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Effects of Years of Service and Poverty Level on School Culture Perception

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EFFECTS OF YEARS OF SERVICE AND SCHOOL POVERTY ON TEACHER SCHOOL CULTURE PERCEPTION

by

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Effects of Years of Service and Poverty Level on School Culture Perception.

This dissertation aimed to determine the effects of school poverty level and teacher years of service on teachers' perceptions of school culture. The new model of school culture was used as the theoretical framework and provides a framework for studying school culture. The hypotheses used stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of the six factors of school culture measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. The six school culture factors are collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. The data were analyzed using six 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs. The results of the data analysis determined no significant interaction effects for the six hypotheses. One small, significant main effect for school poverty level on teacher collaboration existed. The conclusion can be drawn from this study that teachers in schools with high or low poverty and all levels of experience put emphasis on school culture. According to the new model of school culture, administrators should be aware of the six factors of school culture and the levels and dimensions where these exist, to ensure that the environment is one where students and teachers can thrive.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each school has unique characteristics that indicate the likelihood of teacher and student success. Teachers leave the profession at very high rates; according to Gray and Taie (2015), 20% to 40% of teachers leave the profession in the first 5 years. These numbers are significant, considering that a school district's cost to replace teachers is between $10,000 and $17,000 (DeFeo, Tran, Hirshberg, Cope, & Cravez, 2017). High teacher attrition can add additional strain on schools and districts that may already struggle to meet students' needs. School culture is the factor that can help mitigate challenges and help ensure that schools are successful.

School culture is multifaceted and permeates every decision made in the school. Administrators create the culture (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017), and teachers decide to stay in the school or profession based on the culture and the support from the administration (Torres, 2019). Administrators' intentional decisions and actions can lead to a positive school culture and teachers staying at the school and in the profession. Many actions can help ensure a positive school culture, including ensuring that teachers have time during the school day, appropriate training, and structures to support collaboration (Elyashiv, 2019; Lockton, 2019; Thessin, 2018; Waters, 2019). Collaboration is critical to ensure that teachers focus on student learning and do not feel isolated. Principals ensure that every decision made directs the school toward effective collaboration.

Schools exist so that students can learn. Student achievement increases as the school's positive culture increases (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015). School culture affects teachers' job satisfaction and whether they stay in the profession, affecting students' achievement. When teachers stay because they are satisfied with their jobs and feel they can make a difference, students are positively influenced (Engin, 2020). Teachers who are happy and satisfied with their jobs will ensure that students learn at high levels. Principals should strive to retain effective teachers; however, novice and experienced teachers have different needs (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). Teachers who are new to the profession need additional supports from administrators and colleagues. Experienced teachers need to feel safe and supported by the administration. Administrators who ensure that the school's conditions are right to retain teachers will also ensure that students achieve academically.

Statement of the Problem

The purposes of this study were six-fold. The purposes were to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas, each measured by the School Culture Survey, for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools:

1. Collaborative Leadership
2. Teacher Collaboration
3. Professional Development
4. Unity of Purpose
5. Collegial Support
6. Learning Partnerships

Background

Theoretical Framework: A New Model of School Culture

School culture is a concept that permeates educational discussions. School culture is the unwritten expectations and behaviors within a school (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Every school has a unique personality identified as school culture. Deal and Kennedy (1983) began the study of school culture based on studies of organizational culture. Since student and teacher performance is mainly affected by culture, studying school culture is essential. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) identified four school culture dimensions: professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of the learning environment, and student-centered focus. These dimensions were combined with three school culture levels identified by Schein (2004): artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions to create a new theoretical framework. This framework is referred to as the new model of school culture.

School Culture

School culture affects all aspects of the school. Teachers leave schools where the culture is negative (Whalen, Majocha, & Van Nuland, 2019; Young, 2018; Zavelevsky & Lishinsky, 2019). Teacher retention is essential for financial and student performance considerations. In schools where teachers positively perceive the school's culture, student achievement is higher (Banerjee, Stearns, Moller, & Mickelson, 2017). In school environments where high levels of trust exist between teachers and administration, as indicated by positive school culture, student needs are the adults' focus. Effective teacher collaboration is also an outcome of positive school culture (Ashley, 2017). A collaborative work environment can be one of the vehicles for improving multiple areas

of education. School culture affects every person and program in a school and can largely determine the effectiveness.

Administrators have the most influence on school culture. Administrators should empower teachers (Burkhauser, 2017) and use motivating language to ensure a positive culture (Holmes & Parker, 2018). The way administrators treat the adults in the building affects the culture. Building leaders should seek to build capacity in other adults (Hallinger, 2015; Torres, 2019). Distributive leadership encourages a positive school culture (Torres, 2019). Teachers are more likely to stay at the school and in the profession if they feel they have a voice in school decision-making (Burkhauser, 2017). Teachers are professionals, and the administration should value their input. Effective leaders understand their influence in building a positive school culture where adults and students can succeed.

School culture is affected by communication. Effective communication builds trust among staff members (Holmes & Parker, 2018; Klien, 2017). Administrators must ensure that structures are in place that allow for open communication between administration and teachers and communication between staff members. Effective teacher communication about instructional expectations and outcomes is critical to student achievement (Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017; Wang & Degol, 2016). Teachers and students will strive to meet clear expectations. Clear and consistent communication is an essential part of school culture.

Teacher Years of Experience

Novice teachers need a positive school culture to thrive. Novice teachers will tolerate low pay if the school culture is positive and equipped for success (Kim, 2019).

