psychological dysfunction, for example, an intervention that includes physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions are included (Addis, 1995).

Westgate, Addis, and other theorists have advanced strong arguments for the importance of spirituality to mental health, which is a prerequisite to efficient and productive learning. Westgate (1996) identified four dimensions to spirituality or "being": meaning in life, intrinsic value, transcendence, spiritual community (p. 27). The spiritual dimension, as the realm of values and creativity, serves as the mechanism through which the integration and growth of the person occurs (Bensley, 1991; Ingersoll, 1994). In summary, these theorists believed that the spiritual dimension is an innate component to human functioning that acts to integrate the other components and is the underlying motivation to health and learning.

Traditional education is organized to achieve the expected out-comes of efficiency and effectiveness of the profession. It is unbalanced in it pedagogy of how the human being learns. It emphasizes the left brain, intellectual, inductive/deductive ways of learning and knowing, stemming for the left brain, body/soul cultural influences. This unbalanced way of knowing actually hinders student learning (Vrugtman, 2009). The student centered, right brained, spirit/soul/body perspective is the spiritual, intuitive knowledge, concerned with understanding self, others, and the environment around them. Spirit knows what cannot be known intellectually; a function of the intuitional ability of the human spirit. It is this ability that also allows us to know who we are in and of ourselves, and who we are in relation with others (Harvey, 1999). The spirit affirms when we are right or wrong with our relationships and environment identifying the

spiritual function of conscience. The combined functions of intuition and conscience enable us to intuitionally communicate and commune creating or preventing the sense of belonging, communion, and community (Lerner, 2000; Nee, 1968). These two ways of knowing are interdependent and interactive and an optimal learning opportunity requires a balance between them both (Harvey, 1999).

In order to give value to a student, facilitate them discovering personal meaning or purpose, and create a culture of acceptance one must recognize that their spirits are perceptive of our level of valuing and acceptance, of them as persons and as students (Cohen, 2006). Thus, when an organization recognizes and understands the Trinitarian make-up of the human being, student needs are met. Teachers and administrators are empowered through student acceptance, and students are empowered through understanding and respect that begins with recognition of a student's spiritual-worth; "the place where intellect and emotion, and spirit and will, converge in the human self" (Palmer, 1998, p. 11). An authoritative, healthy, safe environment that pedagogically recognizes self-worth as inherent in all people will cultivate students' thriving because they believe and experience three intrinsic cultural conventions: value, belonging, and meaning or purpose. To be valued is to be recognized. To value is to pour energy into, to give of yourself. To have meaning or purpose is to respect ones' self. To give someone a sense of meaning and purpose is to give them respect. To belong is to intuitively know that one is accepted and not judged. The relationship between spiritual beings creates and protects self-worth (Lerner, 2000).

Summary

A dualistic world view that denies the existence of the human spirit leads to an authoritarian approach to education. Authoritarian culture values performance and safety. Safety is not the only catalyst for creating a learning environment. Students who are at-risk are given to rebellion and self-destruction. Zero-tolerance policies confirm the at-risk students' belief that they are isolated and not valued. Consequently, they are poorly motivated to learn. The final result is that at-risk students often drop out of school, become push-outs, or enter the judicial system.

A Trinitarian world view recognizes that what makes a student valuable is they are more than their minds. They are endowed with a human spirit and therefore are valued at a spiritual level creating the potential for building a relationship of acceptance, belonging, and purpose. Trinitarian culture tempers policy and procedure with understanding. It is clear that an authoritative culture that administers with understanding is needed to develop a safe learning environment.

The effects of ambiguous loss, toxic shame, and codependency prevent a dualistic/authoritarian worldview from being inclusive and accepting of all students. By narrow-mindedly considering safety as the primary goal of building culture, it fails to communicate with all students. The Trinitarian/authoritative worldview recognizes the whole person as being made up of spirit, soul, and body. This view enables school staff to become more inclusive and accepting while holding high expectation creating a school culture of learning and safety.

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From a Trinitarian/authoritative worldview, it is imperative to consider that in the development of a school culture, teachers (and administrators) have often had the same traumatic life experiences as their at-risk students. This obviously complicates the development of relationships and the teachers' (and administrators') efficacy. Care must be taken to speak to each other's' spiritual-worth and lead by example.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides details of research design and data collection methodology under subtopics of research questions, research design, participants, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, statistical treatment, threats, and limitations (Newman, Benz, Weis, & McNeil, 1997). These subsections described both the methodology and analysis of how the study was performed. A non-experimental correlational research design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007) was utilized because the intent of the study was to explore the relationship between the variables of the Worth-Teaching Index survey and student academic performance.

Purpose of Study

There is no doubt that schools have the duty to provide safe, caring, and orderly learning environments free of chaos and disrespect (Skiba, 2008). Since the 1990s the education policy over-emphasized a zero-tolerance policy that applied prescribed punishment for specific offences. The tendency was to follow the letter of the law regardless of student needs or situational circumstances (Monahan et al., 2014). Research has found that students' academic achievement and behaviors improve significantly under an authoritative, caring culture as opposed to an authoritarian culture (Thapa, Cohen, Higgins, Alessandro, 2012). The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual-worth of a student and student academic achievement. The Worth-Teaching Index (WTI) survey attempts to measure the teacher's capacity to be relational and whether they have a tendency to be more authoritative than authoritarian.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is there a relationship between student final grades and teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score?

2. Is there a relationship between student final grades and the Teacher's Worth-Teaching subscale scores: Historical Development, Professional Cultural Conditions, Psycho-Social Conditions, Spiritual Influences.

Description of Independent and Dependent Variables

The independent variables in this study are the subscales of the Worth-Teaching Index survey: Historical Development of Teacher Perspective, Professional Culural Conditions, Psycho/social Influences, and Spiritual Influences. The total score of each subscale was added together to determine the Worth-Teaching Index survey total score. Both the individual subscale scores and the Worth-Teaching Index total score were correlated to the final grades of each individual student by teacher. This comparison identified the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of a student.

Research Design

This study was a quantitative study and utilized a non-experimental correlational research design (Gall et al., 2007). This research examined the extent of the predictive relationship between the independent variables of the Worth-Teaching Index survey score and all four subscale scores in relation to the dependent variable of student academic achievement. Correlational research designs are commonly used to describe relationships among two or more variables at a given point in time to describe a predictive relationship

between independent and dependent variables while using a statistical analysis to describe the extent of the relationship.

The non-experimental correlational research design was chosen because the variables produced data that existed naturally in the teachers' environment; there was no attempt to control or manipulate the variables (Creswell & Plano, 2011; Gall et al., 2007; Gravetter & Walnau, 2012). The advantages to utilizing the survey methodology were: the data described teachers' perceptions of their life experiences in the four subscale constructs through the use of the online survey, only a specific population was surveyed (certified teachers), and all teachers in both buildings had equal access to the opportunity to participate (Kelley, 2003). The disadvantages to the survey methodology were the closed-ended questions lacked depth, and there was a risk of misinterpreting the intent of the questions. It is also often difficult to receive a high rate of returned surveys (Kelley, 2003).

The Worth-Teaching Index survey employed a 5-point Likert scale which offered the opportunity to numerically determine relationship, extent, and direction between the dependent variable, student final grade score, and independent variables, the Worth-Teaching Index survey scores, and student final grade score (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2012).

Care was taken to minimize the compounding variables (Gravetter & Walnau, 2012). The total population of both schools were invited to participate in the Worth-Teaching Index survey. The invitation was in the form of a letter of invitation written and signed by the student researcher. The building administrator disseminated the letter by email, protecting each teacher's email address, assuring that each teacher received the

same information in the same format. External validity was at question since there was no plan within the scope of this study to assess the generalizability of the Worth-Teaching Index study.

Sampling Procedures

A non-experimental correlational research design (Gall et al., 2007) was used to survey two schools in mid- and northeastern Ohio. The Worth-Teaching Index survey was offered to the staff of one lower socio/economic, 100% minority school, and one upper/middle class socio/economic school with a white population of 94%. Teachers from all grades (K to 12th) were offered the opportunity to participate.

The Worth-Teaching Index survey has 12 items. Burgess (2001) in his "Guide to the Design of Questionnaires" provided tips for creating a questionnaire. He suggested that respondents are more likely to complete surveys that are brief, concise, organized, easy to complete, and interesting (Burgess, 1997). The WTI met those guidelines.

Twenty-two teachers volunteered to participate in the survey. An attempt was made to offer the survey to a sample population that was representative of the broader teaching population. It is felt that the Worth-Teaching Index survey has a significant degree of generalizability; unfortunately, there was no opportunity to assess external validity in the research design (Gravetter & Walnau, 2012).