Teachers desire to make a difference in students' lives and thus persevere through challenging conditions if they feel appreciated and are given the tools to affect student learning positively. Formal mentor programs are essential for novice teachers (Elyashiv, 2019). Administrators must ensure that mentor programs and appropriate professional development opportunities are in place and meet novice teachers' needs. Professional learning communities (PLCs) create opportunities for novice teachers to collaborate with colleagues (Waters, 2019). Teacher collaboration is essential to teachers but critical to retaining novice teachers. PLCs create opportunities for novice teachers to collaborate with veteran teachers to establish unity of purpose, draw on collegial support, and develop learning partnerships. To build efficacy, novice teachers need direct administrator support with classroom management (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015; Kim, 2019; Nguyen, Pham, Crouch, & Springer, 2020; Youngs, Kwak, & Pogodzinski, 2015). Teachers new to the profession need help from administrators understanding expectations, procedures, and best classroom management practices. A positive school culture helps to ensure novice teachers are successful.

Administrator support for experienced teachers keeps teachers in the profession. Experienced teachers need administrators to provide physical safety (Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016). Teachers who feel safe can focus on improving learning outcomes for students. Redding, Booker, Smith, and Desimone (2019) reported that experienced teachers need less help with classroom management than novices but want to know that administrators will consistently enforce school rules and make safety a priority. Experienced teachers derive job satisfaction from teacher-student relationships, interactions with colleagues, and leadership by the administration. Teacher job

satisfaction leads to teacher retention. Administrators who are mindful of the needs of experienced teachers ensure that teachers stay in the profession.

High-Poverty Schools

The overall poverty level of the school determines specific school characteristics. Teacher attrition is higher in schools where more students live in poverty (Simon & Johnson, 2015). However, Simon and Johnson (2015) hypothesized that teachers are not leaving high-poverty schools because of student needs but poor working conditions. To retain teachers, administrators should make improving working conditions the highest priority in high-poverty schools. Torres (2019) stated that leaders in high-poverty schools often focus on student needs instead of teacher needs, causing teachers to feel unsupported and creating undesirable working conditions. Schools, where most students live in poverty, have additional challenges that leaders must face. Higher teacher attrition numbers also mean a higher likelihood of more novice teachers in high-poverty schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Novice teachers need formal mentor programs and high support levels from principals (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017); these needs place additional demands on a school that may already be lacking resources to meet student needs. Appropriately allocating resources in high-poverty schools will ensure that teachers can meet the students' needs. Parents in communities with high-poverty levels are less likely to be involved in their child's education (Benner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016). However, students who live in poverty benefit significantly when parents partner with and are involved with the school (Avnet, Makara, Larwin, & Erickson, 2019; Benner et al., 2016). Students benefit from positive parental involvement; however, students living in poverty need to see their families prioritize education. Schools that serve a high number

of students living in poverty should be aware of the benefits of parental involvement and intentionally create opportunities for parents to be involved. Parental involvement increases teacher efficacy because students are more engaged and supported at home.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership is vital to creating and maintaining a positive school culture. Huang, Hochbein, and Simons (2020) posited that collaborative leaders promote positive school culture by increasing the collective desire to improve school performance. Leaders need to be able to move the staff toward a shared vision and mission through collaboration. Urick (2020) stated that while collaborative leadership should be the ultimate goal, new leaders need to establish their leadership before sharing leadership with the staff. Urick also identified four types of principals (integrated, transitioned, balkanized, and limited) and expressed that integrated leaders create the synergy that promotes positive school culture. Leaders need to identify and develop other leaders after solidifying their role in the school. Creating and maintaining a positive school culture requires that principals encourage collaboration among staff and share leadership.

Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration is beneficial to the school. Administrators must set the tone for collaboration in the building by providing structures and time (Jones & Thessin, 2017; Lockton, 2019). Teachers need to meet at specified times and understand the meeting's purpose for collaboration to be beneficial. While increasing student achievement is ultimately the goal, teachers benefit emotionally and professionally from meeting with their colleagues and collaborating about teaching (Ronfeldt et al., 2015; Jones & Thessin, 2017; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). Teachers who meet together regularly

create ways to support each other and students. Collaboration helps to create a culture of collective responsibility for students. Stakeholders can benefit from teacher collaboration.

Specific qualities will ensure that collaboration is effective. Goddard, Goddard, Kim, and Miller (2015) expressed that collaboration should be frequent, formal, and focused on instructional improvements. Thessin (2018) identified eight factors that leaders should look for in teacher collaboration: meeting regularly over time, emphasizing context, aligning with initiatives in the school, working collaboratively, sharing a vision and purpose to improve student learning, establishing shared leadership, and structuring meetings correctly. Thessin also said that collaboration had more positive effects when teachers used the time to analyze student work, researched improved practices, answered questions, and discussed classroom observation data. Administrators help teachers reach their full potential by providing consistent time within the schedule, agendas, and other structures to support collaboration. Leaders should also ensure they are modeling beneficial behaviors so that time spent in collaboration is of maximum benefit to students and teachers. Administrators should ensure that teachers have effective collaboration training (Jones & Thessin, 2017). Training can help ensure that teachers understand best practices related to regular collaboration. Collaboration is more beneficial for everyone when conditions allow for best practices.

Professional Development

Professional development must meet specific criteria to ensure positive outcomes for the teacher and the school. Garcia and Weiss (2019) said that teachers are more likely to benefit from professional development when they have a voice in the training they attend. Teachers know their needs and should be able to choose activities to fit their

needs. Administrators should be included in teacher professional development when the training is for a new program being implemented (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Principals need to know what teachers are learning about the implementation of programs to provide support and accountability. Professional development should be active learning that allows teachers to test new knowledge and skills before implementing the skills in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Workshops where active learning and opportunities for practice are not involved are not likely to change classroom practices and affect student achievement. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) also asserted that professional development should always be followed with collaboration opportunities to solidify learning. Collaboration is always important for teachers, but collaborating about new programs and training can help ensure students' and teachers' positive effects. Professional development implemented correctly should increase student achievement and improve teacher efficacy, leading to teacher retention (Nguyen et al., 2020). Leaders must encourage professional development that creates authentic opportunities for student and teacher growth. Ensuring that professional development meets these criteria will ensure that teachers continuously improve their craft.