However, to assess the level of internal validity, Fowler's (1988) sample size recommendations were followed. There was a potential of 70 teachers who were informed of the opportunity to participate in the study. Twenty-two responded. This response produced 105 teacher/student records. According to Fowler's sample size table (1988), using correlation research in order to establish internal validity at the 5% margin

of error and a confidence level of 95%, a sample size of 80 teacher/student records was needed. Therefore, the records that were used met the recommendation.

<p style="text-align:center">Participants</p>

The research population surveyed were certified K-12 teachers. After permission from the superintendents of the two participating schools, one in mid-Ohio and one in northeastern Ohio, all of the 70 teachers from both schools were offered the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the secure, confidential, online survey through SurveyMonkey.

One school resides in a mid-sized city in a lower socioeconomic neighborhood. The student population was 100% minority with a pupil teacher ratio of 12.3 to 1. It served students in grades K – 8. The other school resides in a large suburban area in an upper/middle socioeconomic neighborhood. The student population was 94% white with a pupil teacher ratio of 12.0 to 1. It served students K – 12.

<p style="text-align:center">Instruments</p>

The Worth-Teaching Index survey was developed by the student investigator at the conclusion of the literature search. Research suggested four constructs that became subscales: Historical Development of Teacher Perspective, Professional Cultural Conditions, Psycho/Social Influences, and Spiritual Influences. Each subscale asked the teachers to respond to three questions from their own past and present experiences and understandings. These statements were rated using a Likert scale of 1 = *not at all like me*, 2 = blank (half way between descriptive scores), 3 = *somewhat like me*, 4 = (half way between descriptive scores), and 5 = *exactly like me*. The total score of each set of questions equals the individual subscale score, and the sum of all four subscales scores

equals the Worth-Teaching Survey score of each teacher. The teachers' Worth-Teaching Index scores were compared to their students' final grading period grade score.

The Worth-Teaching Index survey was scored by the following scale:

"Teachers' capacitive sensitivity to consider the self-worth of a student as key to the teaching and learning relationship"

Least to be aware and use …	15-0
Slightly likely to be aware and use …	30-16
Likely to be aware and use …	60-46

Expert Review – Face Validity and Content Validity

The initial step in preparing the Worth-Teaching Index (WTI) was to attempt to subjectively assess face validity (Weiner & Craighead, 2010). The person reviewing the WTI was a professional counselor, Founder and President of Life Enhancement Training Services. She has worked in both schools and agencies with students and clients regarding psycho/social issues for many years. Upon review of the Worth-Teaching Index survey, she agreed that the survey items of each of the categories were on the surface relevant to the intent of each category. She provided insight as to whether the questions effectively captured the intent of the Worth-Teaching Index survey. She provided valuable insight assisting in the wording of the survey. The second reviewer holds two doctoral degrees. He is a certified clinical sociologist who also reviewed and offered insight regarding the relevance of the test items to each category. No changes were made in the text of the Worth-Teaching Index survey.

The student academic achievement scores represented the students' final grade in each major course completed for that year by teacher so that every student's final grade who had a given teacher was compared to that teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score.

Final grades for both schools were determined by academic achievement and were not tied to other criteria such as attendance or participation in extracurricular activities.

Internal Consistency

The next step was to check the internal consistency of the items in relation to each category. A standard test of internal consistency, the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) was applied to the data.

One way of understanding the Cronbach's alpha is to view it as "an average of all of the correlations of each test item with every other test item" (Weiner & Craighead, 2010, p. 1449). "The Cronbach's alpha is not a statistical test; it is a coefficient of reliability or consistency" (McKeon, 2007, p. 73). Coefficient ranges from 0.00 to 1.00. A value of .90 is considered excellent; a value of .80 is considered good; and a value of .70 is acceptable. The Cronbach's alpha procedure was used to measure the internal consistency of the independent variables of the Worth-Teaching Index survey. The current data analysis indicates an alpha of .856.

There was a problem with the dependent variable which was the "Student Final Grade." Although it was possible to report the data using a 0% to 100% scoring system, it was not possible to verify that each of the 22 teachers who participated in the survey assessed the same student's performance the exact same way. What one teacher saw as student performance to be an 85%, another teacher may only evaluate that same student's work to be an 80% grade. It was verified, however, that both schools did use the percentage method of grading.

Data Collection and Privacy Practices

The Full/Expedited Review Protocol was completed and submitted to the Youngstown State Institutional Review Board for the purpose of data collection. All required policies and guidelines of the Institutional Review Board were followed. The chief administrators of both Ohio schools provided letters of permission to offer the Worth-Teaching Index survey to all certified staff.

Following approval from the Youngstown State University IRB, a letter was disseminated to all certified staff of both Ohio schools. The letter was emailed by the head administrators protecting the email address of the staff, but the letter was written by the student researcher and came under his name. The email explained in detail the purpose of the Worth-Teaching Survey and the role it played in the study.

All requirements set forth by the Youngstown State University's Internal Review Board were explained and distributed in writing to all teachers present. All staff were assured that the survey is confidential, anonymous, and completely voluntary with no repercussions for choosing not to participate.

The Worth-Teaching Index survey was administered through the secure online survey service SurveyMonkey. The Informed Consent Statement was attached to the secure online survey. SurveyMonkey's privacy policy guaranteed anonymity to everyone except the administrator. In this case, that person was the student and/or Principal Investigator. SurveyMonkey Inc. participates in and has certified its compliance with the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework. SurveyMonkey Inc. is only a custodian of respondents' email addresses and does not use them in any way except as directed by the administrator of the survey (student investigator).

Teachers who voluntarily chose to participate in the survey did so by clicking on the link provided in the invitational email that opens up the Worth-Teaching Index survey. Teachers who volunteered were asked to enter their school ID number in place of their email address or name. Teachers who choose not to participate do not open the Worth-Teaching Index survey link.

In addition, an invitation to participate in the study, a written explanation of the study and its purpose and importance were included in the text. A sample Informed Consent notification was attached to the invitational email. The Informed Consent Form included: (a) the purpose of the Worth-Teaching Index study, (b) a description of the Worth-Teaching Index design, (c) an explanation of the scoring procedure, (d) a survey confidentiality clause, (e) a personal risk to the participants' statement, (f) a statement that participation is totally voluntary, and (g) the average duration of the survey.

A second informed consent notification was included in the Worth-Teaching Index survey. It was the first page of the survey and there was a box to place a checkmark indicating that voluntary respondents are 18 years of age or older and that they are voluntarily choosing to participate. It stated that by continuing to the next screen, respondents were volunteering to participate in the survey. Twenty-two staff out of a possible 70 teachers volunteered. The survey took between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. All responses were kept private and confidential.

A Dashboard program was utilized to digitally upload the final grades of each teachers' students. The Dashboard program interfaces with the schools' Ren-Web data collection program and maintains privacy, confidentiality, and uniformity. No student names were used in the data collection.

Once the data for both Worth-Teaching Index survey and student grades by teacher ID number had been recorded on a composite spreadsheet, the teacher ID numbers were digitally altered to a new random teacher ID number. Consequently, it is not possible to identify either a specific teacher or a specific student. Both informed consent notifications were in full compliance with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects: 45 CFR 46.

All data were maintained in Dropbox account and password protected. Access was shared by the Principal Investigator (PI) and Student Investigator (SI) only. All data will be maintained for three years, stored in a secure location under lock and key at YSU, and all electronic data will be kept in a password-protected file on the YSU server, in accordance with (45 CRF 46.155[b])

Data Analysis Procedure

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha fits the purposes of this study for two reasons: The first is to determine the consistency of the four subscales themselves to relate to the overarching phenomena of spiritual worth. The second is to determine the degree of internal consistency between the four subscales and three statements intended to relate to each of them. It was not possible to standardize the dependent variable, "Student Final Grade" beyond the point of verifying that both schools used the percentage system for reporting grades.

Bivariate correlations were conducted among the independent and dependent variables. Data were also screened for multicollinearity of scores on the Worth-Teaching Index survey. Multicollinearity occurs when moderate to high intercorrelations exist among independent variables used in a regression analysis (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010).

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient was used to verify the linear dependence (reliability and validity), if any, between the Worth-Teaching Index survey scores and student's final grade.

Four factors were considered in understanding and interpreting the Pearson Correlation: (Gravetter & Walnall, 1992). First, the correlation data from the Worth-Teaching Index survey do not explain why the two variables are related. The effort was not to answer why. The hope was to be able to identify the level of effect the-Worth-Teaching Index scores had on a teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student.

Second, the value of the correlation can be affected by the possible range of scores. The Worth-Teaching Index study was offered voluntarily to every teacher within both participating buildings. The results of the survey were both generalizable and representative of the population.

Third, one or two extreme data points can affect the value of the correlation. Although the data set was extremely small, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was re-run with SPSS to determine the possibility of results being outliers.

Fourth, in order to describe the accuracy of one variable in predicting the other, the correlation must be squared. A single factor analysis was also run with SPSS.

Based on the research question and related hypothesis, a hierarchical linear multiple regression was conducted. Mertler and Vannatta (2010) asserted that linear multiple regression analyses are the most appropriate method for investigating the existence of predictable relationships among a set of independent variables with a dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the statistical

existence of relationships among groups of independent variables to determine if there was a prediction of scores on the dependent variable. A hierarchical linear multiple regression was conducted to determine whether average scores on the subscales of the Worth-Teaching Index statistically significantly predict total scores of the dependent variable,"Student Final Grade." The Worth-Teaching Index subscales of Historical Development of Teacher Perspective, Professional Cultural Conditions, Psycho/social Influences, and Spiritual Influences were regressed on collective teacher WTI and "Student Final Grade" total scores.

Threats

Three threats could be identified in this study. The first is the willingness of the participants to be honest. Participants often minimize their history of experiences and choose to answer what they feel may be the more acceptable response (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Secondly, the clarity of purpose of each statement may cause a response that is not best reflective of the participant's experiences and feelings. Thirdly, the misunderstanding of the meaning of the statements may cause participants to apply life experiences and feelings inappropriately.

Limitations

Unlike a more eclectic staff, the staffs at both of the Ohio schools have a common cultural familiarity with Christian theology and the Trinitarian worldview. The language of *spirit* is not foreign. Other staff/teachers may not have the same exposure to or belief in the Trinitarian worldview. Further research is needed to establish stronger reliability across the influences of other worldviews.

"The value of a correlation can be greatly affected by the range of scores" (Gravetter, & Walnau, 1992, p. 477). The study consisted of only 22 surveys. Two surveys were not completed. A greater number of school staff inclusive of a variety of theological understandings is needed to quantify the correlation, if any, between the Worth-Teaching Index and the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student as indicated by student academic achievement.

The four subscales highlighted in the Worth-Teaching Index are not necessarily the only subscales that affect the teacher's capacity or awareness of spiritual worth to the teacher/learner relationship. The use of a mixed methods study where phenomenology could be employed would possibly reveal other subscales or another way to organize all subscales.

Although it is hoped based upon the Chapter II research that the 12 item statements are sufficient to provide quantifiably correlational subscale scores, they are not all inclusive of other statements that could also assist in identifying and validating the present edition of the Worth-Teaching Index or discovering additional subscales.

In addition to the above limitations, correlation only describes a relationship between two variables. It does not explain *why*. A mixed method would deepen the understanding and verify the relationship to quantify and triangulate the correlation, if any, between the Worth-Teaching Index and the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student as indicated by student academic achievement.

Summary

This study was a quantitative study and utilized a non-experimental correlational research design (Gall et al., 2007). This chapter provided justification and clarification

for the research design, participants, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, and statistical treatment used to explore the potential of the Worth-Teaching Index survey to predict the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of a student as indicated by student academic achievement. The range of data, 22 surveys, was small. However, the survey may have introduced broad categories that could individually be researched with the intent of learning what effect, if any, each had on the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student.

Chapter IV describes in detail the results of the 20 Worth-Teaching Index surveys compared to the academic achievement of each teacher's students.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This correlation survey study assessed data in an effort to quantify the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of a student. This chapter restates the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the null hypotheses. A narrative of the data entry process, the data transportation process, a descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis results complete the chapter.

Purpose and Direction of Study

The purpose of the design was to collect data that would measure the teacher's capacity to speak to the spiritual worth of a student as indicated by the relationship between the Worth-Teaching Index total and subscale scores and student academic achievement. The research questions of this study were:

1. Is there a relationship between student final grades and teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score?

2. Is there a relationship between student final grades and the Teacher's Worth-Teaching subscale scores: Historical Development, Professional Cultural Conditions, Psycho-Social Conditions, Spiritual Influences.

Parameters of the Study

The research questions were restated into two hypotheses for the sake of statistical analysis:

Hypothesis H_0: There is no relationship between student final grades and teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score.

Hypothesis H_1: There is a relationship between student final grades and teacher's Worth-Teaching Index score.

Data Entry and Transportation Process

The student researcher collected data through the distribution of the Worth-Teaching Index survey. The Worth-Teaching Index survey was offered via the Survey Monkey online survey service. Student records were uploaded electronically from the individual school's Ren-Web data management program. The survey consisted of 12 questions divided into four subcategories, the sum of which became the Worth-Teaching Index total score. Each teacher's subcategory score and the Worth-Teaching Index score were compared to her/his students' final grade score. Out of a potential 70 teachers, 22 teachers voluntarily submitted the Worth-Teaching Index survey. Two surveys were incomplete and were omitted from the data. From the 20 completed surveys, the Worth-Teaching Index total score and the scores of each subscale were compared to the 105 student records (student final course grade). In accordance with the Fowler's (1988) sample size chart, at the 95% confidence level, allowing for a 6% margin of error, 80 grade records were needed to establish the validity of the Worth-Teaching Index survey.

Demographic Data

Over the past three years, the student researcher attempted to work with six different schools, both public and private. For various reasons it was only possible to carry out the full research project with just two schools: 1) a school located in northeastern Ohio and 2) a school located in mid-Ohio. However, the diversity and demographics were significant in that the school located in northeastern-Ohio is a 100% black, inner-city, Pre-K-8th grade school with an enrollment of 228 students. The student

body is 51% female and 49% male. The surrounding neighborhood has a median income of $35,000. The school in mid-Ohio is a predominately white, K – 12 school with 677 students located in a surrounding neighborhood with a median income of $65,000. The student body is 49% female and 51% male.

Table 4.1

Participating Schools' Demographic Profile

N.E. Ohio School Data		Mid-Ohio School Data	
Neighborhood		Neighborhood	
Mid-Income	$35,000	Mid-Income	$65,000
Teacher's Profile		**Teacher's Profile**	
Staff Size	26	Staff Size	44
Admin & Support Staff	4	Admin & Support Staff	21
Gender Balance		Gender Balance	
Female	58%	Female	68%
Male	49%	Male	32%
Racial Balance		Racial Balance	
White	11%	White	96%
Africa American	89%	Africa American	4%
Hispanic	0%	Hispanic	0%
Asian	0%	Asian	0%
International	0%	International	0%
Unknown	0%	Unknown	0%
Teacher Certification		Teacher Certification	
Bachelor's Degree	100%	Bachelor's Degree	70%
Master's Degree or above	90%	Master's Degree or above	30%
Student Profile		Student Profile	
Graduation Rate	94%	Graduation Rate	99%
Grade Levels	P,K-8	Grade Levels	K-12
Enrollment	228	Enrollment	677
Gender Balance		Gender Balance	
Female	51%	Female	49%
Male	49%	Male	51%

(continued)

Racial Balance			Racial Balance	
White	0%		White	84%
African American	100%		African American	4%
Hispanic	0%		Hispanic	5%
Asian	0%		Asian	1%
Unknown	0%		Multi-racial- Unknown	6%

Note. A. Sullivan (personal communications, October 3, 2018); V. Suber (personal communication, October 5, 2018)

Findings

The Worth-Teaching Index survey consisted of four subscale constructs: Historical Development of Teacher Perspective (HDT), Professional Cultural Conditions (PCCT), Psycho/Social Influences (PSIT), and Spiritual Influences (SIT). Participants were asked to respond to three statements related to each subscale. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess participant responses. The sum of the set of the three questions (totaling between 1 and 15) became the individual subscale total score, and the sum of the four subscales (with a range of 0 to 60) became the Worth-Teaching Index total score.