Unity of Purpose

Unity of purpose is the degree to which adults in the building work toward a common goal. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, and Matttos (2016) refer to the unity of purpose as collective commitments that can also be considered the school's core values. Teachers have a greater sense of unity of purpose if they are involved in creating collective commitments. PLCs create opportunities for teachers to collaborate with administrators on vision, mission, goals, and collective commitments (DuFour et al.,

2016). Once these cornerstones are established, everyone in the building can begin to move in the same direction. Unity of purpose contributes to the common goals and culture of a school.

Collegial Support

Collegial support speaks to the way that teachers help each other move toward reaching school goals. Garcia and Weiss (2019) asserted that administrators should nurture colleagues' relationships to improve the overall teaching experience. Teachers need to know that others understand the challenges they are facing. Thus, collegial support helps teachers feel like part of a team. Vangrieken et al. (2015) promoted the importance of emotional supports for teachers. When leaders create an environment of collegial support, they provide a means of meeting staff members' emotional needs. Collegial support establishes an atmosphere of staff members supporting each other as they work toward educational goals.

Learning Partnerships

Students benefit when school and family partnerships are forged. Academic achievement increases when parents or guardians are involved with schools (Benner et al., 2016; Day & Dotterer, 2018). Schools should ensure that parents can be involved in schools to allow students to benefit from learning partnerships. Park, Stone, and Holloway (2017) identified three categories of parental involvement beneficial to stakeholders. Not only do students benefit from parental involvement, but parents and teachers benefit as well. Students living in poverty benefit from seeing their parents involved in school-based activities (Avnet et al., 2019). Modeling the importance of

education is critical for children in poverty. Students benefit when schools and parents work together.

The types of parental involvement that are beneficial vary with grade levels. Elementary students can benefit significantly from school-based parental involvement (Avnet et al., 2019). Elementary schools should put structures in place to get parents on campus throughout the year to significantly affect student achievement. Middle school students benefitted the most from academic socialization or having conversations with their parents regarding academics and future plans (Avnet et al., 2019). Middle schools can partner with parents to facilitate discussions regarding academics. High school students benefit when parents are involved in school-based activities and provide academic socialization (Benner et al., 2016). The benefits of these types of involvement in high school were very significant. Each level of school needs to provide different kinds of opportunities for parents to partner with the school.

Hypotheses

1. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collaborative leadership measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
2. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of teacher collaboration measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.

3. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of professional development measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
4. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of unity of purpose measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
5. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collegial support measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
6. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of learning partnerships measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.

Description of Terms

Collaborative Leadership. Collaborative leadership is the relationships that leaders have with school staff and the extent to which the leader seeks and values input from the staff, students, and community (Ohlson, 2009).

Collegial Support. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) defined collegial support as the level of trust between teachers and the extent to which they work well together.

High-Poverty Schools. In high-poverty schools, 90% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017).

Learning Partnerships. Working relationships between school staff, parents, and students are known as learning partnerships. Learning partnerships should focus on the students' good (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006).

Low-Poverty Schools. In low-poverty schools, 69% or fewer students qualify for free or reduced lunch (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017).

Professional Development. Professional development is structured professional learning that creates teacher practices and student growth (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Teacher Collaboration. Teacher collaboration is the joint interaction of teachers needed to perform a shared task (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

Teacher Years of Experience. A novice teacher is any teacher who has completed 0 - 3 years of teaching experience. An experienced teacher has 4 or more years of experience (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020).

Unity of Purpose. Unity of purpose describes how teachers work toward a school's common goal (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006).

Significance

Research Gaps

School culture research is not new in the field of education. Minimal research exists to indicate how poverty level and teacher years of service interact with teachers'

perceptions of school culture's various facets. These data are significant as the demographics in Arkansas continue to change, especially in individual districts. Parental involvement's influence on school culture is another area that has not been explored thoroughly. Existing research does not adequately cover unity of purpose within schools and the influence of PLCs on school culture. The importance of school culture makes the connections between these variables critical for educational leaders to understand.

Possible Implications for Practice

School culture is something with which school leaders should be concerned. A positive school culture promotes high student achievement (Horton, 2018). Educational leaders need data regarding school poverty level and teacher years of service with school culture perceptions. Parental involvement affects school culture and should be considered a variable when improving schools (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu, & Yuan, 2016). Principals and other leaders can evaluate the data that focuses on culture and the relationship to the teacher's years of service and the poverty level.

Administrators at the building and district levels will find this information useful. The data might also interest administrator preparation programs to develop skills that help administrators understand and establish a positive school culture based on these six factors. Identification of the six factors is vital as school culture is sometimes thought of as a vague construct. District administrators could also use the six factors related to culture to evaluate principals and target professional development.

Process to Accomplish

Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used. The six independent variables were the school poverty level and years of teaching experience (0-3 years versus 4 or more years). The six hypotheses' dependent variables were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships.

Sample

This sample included scores from a school culture survey measuring K-12 teachers' perceptions of school culture's six factors in 69 Arkansas schools. Sixteen schools were high-poverty, having at least 90% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches, and 53 schools were low-poverty, having between 0% to 69% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunches. The sample included 95 novice and 204 experienced K-12 teachers.