The Historical Development subscale had the widest range of minimum to maximum scores (5 to 15) with the lowest mean score but the largest standard deviation. The narrowest range was found in the Spiritual Influence subscale (10 to 15) with the highest mean score but the smallest standard deviation. Both Professional Cultural Conditions and Psycho/Social Influences shared the same minimum to maximum ranges (9 to 15) with similar mean and standard deviation scores that lie between HDT and SIT mean scores.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics: Mean Comparisons - Final grade, WTI Total, and Subscales

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Final Grade	105	40	100	87.26	10.478	109.789
HDT	105	5	15	11.80	3.329	11.085
PCCT	105	9	15	12.80	2.379	5.662
PSIT	105	9	15	12.82	2.037	4.150
SIT	105	10	15	13.47	1.653	2.732
TOTAL	105	36	60	50.89	7.040	49.564

The SPSS program was used to run the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test for the purpose of showing the relationship between the Worth-Teaching Index total score and the Worth-Teaching subscale scores to student final grades. The Final Grade score is the students' final course grade that was reported on their transcript. The four subscale scores are the composite 1 to 5 Likert scale scores, and the Total score is the survey total score. The Pearson correlation coefficient produces a range of values from +1 to -1. The closer to 1, either negatively or positively, the greater the correlation (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1992). Table 4.2 reveals that the subscales of PCCT and SIT were not statistically significant related to the Final Grade subscale and failed to reject or accept the null hypothesis. The HDT, PSIT, and the Worth-Teaching Index total score were statistically significant and were weakly correlated to Final Grade score. It also reveals that all of the subscales have a positive relationship to the total Worth-Teaching Index score. However, the data size was too small to indicate a statistical significance. Table 4.3 depicts the presence of those correlations and at what statistical significance.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics: Correlations Between WTI Total and Subscale Scores With Student Final Grades

		HDT	PCCT	PSIT	SIT	TOTAL
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	-.242	.024	-.233	-.100	-.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.804	.017	.309	.043
HDT	Pearson Correlation		.483	.200	.594	.833
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.041	.000	.000
PCCT	Pearson Correlation			.320	.554	.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.001	.000	.000
PSIT	Pearson Correlation				.234	.547
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.016	.000
SIT	Pearson Correlation					.771
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The following sections describe and compare the correlations of each independent variable with the dependent variable (Final Grade) separately, followed by a further exploration of each independent variable using linear regression analysis.

Overall WTI Score/Student Final Grades

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine whether H_0 could be supported.

Table 4.4

Correlations: Final Grade/WTI Total Score

		Final Grade	TOTAL
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	105	105

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given, N = 105 and r = -.197, the calculated *p* value from the Pearson Product

Moment of Correlation was 0.043 at the < .05 level, indicating a weak negative but

statistically significant correlation between Final Grade and Worth-Teaching Index Total

Score. The value of R2, the coefficient of determination, was 0.039, meaning that only

3.9% of teachers' WTI total score contributes to student final grade.

Table 4.5

Model Summary: R2 - Value Indicating WTI Total Score as
Predictor of Final Grade Score

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.197[a]	.039	.030	10.321

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL

The null hypothesis (H_0), of Worth-Teaching Index total score in relation to

students' final grade was rejected. Though weak, the H_1 is accepted.

Historical Development Subscale

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine

whether H_0 could be supported.

Table 4.6

Correlations: Final Grade/Historical Development

		Final Grade	HDT
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.242[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	105	105

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given, N = 105, the r-value of the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation was

-0.2424. Although a negative correlation, the relationship between the variables (.013)

was weak with the statistical significance level set at < 0.05 (see Table 4.6). The

calculated *p* value of < 0.05 level was 0.551293 indicating that the null hypothesis would

be falsely rejected 55% of the time. The value of R2, the coefficient of determination,

was 0.0588, meaning that only 5.9%. of teachers' Historical Development score

contributes to student final grade (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Model Summary: R2 - Value Indicating Historical
Development as Predictor of Final Grade Score

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.242[a]	.059	.050	10.215

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), HDT

The mean comparisons of the three statements under the Historical Development

subscale are shown in Tables 4.8 through 4.10:

Statement 1: When I was growing up, my family experiences were nurturing and

supportive.

Table 4.8

*Final Grade * HD1– Means per Likert Response*

HD1	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	90.50	6	2.881
2	92.00	3	1.732
3	90.17	12	4.041
4	86.71	17	7.824
5	86.37	67	12.261
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 2: Based upon things that have happened to me so far in my life, I have always felt confident and valued.

Table 4.9

*Final Grade * HD2– Means per Likert Response*

HD2	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	89.64	11	5.201
2	88.58	12	3.088
3	91.35	17	3.920
4	86.86	14	5.082
5	85.18	51	14.049
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 3: Based upon relationships so far in my life, I have not had trouble feeling accepted.

Table 4.10

*Final Grade * HD3– Means per Likert Response*

HD3	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	93.67	6	1.633
2	89.44	18	3.222
3	90.72	25	5.587
4	81.83	6	3.125
5	84.62	50	13.757
Total	87.26	105	10.478

The null hypothesis (H_0) of Historical Development subscale score in relation to the student final grade was rejected. Though negative and weak, the H_1 is accepted.

Professional Cultural Conditions Subscale

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine whether H_0 could be supported.

Table 4.11

Correlations: Final Grade/Professional Cultural Conditions

		Final Grade	PCCT
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.804
	N	105	105

Given, N = 105, the r-value of the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation was 0.024. Although a positive correlation, the relationship between the variables did not meet the stated < .05 level of confidence for statistical significance (see Table 4.11). The calculated *p* value at the < 0.05 level was 0.804 indicating that the professional Cultural Conditions would have no effect on the student final grade 80% of the time.

The mean comparisons of the three statements under the Professional Cultural Conditions subscale are shown in Tables 4.12 through 4.14

Statement 4: Being in education demands significant personal sacrifice.

Table 4.12

*Final Grade * PCC1- Means per Likert Response*

PCC1	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
4	83.67	27	17.409
5	88.50	78	6.314
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 5: I am largely satisfied with my students' investment in what I a teaching.

Table 4.13

*Final Grade * PCC2 – per Likert Response*

PCC2	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
2	88.21	19	6.469
3	91.37	16	3.243
4	84.41	17	6.276
5	86.58	53	13.464
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 6: When circumstances and relationships in my building are difficult and

unfair, I do not doubt my own efficiency of sense of belonging.

Table 4.14

*Final Grade * PCC3 – per Likert Response*

PCC3	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	93.67	6	1.633
2	85.67	18	3.835
3	81.09	11	4.949
4	93.88	8	3.137
5	85.63	52	12.706
6	96.20	10	8.230
Total	87.26	105	10.478

The null hypothesis (H_0), of Professional Cultural Conditions subscale score in relation to the student final grade was rejected. Though weak, the H_1 is accepted.

Psycho-Social Subscale

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine whether H_0 could be supported.

Table 4.15

Correlations: Final Grade/Psycho-Social

		Final Grade	PSIT
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.233[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.017
	N	105	105
PSIT	Pearson Correlation	-.233[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	
	N	105	105

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given, N = 105, the r-value of the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation was -0.2334. Although a negative correlation, the relationship between the variables is weak but there is a minimal level of statistical significance. The calculated *p* value at the < 0.05 level was 0.017. The value of R^2, the coefficient of determination, is 0.0545 meaning that 5.5% score of teachers' Psycho-Social Conditions score contributes to student final grade (see Table 4.16).

Table 4.16

Model Summary: R^2 - Value Indicating Psycho-Social Total
Score as Predictor of Final Grade Score

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.233[a]	.054	.045	10.238

Note. [a]. Predictors: (Constant), PSIT

The mean comparisons of the three statements under the Psycho/social Influences subscale are shown in Tables 4.17 through 4.19.

Statement 7: I am satisfied with the teaching and learning relationships in my classroom.

Table 4.17

*Final Grade * PSI1– Means per Likert Response*

PSI1	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3	85.67	18	3.835
4	92.43	30	6.564
5	85.04	57	12.527
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 8: Student family and environmental conditions play an important role in how I interpret student performance and behavior.

Table 4.18

*Final Grade *PSI2 – Means per Likert Response*

PSI2	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1	96.20	10	8.230
2	92.00	3	1.732
3	90.17	12	4.041
4	84.32	38	14.031
5	86.62	42	7.026
Total	87.26	105	10.478

Statement 9: I recognize that students who feel bad about themselves are usually reactionary or reclusive.

Table 4.19

*Final Grade * PSI3 – Means per Likert Response*

PSI3	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
3	93.67	6	1.633
4	86.87	40	14.945
5	86.86	59	6.477
Total	87.26	105	10.478

The null hypothesis (H₀), of Psycho-Social subscale scores in relation to the student final grade was rejected. Though negative and weak, the H_1 is accepted.

Spiritual Influence Subscale

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine whether H₀ could be supported.

Table 4.20

Correlations: Final Grade/Spiritual Influences

		Final Grade	SIT
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.309
	N	105	105

Finally, having considered the correlation descriptive statistics and in an attempt to understand more fully the correlation between the dependent variable (Student Final Grade) and the independent variables (HDT, PCCT, PSIT, and SIT), the following regression statistics were helpful.

Table 4.21

Model Summary: Predictive Contributions of Individual
Variables by Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.197[a]	.039	.030	10.321
2	.243[b]	.059	.040	10.264
3	.354[c]	.125	.099	9.945
4	.377[d]	.142	.108	9.898

Note. a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL
b. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL, HDT
c. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL, HDT, PCCT
d. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL, HDT, PCCT, PSIT

Looking at the ANOVA (Table 4.21), the *p* values are all significant in each of the models and validate the amount of variance (R-Square) indicated for each model in the model summary. However, the F statistic indicates a wide variation of data. The small R-square and the wide variation of the F statistic show an accurate picture of the data set.

Table 4.22

Comparison of the Regression Models

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	445.224	1	445.224	4.179	.043[b]
	Residual	10972.833	103	106.532		
	Total	11418.057	104			
2	Regression	671.933	2	335.967	3.189	.045[c]
	Residual	10746.124	102	105.354		
	Total	11418.057	104			
3	Regression	1429.798	3	476.599	4.819	.004[d]
	Residual	9988.259	101	98.894		
	Total	11418.057	104			
4	Regression	1621.449	4	405.362	4.138	.004[e]
	Residual	9796.608	100	97.966		
	Total	11418.057	104			

Looking at the individual subscales within the individual models a few potential variables have a unique effect on the dependent variable (Student Final Grade). The coefficients table (Table 4.23) indicates that Total Worth-Teaching Index variable when not grouped with the other variables is statistically significant with a B of -.294 with the set statistical significance level of < .05.

Further, only model 3 indicates variables that are also statistically significant. The variable Total Worth-Teaching Index maintains its unique contribution to the dependent variable (Student Final Grade). The B score is -.899. The PCCT variable statistical

significance is .007 and a B score of 2.154. The PCCT variable may be the strongest

variable in contributing to change in the dependent variable (Student Final Grade).

Table 4.23

Individual Contributions to the Regression Model and B Coefficient of the Four Models

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	102.212	7.384		13.842	.000
	TOTAL	-.294	.144	-.197	-2.044	.043
2	(Constant)	95.587	8.621		11.088	.000
	TOTAL	.022	.259	.015	.086	.931
	HDT	-.802	.547	-.255	-1.467	.145
3	(Constant)	104.517	8.954		11.673	.000
	TOTAL	-.899	.417	-.604	-2.158	.033
	HDT	.078	.618	.025	.127	.899
	PCCT	2.154	.778	.489	2.768	.007
4	(Constant)	100.807	9.298		10.842	.000
	TOTAL	.041	.790	.028	.052	.958
	HDT	-1.046	1.012	-.332	-1.033	.304
	PCCT	1.085	1.088	.246	.998	.321
	PSIT	-1.342	.959	-.261	-1.399	.165

Note. A. Dependent Variable: Final Grade

Summary

This study attempted to quantify the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual

worth of a student. Chapter IV recounted the findings of this study. A non-experimental

correlational research design was used (Gall et al., 2007). The Worth-Teaching Index

survey was created by the student researcher from the literature of Chapter II.

From 22 surveys 105 data records were produced. Checking for internal validity

the Fowler's sample size chart (1988), at the 95% Margin of Error, 80 grade records were

needed to meet the 6% margin of error.

Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 -1.0. with the acceptable range between 0.60 and 0 - 0.70 (Santos, 1999). The Worth-Teaching Index alpha is .856.

Using SPSS to run a means comparison, it was found that all of the subscales did have a potential correlation to the Student Final Score. There was one exception. The SIT data did not have a significant linear relationship; SPSS dropped it from all of the regression models.

The Pearson Correlation Product Moment procedure found that the subscales HDT, PSIT, and Total Survey Score indicated statistical significance. The PCCT and SIT were not significant.

Applying regression analysis through SPSS the Model Summary identified the subscale grouping as follows: a. Predictor (Constant), TOTAL; b. Predictors (Constant) TOTAL, HDT; c. Predictors (Constant), TOTAL, HDT, PCCT; d. Predictors (Constant) TOTAL, HDT, PCCT, PSIT. For models a through d the R-square goodness-of-fit linear values were .039, .059, .125, .142, respectively, indicating the percentage of the variance each model explains collectively. There was not a significant effect any model has on Student Final Grade. However, continuing to use SPSS and applying the ANOVA analysis, it was discovered that all of the models were statistically significant and validated the R-Square values of each model.

Looking at the Coefficient chart (Table 4.23), the only model with any subscale that was statistically significant was model three: TOTAL, HDT, PCCT. Out of this model HDT was not significant, leaving only TOTAL and PCCT. The PCCT subscale did not correlate with Student Final Grade (Table 4.3).

The conclusion that can be reached is that the Worth-Teaching Index score has both validity (correlation analysis) and validity (regression analysis).

There were several shortcomings in this study. First, not enough surveys were able to be obtained. Secondly, quantitative methodology prohibited the development of more relevant hypotheses with qualitative counterparts (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1992). If it were possible to have completed the initially planned mixed methodology, a deeper understanding and significant triangulation could be accomplished.

Third, there were shortcomings in data collection. Gradebook data collected from teachers from the sample schools was less than ideal. While the data represented student achievement from both an urban and suburban school, they were skewed toward higher achievement (average score = 87.6); this may be a function of sampling from private schools with selective admission, overall higher than normal achievement, or both.

Further, gradebook scores were linked to the teacher's WTI score by average gradebook score per class taught, creating an overall sample of N = 105 gradebook records. While not ideal, this method created a larger sample of gradebook records but repetitive WTI scores per teacher. The extent to which this had an effect on the overall analysis of WTI scores in relation to gradebook scores is unclear. The alternative, averaging gradebook scores by teacher and linking the overall average to the teacher's individual WTI score would have been even less ideal, as the gradebook data could have been skewed as an average of averages and ultimately resulted in a significantly lower overall sample (N). Given the limitations on the extant data, the best option available was selected and the gradebook scores were linked to the teacher's WTI score by average gradebook score per class taught.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF STUDY

The focus of this study was to assess the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of students. The underlying assumption was that teachers who recognize the spirit of a student would have a greater impact on students' academic achievement (Bloomberg, 2013; Lerner, 2000). This chapter contains a summary of the study, discussion, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion.

In an effort to address this assumption, the Worth-Teaching Index survey was developed from themes identified after a review of the literature. The student researcher chose to design his own survey instrument because no other instrument could be identified that would measure the same combination of constructs with the same underlying assumptions (Newman et al., 1997). This study used a correlational survey research design. The Worth-Teaching Index was constructed with four subscales score totals. The sum of the subscale scores comprised the Worth-Teaching total score. All five scores were identified as potentially having an impact on the teacher's capacity to recognize the role of spirit in relationship building, thus impacting student academic achievement. The survey used a 5-point Likert scale (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1992).

Teaching is as much a relational endeavor between teacher and student as it is an academic endeavor (Neilsen, Winter, & Saatcioglu, 2005). Students most often choose to learn when they believe or feel that their teachers care about them as people (Gregory et al., 2010), and teacher stress is greatly reduced when students are respectful and caring as well. Building a school culture of communion reduces both teacher and student stress

(Soderstrom et al., 2006). Negative teacher/student relationships are a major factor in teacher burnout (Gavish & Friedman, 2010) as well as unhealthy emotional stress, often leading to suspension or expulsion for students (Evenson et al., 2009) and teacher burnout (Chang, 2009).

Since the 1960s, the response to student misconduct has been the zero-tolerance policy. This policy consistently mandates specific, predetermined consequences for pre-identified offenses often without consideration of the circumstances or the needs of the students (Evenson et al., 2009; Gonzales, 2002). Zero-tolerance policies have not worked (Gonzales, 2002; Skiba, 2008) but have created an authoritarian, dualistic (body-mind) philosophy/theology (Baumrind, 2012). A Trinitarian (spirit, mind, and body) authoritative philosophy/theology has the potential to create an educational culture that both reduces teacher/student stress (though not directly explored in this study) and improves student academic performance (Lerner, 2002).

Summary of Findings

The statistical significance of the study findings was weak, primarily because there were only 22 volunteer participants. The staff from two Ohio schools were invited to participate in the study. The potential population available to volunteer was 70 teachers. Twenty-two out of a potential of 70 teachers volunteered or 31% of the total potential population chose to participate in the study.

On every demographic variable between the two schools there was a significant difference, with the exception of two variables: staff certification and student graduation rate. In the case of staff certification, both schools' staff were comparably credentialed. Consequently, in terms of technology, rational thinking, and interpreting the Worth-

Teaching Index survey, the accuracy and quality of responses have reason to be judged as comparably valid. In the case of the other comparably similar variables, the data were very close. In this case, it may be possible to assume that the students of both schools were equally responding to their teachers relationally and academically.