Instrumentation

The School Culture Survey developed by Valentine and Gruenert (2006) was used to study school culture perceptions. The survey measures perceptions of school culture using six factors: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. The survey contains 11 questions related to collaborative leadership, six questions related to teacher collaboration, five questions for professional development, four questions related to collegial support, five questions for unity of purpose, and four questions on learning partnerships. A 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly

agree) was used to indicate teachers' level of perception on each item. The Cronbach's Alpha Factor Reliability Coefficients on the six components were collaborative leadership (.910), teacher collaboration (.834), professional development (.867), unity of purpose (.821), collegial support (.796), and learning partnerships (.658).

Data Analysis

A 2 x 2 between-groups, factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to address each of the six hypotheses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 27 software was used to analyze the data collected from 69 schools in Arkansas. Two hundred ninety-nine teachers at varying grade levels and years of teaching experience responded to the survey. The six hypotheses' independent variables were the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch and years of teaching experience, divided into two levels. The six hypotheses' dependent variables were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. A two-tailed test with a .05 level of significance was used to test the null hypotheses.

Summary

School culture is of critical importance to every administrator. Understanding school culture and the factors within school culture helps ensure close attention is paid to creating environments where teachers will stay, and students will learn. Novice teachers need additional administrative support to become confident and effective teachers (Youngs et al., 2015). Experienced teachers need a collaborative environment and distributed leadership to persevere through education difficulties (Urick, 2020). Community factors, such as poverty level, can also influence what happens inside the

school. Administrators who build positive school cultures can protect teachers from additional stressors and keep them in the profession.

The next chapter will apply the theoretical framework and the new school culture model to the current school culture research. A review of the related literature on the six factors of school culture and administrators' importance in creating and maintaining a positive environment for teachers and students will be examined. The different needs of novice and experienced teachers will also be explored.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

School culture can determine whether teachers stay at the school or even in the profession. School culture is the most critical factor in retaining teachers (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers will overlook low pay and other challenges if they work in an environment where they feel physically safe and supported by the administration. Six factors make up school culture: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). Each factor is essential to the school's overall culture; however, each factor will affect the school and the teachers differently. Novice teachers and experienced teachers have different needs relating to each of the six factors, determining if they persevere at the school and in the profession.

Administrators should understand how school culture affects every facet of the school. The six factors identified above fall into the dimensions and levels of school culture identified in the theoretical framework: a new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). This framework delineates the levels (artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions) and the dimensions (professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of learning environment, and student-centered focus) of the culture found in every school. Administrators should strive to understand the levels and dimensions to retain teachers.

The environment of the school is the responsibility of the school leadership. A positive environment will provide many benefits, including student achievement (Engin, 2020). Administrators indirectly affect student achievement by creating an atmosphere in the school that is conducive to learning. Factors out of school leadership control, such as poverty, can be mitigated by ensuring a positive school culture and low teacher attrition (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Wang & Degol, 2016). School leaders must understand the critical part that school culture plays in their school. This chapter includes a review of the literature surrounding the six factors of school culture and the effects on novice and experienced school teachers.

Theoretical Framework: A New Model of School Culture

School culture is a critical concept for educators to understand. Deal and Peterson (1999) described school culture as unwritten expectations and behaviors within a school. This unwritten code of conduct determines how faculty react to challenges and think about student learning. School culture has developed over time as a concept stemming from organizational culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1983). Since schools are different from businesses, educators and researchers must be aware of school culture's nuances. Establishing a clear definition of school culture is essential for educational leaders.

School climate and school culture are sometimes thought of as interchangeable concepts. Van Houtte (2005) called for clarity in the concept of school culture. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) clarified the concepts in response to Van Houtte's research. These researchers aimed to identify influences on school effectiveness by determining which metrics are most important for researchers to study. The search for clarity resulted in a new model of school culture.

A New Model of School Culture

The culture of a school encompasses everything that happens in the school. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) defined school culture as

> the shared basic assumptions and espoused beliefs that exist in the professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of the learning environment, and student-centered focus of the school that determine and sustain the norms of behavior, traditions, and processes particular to a specific school (p.139).

The four dimensions of school culture noted in the definition each affect the culture differently and do so at different levels. Schein (2004) identified three levels influenced by culture: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) connected the four dimensions of culture they identified to Schein's three levels of culture (see Figure 1). Each school has a culture expressed at the three levels and in the four dimensions that determines the school's overall effectiveness. Every experience that each stakeholder has is affected by the culture of the school.

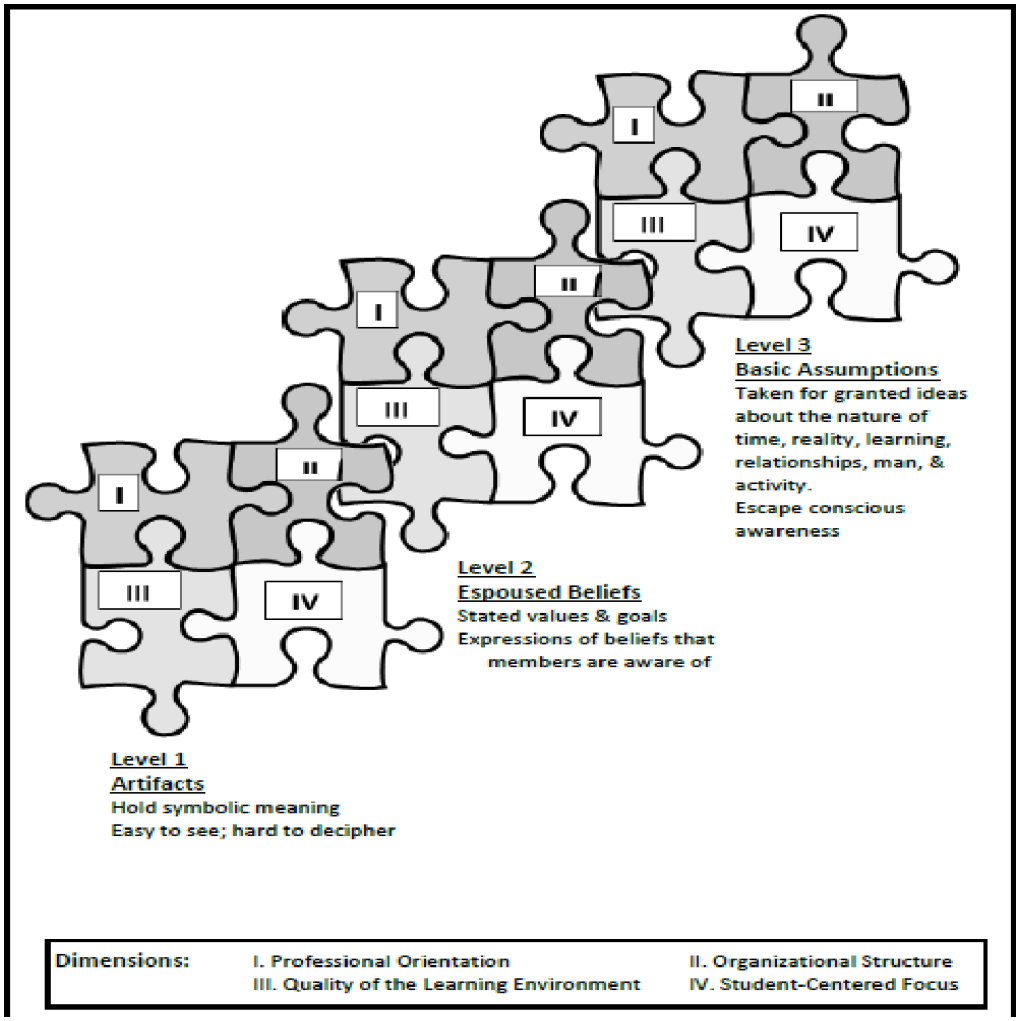

Figure 1. A new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Reprinted with permission.

The first dimension of the model is professional orientation. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) indicated that professional orientation could also be replaced with PLC descriptions. DuFour et al. (2016) described a PLC as an ongoing process by which teachers work in a recurring cycle to improve better results for teachers and students. When considering teachers' improvement and growth, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the PLC process are vital as organizational constructs and structures. A large part

of this dimension consists of intangibles that researchers cannot easily measure with traditional methods.

Organizational structure is the second dimension. While the professional orientation examines attitudes, organizational structure examines the systems and structures that affect how business is conducted in the school (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). These structures include leadership styles (transactional or transformational), communication methods (verbal and written), and processes by which tasks are accomplished (collaboratively or individually). The organizational structure and constructs are readily observable.

The quality of student learning in a school is the third dimension and is dependent on the quality of instruction and instructional activities delivered by the staff. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) used descriptors like *intellectual rigor* and *cognitively challenging* to describe this dimension of school culture. The learning environment also refers to how students interact with peers and adults in the building. Outcomes of quality learning environments can be measured through observations and achievement data, depending on the research's focus.

Student-centered focus is the final dimension. The student-centered focus dimension will affect student achievement and student self-efficacy (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). This dimension is measured by the extent to which the needs of individual students are met. Parental involvement, differentiated instruction, student achievement data, and other student support services are recognized under this school culture dimension. The collective, rather than individual, results of the programs in place at the school will determine the student-centered focus level.

The dimensions of school culture exist at different levels of the organization. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) identified three levels that house the four of the dimensions. Artifacts are the first level; artifacts are the symbols or things observable in a school. Espoused beliefs are the second level. These beliefs are the values and goals in which decisions are made and reflected in the school's vision and mission. Basic assumptions are the third level. Basic assumptions are the undercurrent from which everything in the building flows. The basic assumptions are taken for granted and do not have to be explicitly stated because they are part of the school's personality. The levels of school culture are not inherently positive or negative but reflect the beliefs at the heart of a school community. Each dimension of school culture exists at the three levels.

School Culture

School culture and the components of school culture affect teacher retention. School culture is a critical factor in retaining teachers (Whalen et al., 2019; Young, 2018; Zavelevsky & Lishinsky, 2019). School culture is multifaceted and includes relationships with peers and administrators. These relationships affect a teacher's desire to persevere and stay in the profession. Zavelevsky and Lishinsky (2019) also noted that support from the administration is critical, and each individual needs a unique amount of support. Administrators should strive to understand and meet the needs of each teacher. On teacher retention, Young (2018) noted that the lack of influence over school policy was a reason for teacher attrition. Shared leadership is significant to teachers. A teacher's decision to stay in the profession or at a school could depend on the school's culture and the administration's ability to meet teachers' specific needs.

In a positive school culture, administrators earn the trust of teachers. Teachers must trust administrators to be fair and consistent with every decision (Talley, 2017). Administrators should strive to be fair in dealing with staff members and students and should be observed supporting everyone equally concerning student discipline and personnel matters. Kirkpatrick and Johnson (2014) posited that teachers engage differently in their jobs beyond their novice years, depending on the ability to trust the administration. Teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience would not take risks in the classroom to benefit students if administrators could not be trusted. Talley (2017) also stated that administrators erode trust when they fail to model expected behaviors, leading to teacher attrition. Administrators who hold themselves to a high standard of professionalism gain teachers' confidence and earn teachers' trust by insulating teachers from happenings outside of the school that could affect their morale (Dahlkamp et al., 2017). Outside influences could be vocal community members, parents, or even school board members. Teachers who feel they cannot trust administrators are more likely to leave the school and the profession.