If a sufficient number of surveys could have been secured for both schools, it would have been possible to separate the data of both schools and compare the means, correlations, and coefficient of determination data between the two schools. Thus, in addition to improving statistical significance, comparing the correlations between the two different schools would have provided a degree of triangulation based on their differences geographically and socio-economically.

The following two schools were willing and able to participate and complete this study, one located in northeastern Ohio and the other located in mid-Ohio. The result was that 20 of 22 surveys were completed. According to the Krejccie and Morgan Sample Size Scale chart (1970), with a population of 70 teachers there should be 59 completed surveys. Leaving the validity of the study in serious question, keeping this problem in mind, we continued to discuss the findings of this study.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings begins with analyzing and interpreting the correlation data between Worth-Teaching Index total and subscale scores with student's Final Grades. In an effort to establish the strength and direction of relationships between these variables, the SPSS correlation procedure was employed, as shown in Table 5.1.

Overall Worth-Teaching Index Score in Correlation to the Subscale Scores

Table 5.1

Descriptive Statistics: Correlations Between WTI Total and Subscale Scores With Student Final Grades

		HDT	PCCT	PSIT	SIT	TOTAL
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	-.242	.024	-.233	-.100	-.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.804	.017	.309	.043
HDT	Pearson Correlation		.483	.200	.594	.833
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.041	.000	.000
PCCT	Pearson Correlation			.320	.554	.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.001	.000	.000
PSIT	Pearson Correlation				.234	.547
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.016	.000
SIT	Pearson Correlation					.771
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000

Note.*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Overall WTI Score/Student Final Grades:

The Pearson Product Moment of Correlation test was applied to determine whether H_0 could be supported. The following data is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Correlations Final Grade/WTI Total Score

		Final Grade	TOTAL
Final Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	105	105
TOTAL	Pearson Correlation	-.197[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	105	105

Note.*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Given N = 105 and r = -.197, the calculated *p*-value from the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation was 0.043 at the < .05 level, indicating a weak, negative; but, statistically significant correlation between Final Grade and Worth-Teaching Index Total Score. The value of R2, the coefficient of determination, is 0.039, meaning that only 3.9% of teacher's WTI total score contributes to student final grade. The null hypothesis (H_0), of Worth-Teaching Index total score in relation to students' final grade was rejected. Though negative and weak, the H_1 is accepted.

The negative correlation between the Worth-Teaching Index total score and student Final Grade score was unexpected. The inverse relationship indicates that a high Worth-Teaching Index score results in a low student Final Grade score. The expectation was that the correlation between the Worth-Teaching Index total score and the Final Grade score would be a positive relationship. The higher the survey score the higher the student academic achievement (Final Grade score) would be. One possible explanation

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for this anomaly is teachers' personal lived experiences. The teacher who has had a significant traumatic experience in her/his life would have a lower score in some subscales. For example, the first statement in Historical Development (Statement #1: When I was growing up my family experiences were nurturing and supportive) this teacher would choose to score low. However, having overcome her/his difficulties she/he would choose to be a teacher in order to love and support other students who are experiencing what she/he has gone through. Possessing such empathy, with the proper training, this teacher's students will be more successful both socially and academically (Cobb, 2014).

The following analysis between subscale scores may strengthen this interpretation of the data. The following tables explain why the three statements related to each of the subscale constructs were utilized to explore the teachers' capacity to relate to the spiritual-worth of their students.

Historical Development Subscale Analysis

The Historical Development subscale was discovered from the research largely looking at the concept of codependency (Boss, Beaulieu, Wieling, Turner, & LaCruz, 2003; Boss & Carnes, 2012).

Table 5.3

HDT Survey Statements Rationale

_____

Survey Statement	Reason for Statement	Research Citation/s
When I was growing up my family experiences were nurturing and supportive	Largely familial relationships and experiences shape the level of codependency a teacher displays.	(Boss, 2004). - parenting style and level of caring
Based upon things that have happened to me so far in my life, I have always felt confident and valued.	Co-dependent teachers have external locus of control, meaning that they do not have confidence nor feel valued unless someone confirms they are ok.	(Wells et al.,1999) – "Locus of Control" (Springer et al., 1998) – lack self-confidence and self-worth
Based upon relationships so far in my life, I have not had trouble feeling accepted	The level of internal locus of control dictates the capacity to be comfortable with social interactions	(Lerner, 2000) – value of belonging Springer et al., 1998) – value of relationships (Wells et al., 1999) – internal locus of control

_____

There was a weak, negative correlation between the Historical Development subscale score and the Final Grade total score (R-value = .1975) with a moderate level of statistical significance (sig. .013). The null hypothesis (H_0) of Historical Development subscale score in relation to Worth-Teaching Index total score was rejected. The observation is that the inverse relationship between the teacher's Historical Development score and student academic achievement is not what was expected.

The design of the Worth-Teaching Index was created on the assumption that the higher the score of each subscale the more likely student academic achievement would increase. The three statements were written in the positive, rating the teacher's personal history; namely, 1) family dynamics, 2) significant personal events, and 3) significant relationships. Based on the design of the Worth-Teaching Index survey, a negative

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correlation would indicate the teacher has experienced less than a normal life, perhaps a non-traditional upbringing, some traumatic event/s, or significant dysfunctional relationships.

In terms of classroom management and building culture affecting student academic achievement, these data, though weakly correlated, may indicate that the people may choose to become teachers because, in time, they have overcome life's difficulties. They have developed a non-judgmental spirit, meaning that the teacher recognizes the source of the students' aberrant behaviors. She/he identifies with the student as a hurting person, not just a difficult student. They respond by being flexible, understanding, and forgiving. Yet, they have developed a strong sense of spiritual worth and are able to hold the student accountable with love.

In terms of educational pedagogy there is a possibility that teachers with a lower Personal History subscale score may be relational to all students. Their style would potentially be more authoritative than authoritarian. Conversely, the teacher with the highest Personal History subscale score may tend to be more narrowminded, less able to understand and accept student aberrant behaviors. Their classroom management style could prove to me more authoritarian (Baumrind, 2012; Gregory et al., 2010). Table 5.4 is an over simplification of how the Worth-Teaching Index may reveal *why* of certain teacher's style of classroom management and student/teacher relations. This is not to say that a teacher with a high Personal History subscale score would be an authoritarian or that a teacher with a low Personal History subscale score would be authoritative. Neither do I mean to say that both would not be able to be successful, relational teachers.

Table 5.4

Classroom Management Style Based on Teacher Historical Development

Authoritarian	Authoritative
Implications on classroom management: Teacher centered expectations regarding student respect, motivation, and cooperation	Implications on classroom management Student centered expectations for mutual respect, motivation, cooperation
	Student/teacher relations
Student/teacher relations	Open
Rigid	Flexible
Value performance not student	Accepting
Spiritual worth	Recognition of student spiritual-worth
Identify with certain students, not with others	High expectations for the student's sake
Harder to understand another culture	
High expectations for the systems' sake and to be valuable to system and self.	
Personal	Personal
Strong pseudo sense of self – self-image is based on what others expect	Forgiving of self and others
Prideful, perfectionist	Strong sense of self – personal spiritual-worth is based upon conscience and experience
Expect too much of self	
Prone to burn out	Resilient
Experience little disappointment or grief	Living with ubiquitous grief
Abusive disciplinarian	Strong disciplinarian
More susceptible to being codependent	Less susceptible to being codependent
	(Baumrind, 2012)

Professional Cultural Conditions Subscale Analysis

The Professional Cultural Conditions subscale developed out of the research

regarding teacher burnout (Chang, 2009; Gavish & Friedman, 2010;) and self-worth

(Britt, & Schlenker, 1999; Lerner. 2000; Shimizu et al., 2016; Springer, Wells et al.,

1999). Table 5.5 explains why the three statements were utilized to explore the effects of

school culture on teacher psychological and emotional well-being.