School culture affects student achievement. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs increase student achievement, and if the school culture is positive, the benefits are amplified (Banerjee et al., 2017; Torres, 2019). Teachers might enjoy teaching and therefore improve student learning; however, if they enjoy teaching and report a positive school culture, student achievement increases (Torres, 2019). Whitney, Maras, and Schisler (2012) determined that at-risk schools with high student achievement were more likely to have administrators who supported teacher collaboration. Teacher collaboration is one factor that can lead to a more positive school culture and higher student

achievement. School culture can have positive or negative effects on student achievement.

School Culture and Administration

Administrator support plays an essential role in determining school culture. Von Fischer and De Jong (2017) found a significant relationship between a principal's perceived servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction. Two critical factors of servant leadership listed by von Fischer and De Jong were humility and empowerment. Burkhauser (2017) also expressed that empowerment was an essential aspect of administrator support perceived by teachers. Teachers perform better if they feel empowered by the administration to make decisions in their classrooms. Teacher job satisfaction leads to increased student achievement (Banerjee et al., 2017; Burkhauser, 2017; Hallinger, 2015; Wang & Degol, 2016). Lack of autonomy was a factor listed by Young (2018) for teacher attrition. Administrators who empower teachers will have an indirect effect on student achievement and a direct effect on the culture in the school. Holmes and Parker (2018) noted that principals who used motivating language improved teacher and student outcomes. Leaders' words can affect the school culture, and leaders should pay close attention to how they speak to teachers. According to the new model of school culture, the way leaders speak to others is related to the professional orientation dimension at the three school culture levels (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). If leaders have a professional orientation, professionalism will be evident in what they do and say. Administrators show support in many ways, including words spoken and how they empower teachers; these behaviors play an essential role in determining the school culture.

Student achievement can be highly attributable to the leadership in the building. In high-performing schools, administrators emphasize high academic standards, and everyone believes they can improve student outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2016). Principals and other school leaders must place a priority on student achievement and building efficacy in teachers. Maintaining high instructional standards, ensuring an effective school leadership team and teacher teams, and fostering a shared vision are leadership activities with the highest positive effect on student achievement (Ingersoll, Sirinides, & Dougherty, 2018). Administrators should put systems in place to ensure these high-leverage activities are happening consistently to promote student achievement. Teachers who work in academically high-performing schools are more likely to stay in the profession (Nguyen et al., 2020; Young, 2018). This relationship's causation is unclear, as Young could not determine if teachers stayed because students performed well or students performed well because of the teachers staying at the school. Regardless of which caused the other, high student achievement and teacher retention can be every administrator's goal. Another way to attend to student achievement and teacher retention is to ensure the physical safety of everyone in the building (Kraft et al., 2016). Students can focus on academics, and teachers can focus on activities that improve student learning when a safe school environment exists. Administrators are responsible for ensuring that conditions in the school are appropriate for students to achieve academically.

Administrators set the tone for interactions in the school. Hallinger (2015) and Torres (2019) stated that leaders who were cooperative, collaborative, and sought to build capacity in others were most effective. Leaders should always model the behaviors they

desire in others. Klien (2017) and Holmes and Parker (2018) noted that effective communication builds trust among staff members, and constructivist leadership will invite more honest staff input than transactional leadership. A collaborative leader should encourage and expect effective communication and collaboration from staff. Zavelevski and Lishinsky (2019) found that relationships with peers were critical to teacher success. Administrators should be intentional about putting structures in place to support relationship building and collaboration among colleagues. These structures might look different in every school; however, Elyashiv (2019) pointed out that administrators should strive to make the school's environment democratic with collegial partnerships and high levels of support. This kind of setting helps ensure teachers are retained and perform at a high level. Administrators cannot expect teachers to communicate and collaborate effectively if they do not model desired behaviors.

Ethical leadership encourages growth in schools. Klenowski and Ehrich (2016) noted that administrators who model ethical leadership and view improving student outcomes as a moral obligation improve school culture. Cherkowski, Walker, and Kutsyuruba (2015) added that good leaders always find ways to empower others and view improving school for learners as a moral imperative. If these environments are present, teachers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, encouraging student growth. Another way leaders can ensure teachers have input is to operate with a critical inquiry approach. Teachers will more often challenge potentially harmful or unethical directives or policies if leaders model and encourage critical inquiry (Klenowski & Ehrich, 2016). Critical inquiry allows teachers to look at the reasons behind decisions and

ensure equity for all. When parties feel a moral obligation to make the right decision for students, schools could improve.

Support from the administration is essential to retaining teachers at any stage of their career. Elyashiv (2019) and Kelly, Cespedes, Clara, and Danaher (2019) argued that novice teachers are significantly more likely to leave the profession due to poor school culture than low pay. Teachers want to feel like they are part of a team, and administrators are responsible for setting that tone for the building. Ucar and Ipek (2019) noted that teachers with fewer years of experience were more likely to feel unsupported by the administration, reinforcing Lockton's (2019) and Jones and Thessin's (2017) findings that administrators should strive to understand staff members' and teams' unique needs. Kirkpatrick and Johnson (2014) asserted that teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience felt administrators' guidance was still crucial, but they also wanted a level of autonomy. Carillo and Flores (2017) also concluded that veteran teachers need administrators to provide a safe and supportive environment conducive to building healthy relationships with stakeholders. Administrators must model positive and healthy relationships with stakeholders if teachers are expected to create similar relationships. Nguyen et al. (2020) theorized that teachers are more likely to stay in schools where fewer discipline issues exist, more accessibility to teaching materials and resources, and better working conditions are present. According to Nguyen et al. (2020), Torres (2019), and Zavelevsky and Lishinsky (2019), class size and student demographics did not affect teacher retention. Administrators focus on areas that they can control to affect teacher retention positively. Teacher retention is highly dependent on administrator support.

Instructional leadership is critical to a high-performing school. High-performing schools have leaders who emphasize high academic standards (Dou et al., 2017; Wang & Degol, 2016). Ingersoll et al. (2018) asserted that instructional leadership and teacher leadership were significant to student achievement even after controlling other school characteristics. Administrators should focus on core teaching and learning activities and encourage teachers to take ownership of academic outcomes. Instructional leadership includes being knowledgeable about curriculum and assessment and facilitating opportunities for teachers to grow through formal and informal learning experiences. However, providing objective and consistent performance evaluations did not improve student achievement (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Alternatively, Nguyen et al. (2020) posited that consistent evaluation systems did increase the odds of teacher retention. Teacher evaluation systems alone may not produce increased student achievement but can indirectly affect whether or not teachers are retained. Goddard et al. (2015) suggested that the principal's instructional leadership could predict the degree to which teachers collaborate to improve instruction and student achievement. Principals should closely monitor classroom instruction to ensure that teachers focus on improving student achievement. A robust instructional leader also improves teacher retention (Dou et al., 2017). Teachers are more likely to remain in a school where the administration focuses on teaching and learning, and the culture supports teachers. Strong instructional leadership supports an environment where teachers and students grow.

Teacher Years of Experience

Novice Teachers

Novice teachers have unique needs. Kelly et al. (2019) and Kim (2019) studied novice teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. They proposed that novice teachers were primarily unconcerned about the relatively low salary but needed to feel supported. Although, Nguyen et al. (2020) theorized that salary increases slightly reduced the odds of teacher attrition. Mentor programs and structures that allowed teachers to build relationships with students and parents were two of the most substantial factors that led to retention (Kelly et al., 2019). Formal mentoring programs make retaining teachers more likely (Burke et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2020; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Youngs et al., 2015). Burke et al. (2015) noted that administrators must design mentor programs that allow for onsite meetings between mentees and mentors during the school day. However, Helms-Lorenz, van de Grift, and Maulana (2015) discovered that observations and coaching based on those observations are the most influential components of mentor programs. Mentors and mentees should be allowed to observe each other and reflect on those observations. The support novice teachers receive reflects the organizational structure identified by Schoen & Teddlie (2008). Administrators intentionally create organizational structures to support teachers. The administration should attend to novice teachers' needs so they will persevere in education.

Novice teachers will stay in schools that create specific conditions. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) posited that the three factors that were most likely to retain novice teachers were supportive communication from school leadership, formal mentor programs, and collaboration time. Teachers will tolerate low pay if other conditions meet

their needs. Elyashiv (2019) also cautioned that novice teachers would leave the school and possibly the profession when no formal mentorship programs are available or negative school culture. Elyashiv also postulated that novice teachers are more susceptible to negative school culture than veteran teachers because they compare school conditions to alternative professions they could pursue. Redding et al. (2019) asserted that administrators' support is more critical than mentor programs. They determined that administrators who take the time to organize strong mentor programs would also provide support in other areas. Redding et al. (2019) indicated that mentor programs result from high levels of administrative support. School culture can compound or overcome the effects of low salaries depending on the nature of the culture. Helms-Lorenz et al. (2015) studied a group of novice teachers for 3 consecutive years. They expressed that any efforts to retain teachers should be at the teacher level rather than the school level. Administrators, therefore, target school culture and teacher needs to ensure retention. Novice teachers need extra supports at the beginning of their careers to keep them in the profession.

Formal mentor programs need to have specific characteristics to ensure they are beneficial. In elementary schools, mentors and novice teachers should teach at the same grade level, and in secondary, mentors and novices should teach the same subject area (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Novice teachers need guidance in specific areas, and mentors will be more helpful if they share similar experiences. An essential feature of mentor programs is observation and coaching provided by the mentor (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2015). Time should be provided to novice teachers and mentors to observe each other while teaching and interacting with students. Conversation, reflection, and coaching

about observations create authentic learning experiences. The focus of collaboration between novice teachers and mentor teachers is often teaching strategies and matters related to the curriculum; however, novices need support with student assessment and classroom management (Burke et al., 2015; Youngs et al., 2015). Administrators should recognize areas other than curriculum where novice teachers need support and provide guidance to the mentor and novice in needed areas. Understanding the needs of novice teachers and how to meet the needs with mentors could ensure success for teachers and schools.

Mentor and novice teachers should be paired purposefully. Mentor teachers should be experienced teachers who can assist novice teachers with curriculum needs and teaching strategies and convey the school's culture (Whalen et al., 2019). Since PLCs can lower stress for novice teachers (Waters, 2019), mentor teachers should know the school's collaboration processes and help the novice teacher benefit from that collaboration. Charner-Laird, Szczesiul, Kirkpatrick, Watson, and Gordon (2016) and Garcia and Weiss (2019) expressed the importance of collegial support for novice teachers' retention. Well-designed mentor programs provide the collegial support that novice teachers need to grow as teachers. Effective mentor programs do not require extra administrative work for novice or experienced teachers; meeting times are scheduled during the workday to ensure additional time outside of the scheduled day is unnecessary (Burke et al., 2015; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Novice teachers need to be encouraged to balance personal and professional roles, and meeting times outside of the school day do not promote a balance between work and home lives. Administrators should be purposeful about the design of formal mentor programs to ensure effectiveness.