Table 5.5

PCC Survey Statements Rationale

Survey Statement	Reason for Statement	Research Citation/s
Being in education demands a significant personal sacrifice	How teachers perceive the stress of teaching effects teacher efficacy	(McKenzie, 2005) stress and burnout (Montgomery & Rupp; 2009) perception is correlated with effects of stress
I am largely satisfied with my students' investment in what I am teaching	Students who take the course content seriously increase the teacher's sense of self-efficacy	(Chang, 2009) – sources of teacher burn-out
When circumstances and relationships in my building are difficult and unfair, I do not doubt my own efficiency or sense of belonging.	Teachers who were able to not base their self-worth on competition were able to improve on overcoming the demands of teaching	(Shimizu et al., 2016) – healthy self-worth

There was a weak positive correlation between the Professional Cultural Conditions subscale score and the Final Grade total score (R-value = .0.242) with a moderate level of statistical significance (sig. 0.804). The null hypothesis (H_0), of Professional Cultural Conditions subscale score in relation to Worth-Teaching Index total score was rejected. The indication is that the positive relationship between the Professional Cultural Conditions subscale score and student academic achievement is (though very weak) what was expected.

This subscale is not statistically significant. In order to obtain better results statistically, it would be necessary to obtain a larger number of surveys. Since a positive correlation was found, a brief consideration of the survey statements may be beneficial to understand the possible uniqueness of this subscale. School culture referred to in this study is meant to be synonymous with school climate. Although culture may be the

broader more inclusive term, it is chosen because it is meant to include climate, ethnicity, and race as all of these facets of school culture are in relationship with each other within the building.

The first statement in Table 5.5 assesses teacher perception. Building level teachers are basically given the same tasks. What is stressful to one teacher for many reasons may not be so stressful to another. But what is assumed in this study is that the common denominator for creating various levels of stress, or lack thereof, is the teacher's spiritual worth and confidence otherwise known as efficacy. Statement two assesses the teacher/student relationship regarding mutual respect and belonging. Those words (respect and belonging) are not used in the statement, but they are the root cause for both student motivation and teacher efficacy. Statement three assesses whether or not a teacher has a *plumb line*. Are they aware of their own spiritual worth, giving them the flexibility, tenaciousness, and groundedness to be able to accept and relate to all students.

School culture is the heart and soul of the school building (Freiberg & Stein, 1999). Voight and Hanson (2017) showed that schools with higher student performance have a more positive school culture than schools with a less positive school culture. They also confirmed that changes in school culture are associated with changes in student academic performance.

It is important to note that the method of collecting data in this study was from school self-reports. Consequently, the findings are relevant for only one point in time and do not attempt to discover how changes in school culture effect student academic achievement.

The approach to assessing school culture through a specifically designed survey assessing teacher mental/social/emotional strength may offer a potential direction of inquiry that explains how and why changes in school culture and student academic achievement occur. Principals set the direction for school culture; teachers carry it out (Cobb, 2014). This study proposed that school culture could best be assessed through the assessment of teacher mental/social/emotional strength.

Psycho-Social Influence Subscale Analysis

The Psycho-Social subscale was developed out of the research regarding student grief, role of family environment, and student self-worth (Boss & Carnes, 2012; Kubler-Ross, 1997; Lerner, 2000;). Table 5.6 explains why the three statements were utilized to explore the effects of school culture on teacher psychological and emotional well-being.

Table 5.6

PSIT Survey Statements Rationale

Survey Statement	Reason for Statement	Research Citation/s
I am satisfied with the teaching and learning relationships in my classroom	Teacher recognizes the value and connectedness of positive relationships to student learning	(Lerner, 2000) -Belonging, valuing, purposing equal learning environment (Roorda et al., 2017) – student engage if psychological needs are met for relatedness, competence, and autonomy are met.
Student family and environmental conditions play an important role in how I interpret student performance and behavior	Teachers understand that co-dependent students have no or very weak self-worth	(Wells, et al., 1999) – Parentification a source of codependency (Amato, 2005) – Family formation change
I recognize that students who feel bad about themselves are usually reactionary or reclusive	At-Risk students and others who are dealing with trauma are experiencing ambiguous grief	(Boss, 2003) - grief

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There was a weak negative correlation between the Psycho/Social subscale score and the Final Grade total score (R-value .233) with a moderate level of statistical significance (sig. .017). The null hypothesis (H_0), of Psycho-Social subscale score in relation to Worth-Teaching Index total score was rejected. The observation is that the inverse relationship between the teacher's Psycho-Social score and Worth-Teaching Index total score was not expected.

The Psycho-social subscale is the most difficult subscale to understand. Teachers have not been trained or taught about codependency and most of all how codependency affects classroom culture. The results are weak; nevertheless, they do indicate a connection. Teacher/student relationships are often difficult and teacher lack of understanding could be the reasons for the correlation being negative.

Spiritual Influences Subscale Analysis

The Spiritual Influences subscale was discovered from the research regarding the role of intuition, need for belonging, and recognition of the human spirit (Bloomberg, 2013; Lerner, 200; Soderstrom et al., 2006). Table 5.7 explains why the three statements were utilized to explore the effects of school culture on teacher psychological and emotional well-being.

Table 5.7

SIT Survey Statements Rationale

Survey Statement	Reason for Statement	Research Citation/s
Based upon the feelings I get from interacting with students, I believe that all students want to belong	Teacher is able to intuitively 'see past' student's behavior and 'read' the deeper psycho/social needs and desires of all students	(Lerner, 2000) -Belonging, valuing, purposing equal learning environment (Vrugtman, 2009, p. 169) – the 'other way of knowing…"
It is just as easy to value a student who does not try as it is to value one who does	Teacher recognizes the intrinsic spiritual-worth of her/his students	(Lerner, 2000) -Belonging, valuing, purposing equal learning environment
I believe that students must know they are valued and that they belong	Teachers realize that relationships come before learning, especially for at-risk students and the goal is to experience communion not just communication in the classroom	(Bloomberg, 2013) both effect and cognition are involved in learning. (Fisher, 2013) - The current study conceptualizes belonging as an individual's experience of feeling (1) valued, (2) needed, and (3) accepted by a social system. (Soderstrom et al., 2006) – communion is more than communication… [than community - researcher added)

There was a weak negative correlation between the Spiritual Influences subscale score and the Final Grade total score (R-value = -.100) with no meaningful level of statistical significance (sig. .309). The null hypothesis (H_0) of Spiritual Influences subscale in relation to Worth-Teaching Index total score was not rejected. The observation is that the inverse relationship between the teacher's Spiritual Influences score and Worth-Teaching Index total score was not expected.

The data available are of no value in terms of identifying any correlation between Spiritual Influences and student academic achievement (Final Grade Score) since the

statistical significance finding was .309 with the chosen alpha set at the < .05 level. The data in this subscale are not usable for making any conclusions. However, there may be a few observations that could be helpful.

Research is clear that students need to feel safe and valued, that they have purpose, and they belong. Research is abundantly clear that these social/emotional/ relational components are positively correlated to increased student academic achievement (Durlak, Weisberg, Dymniki, Taylor, Schellinger, 2011; Freiberg & Stein, 1999; Voight & Hanson, 2017).

Providing a safe learning environment which is inclusive of students knowing they belong because the teacher sees their purpose in life, values them as individuals not only as students, and is willing to build a relationship with each one unconditionally, is certainly a matter of spirit (Lerner, 2000). Spirit is not mentioned in the three statements in this subscale. Yet, all three statements have a spiritual aspect embedded in them.

Subscale Interdependent Actualization - Not Numbers, But Feelings and Intuitions

I will identify the role of each subscale and describe how it impacts the other subscales relevant to one's capacity to speak to a student's spiritual worth. First, the function of Historical Development subscale explores relationships in and outside the family and significant life experiences. These psycho/social factors shape the way teachers see life, a lens through which everything is interpreted (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Secondly, through this lens the teacher interacts with the building culture. The Professional Cultural Conditions subscale determines how the teacher perceives and responds to the building culture. Do they fit into the culture or is the culture abusive to them?

The Psycho-Social subscale is about the teacher's perception of the student's psychological and emotional needs as they are the root to understanding student behavior and motivation. In terms of the at-risk student, this subscale attempts to assess the teacher's awareness and understanding of especially codependency, trauma, and ubiquitous grief (Wells et al., 1999).

Finally, the Spiritual Influences subscale attempts to identify the teacher's conscious and/or subconscious intuitive sense of the value of each student as a human being first and in the role of student second. The significance of this subscale in relation to the other three is that the humanistic (body and soul) philosophy attempts to espouse building relationships with students through the avenues of mind, will, and emotion (the three functions of the soul) (Nee, 1986). However, in terms of ubiquitous grief, where the goal is not to find closure but meaning. In other words, how to live with the loss (not how to grieve the loss, let go, and move on) requires some connection deeper than reason and emotion. It requires a spiritual connection (conscience, intuition, and worship – the functions of the spirit) (Nee, 1986). It is that intuitive, spiritual connection between student and teacher that breaks the bonds that cause aberrant behavior. It is that intuitive, spiritual connection that makes a student who is abandoned and/or neglected know (not just feel) that they belong. It is that intuitive, spiritual connection that causes a personal sense of value and purpose to spring up into their consciousness that they too are important, and quietly scream deep in their spirit that wonderful, worshipful sense that their life is full of meaning. All because you, their teacher, recognizes, values, and speaks to them spirit to spirit!

Narrow as this study may be, if there can be a correlation identified between the Worth Teaching Index survey scores and student academic achievement it will be a significant indication that the Trinitarian theological/philosophical approach to education may be a paradigm shift that can become a foundational theory that creates belonging, valuing, and purposing of all students by recognizing the whole person: spirit, soul, and body.

Recommendations for Practice

This study did not produce any practical strategies to improve teacher/student relations or building culture. The value of this study may be that it suggested a change in educational theory. The inclusion and understanding of spirit in educational pedagogy is more a matter of further research and staff development than it is a traditional development of steps or intellectual strategies to rotely follow. Man is spirit. Spirit is a separate entity from mind, will or emotion. It has its own identity non-comparable to any subjective or objective entity.

Accepting the Trinitarian theological view of the human being, the scripture records, "And Jehovah God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7, p.23). This *breath of life* (spirit) in union with the body resulted in man becoming a *living soul* (Nee, 1986). Thus, man has three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Nee researched the scripture regarding all three (spirit, soul, and body) and comparing the verbs of the sentences in which these three human parts were found. This allowed him to identify them by their function. The soul has three functions: intellect, choice, and emotion. The spirit also has three functions: intuition, conscience, and communion.

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Education research has largely explored the functions of the soul; for example, Dolan's (2002) work on "Emotion, cognition, and behavior" (p.43) Often, when one of the functions of the spirit has been explored, it was seen as a function of the *self* (Csikszentmihalyi & Epstein, 1999). A gap in the research may be studying the person as a whole. Possible questions may be: how does conscience and intuition, functions of the spirit, affect emotion and motivation (choice), functions of the soul? Or how do you build a classroom of community, where recognition of the spirit is not the norm, into a classroom of communion (a function of the spirit), where everyone knows they belong?

My final recommendation is the hope that we explore how we learn by researching and pondering what part of the soul interacts with what part of the spirit in what order or combination of orders that creates new knowledge and a school culture of belonging (communion).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study fell far short of its intended goal. Research identified four areas that impacted teacher/student relations, school culture, and student motivation: Teacher's Historical Development, Professional Cultural Condition within the building, the teacher's understanding of Psycho/social issues, and the teacher's use of his/her Spiritual Influence.

The Worth-Teaching Index data were insufficient to determine any correlation to student achievement with strong enough statistical significance. Had this not been the case and sufficient data could have been obtained, the study would still be incomplete. The original design was a mixed method design; and without the opportunity to hold face-to-face interviews to corroborate and clarify the survey data, no new discovery or

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triangulation of data could be obtained. The need for future research would be to obtain more survey data and complete the qualitative phase of holding sufficient face-to-face interviews.

There are three other foundational paradigms that were instrumental in the direction and discovery of the four survey subscales. Those paradigms were codependency, grief, and the human spirit. Each of these paradigms have been widely studied. However, they have not been sufficiently studied in relation to their effect on the relationship of teaching and learning.

Conclusion

This study used a correlational survey research design to attempt to discover the capacity of teachers to speak to the spiritual worth of students. The findings show that of the four subscales, Historical Development and Psycho/Social subscales had a negative correlation to Final Grade score. Professional Cultural Conditions and Spiritual Influences had no statistical significant correlation to the Final Grade Score. Further, all of the subscales were positively correlated to each other, possibly indicating that with a greater number of surveys, the findings would be more statistically significant to the Final Grade Score. Whether or not all of the subscales would be correlated to Final Grade score or if they would have changed from negative to positive correlation is unknown.

My preference would have been to design and carry out a Discovery-Exploratory Mixed Method study in order to more fully understand the essence of the shared teacher/learner experience. The original plan was to explore the four subscales of the Worth-Teaching Index:

- Historical Development of Teacher Perspective,

- Professional Cultural Conditions,

- Psycho/social Influences, and

- Spiritual Influences.

The three statements related to each subscale would have been discussed with the interviewee.

The interview would be divided into two categories. The first category would explore personal psychosocial history and professional cultural conditions (Historical Development of Teacher Perspective and Professional Cultural Conditions). The relationship between these two constructs and how they formed the teacher's present state of mind or philosophy could have potentially answered the questions, "What have the participants come to understand about the phenomena of being valued?", "What have the participants come to understand about the phenomena of belonging?", and "What have the participants come to understand about their own sense of self efficacy?"

The second category would have explored the interviewee's psychosocial awareness related to student behavior and interviewee's sensitivity to student spiritual-worth (Psychosocial Influences and Spiritual Influences). In this section of the interview process, I would have asked the interviewee to review and choose two significant discipline incidents from the previous year that still hold an emotional attachment in their memory. Then I would have explored with the interviewee their responses regarding the second formative category (Psychosocial Influences and Spiritual Influences), keeping his/her feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and values at that time in mind. An exploration of the interaction between his/her feelings and the disciplining of his/her students potentially

could have answered the question, "What are the participants' experiences with speaking to the spiritual-worth of students?"

There are two potential groups of people who could benefit from this type of genre of research. First, teachers who take each subscale seriously and journal their thoughts and feelings created by the relevant three statements would have the possibility to grow personally and professionally. Further, teachers could also journal regarding their interactions and observations of particular students, or events through the lens of the Worth-Teaching Index and become aware of the root sources of difficult relationships and problematic circumstances.

Secondly, the administrator who chooses to explore and understand the concepts of the Worth-Teaching Index survey could potentially be much more astute when interviewing teachers for a potential position. She/he could also apply these concepts when facilitating relational problems between students and/or staff.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

From: Diana Fagan <dlfagan@ysu.edu>
Date: May 11, 2018 at 2:46:09 PM EDT
To: James L Freeman <jlfreeman@ysu.edu>, Jane Beese <jbeese@ysu.edu>
Cc: Cheryl K Coy <ckcoy@ysu.edu>, Karen H Larwin <khlarwin@ysu.edu>
Subject: HSRC #171-18

Dear Investigators,

Your protocol "Exploring the potential relationship between the Worth-Teaching score and student academic achievement" has been reviewed and is deemed to meet the criteria of an exempt protocol, category #2. You will be surveying teachers at Grove City Christian School or Emmanuel Christian Academy. You will be using a school administrator to distribute the surveys. If the teacher volunteers to participate, they will provide their teacher identification number in order for the investigator to collect aggregate grades for their classes. The teacher data will be de-identified and no identifying information will be gathered.

The research project is now approved, and you can begin the investigation immediately. Please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to report immediately to the YSU IRB any deviations from the protocol and/or any adverse events that occur. Please reference protocol #171-18 in all correspondence about the research associated with this protocol.

Good luck.

Diana Fagan, Vice-Chair, YSU HSRC

Historical Development of Teacher Perspective:

Statement 1 – When I was growing up my family experiences were nurturing and supportive.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 2 – Based upon things that have happened to me so far in my life, I have always felt confident and valued.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 3 – Based upon relationships so far in my life, I have not had trouble feeling accepted.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Professional Cultural Conditions:

Statement 4 – Being in education demands significant personal sacrifice.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 5 – I am largely satisfied with my students' investment in what I am teaching.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 6 – When circumstances and relationships in my building are difficult and unfair, I do not   doubt my own efficiency or sense of belonging.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Psycho/social Influences:

Statement 7 – I am satisfied with the teaching and learning relationships in my classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like

Statement 8 – Student family and environmental conditions play an important role in how I interpret student performance and behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 9 – I recognize that students who feel bad about themselves are usually reactionary or reclusive.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Spiritual Influences:

Statement 10 – Based upon the feelings I get from interacting with students, I believe that all students   want to belong.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 11 – It is just as easy to value a student who does not try as it is to value one who does   try.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Statement 12 – I believe that students must know they are valued and that they belong.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Exactly like me

Subtotals

Historical Development of Teacher Perspective   Total Score
Questions 1-3

Professional Cultural Conditions   Total Score
Questions 4-6

Psycho/social Influences   Total Score
Questions 7-9

Spiritual Influences   Total Score
Questions 10-12

TOTAL:

_____

WTI Index Scale

Teacher's capacitive sensitivity to consider the self-worth of a student as key to the teaching and learning relationship.

Least to be aware and use …   **15 - 0**

Slightly likely to be aware and use …   **30 - 16**

Somewhat likely to be aware and use …   **45- 31**

Likely to aware and use …   **60 - 46**