Novice teachers have valuable input to offer colleagues. PLCs are associated with increased performance and feelings of well-being in novice teachers (Kelly et al., 2019; Waters, 2019). Novice teachers desire opportunities and are more likely to stay in schools where they have an ongoing collaboration with colleagues (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Charner-Laird et al. (2016) studied novice teachers and their experiences in PLCs and proposed that schools that use critical dialogue in PLCs strengthen novice teachers' commitment to the organization. Critical dialogue gives teachers a voice and focuses on discussions about what is currently happening in the classrooms and school. Critical dialogue promotes reflection on current practice, which increases effectiveness (Charner-Laird et al., 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Huang et al., 2020). In a positive school culture, the reflection included in team meetings influences students' performance. PLCs give teachers a sense of purpose and allow them to explore and help others in areas where they are effective (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). When teachers feel effective, they are more likely to stay in the profession. PLCs are a vehicle for novice teachers to provide input to colleagues.

Novice teachers need to be able to trust administrators. Novice teachers require the most support from administrators with student behavior management; schools with fewer discipline problems have higher teacher retention (Burke et al., 2015; Kim, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020; Youngs et al., 2015). Novice teachers supported with student behavior develop trust for administrators, leading to teacher retention and higher self-efficacy. Redding et al. (2019) reported that administrator support, which included high expectations, encouragement, time and structures for teacher collaboration, and enforcement of school rules, was critical when novice teachers considered staying at or

leaving the school or profession. Administrators make focused efforts to ensure that novice teachers have supports in multiple areas. Youngs et al. (2015) expressed that student behavior and instructional supports made novice teachers feel more secure and enhanced trust between the teacher and principal. When teachers feel secure, they are more effective, which builds confidence. Trust is a critical factor in retaining novice teachers.

Administrators should be aware of the needs of novice teachers. Principals should ensure that teachers are hired to teach in their certification areas to influence teacher retention (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Young, 2018). Often administrators will hire the best teacher possible, even if that means asking the teacher to teach outside of their certification area; however, these types of decisions often lead to teacher attrition. Dahlkamp et al. (2017) and Burkhauser (2017) noted that administrators should protect novice teachers from outside influences. Negative opinions from outside the school can have detrimental effects on the school climate and culture if administrators cannot protect teachers from these influences. Novice teachers are more likely to consider the amount of teaching and clerical work required, academic growth in students, the value the community places on teaching and education, and ability to build relationships with parents and guardians than salary considerations when deciding whether to persevere in teaching (Kelly et al., 2019). Each of these areas should be purposely addressed when administrators are making decisions that affect teachers. Administrators can provide support to novice teachers in many different areas to help ensure retention.

Experienced Teachers

Teachers beyond novice years need to feel safe and supported by administrators. Kraft et al. (2016) noted that improved school safety led to student achievement and teacher retention. Teachers are not likely to be present and give their best effort in a school where they do not feel safe. As noted by Kim (2019), novice teachers need support with student behavior; however, veteran teachers need to know that administrators will enforce school rules and prioritize safety (Nguyen et al., 2020; Redding et al., 2019). Teachers expect leadership to enforce rules and protect them from harm. According to the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008), experienced teachers want administrators to make safety an essential part of the level of the basic assumptions and the organizational structure dimension. Successful principals recognize that relationships exist between school safety and student achievement and school safety and teacher retention, and those relationships must be prioritized (Kraft et al., 2016). These priorities encourage teachers to remain committed to the school. Administrators can affect teacher retention by ensuring experienced teachers are safe and feel supported.

Experienced teachers depend on students and colleagues for job satisfaction. Carrillo and Flores (2017) ascertained that the significant sources of job satisfaction for veteran teachers are teacher-student relationships, interactions with colleagues, and leadership provided by the administration. These factors are related to emotions indicating that administrators should not discount the importance of feelings. Carrillo and Flores stated that three dimensions exist from which veteran teachers find their identity. These dimensions are situated, personal, and professional. The situated dimension

includes students, colleagues, administrators, and families served. The personal dimension consists of the teacher, personal circumstances, family and child-related issues, and spiritual matters. The professional dimension includes school reforms, school culture, professional development opportunities, professional responsibilities, and school context. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2020) argued external or policy factors, personal factors, and school factors as three areas that affect teachers and retention decisions. Veteran teachers must balance these dimensions and feel confident in their abilities to affect students positively if they persevere in the profession. Administrators must attend to these dimensions and ensure that teachers feel safe, supported, and satisfied in the job.

Poverty

Schools, where a majority of students come from households with low income, have unique challenges. In many cases, high-poverty schools' teachers are not leaving because of student demographics but poor working conditions (Dupriez et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2020; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Torres, 2019). Positive school culture retains teachers in any school, but the extra challenges of a high-poverty school emphasize the need for positive school culture. Teacher retention in high-poverty schools is critical due to attrition's adverse effects on students who may already be struggling academically (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers who stay in schools longer have the best opportunity to affect students positively. Leaders in high-poverty schools are less likely to share leadership with teachers, contributing to higher teacher attrition (Torres, 2019). Principals in schools with high numbers of struggling students may inadvertently reduce teachers' opportunities to have a voice by protecting the teachers from demands or responsibilities outside of the classroom. Teacher retention in high-poverty schools is

even more critical than in low-poverty schools. Administrators must be aware of unique factors that affect these schools.

Poverty affects teachers' perceptions of school culture. Underwood (2018) concluded that the poverty level significantly affected collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships perceptions. The only factor that poverty did not significantly affect was professional development. Underwood's study was conducted at six secondary schools in Arkansas and emphasized the necessity of positive school culture. Hammonds (2016) claimed that professional development and learning partnerships significantly related to student achievement in Title 1 schools, but the other factors did not. Lockwood looked specifically at the effects of school culture perception on student achievement in schools with higher poverty. Leaders at high-poverty schools have additional barriers to creating a positive school culture.

Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership affects the performance of schools. Collaborative leaders who facilitate teacher input increase teachers' likelihood of remaining at the school and in the profession (Burke et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2020; Torres, 2019; Urick, 2020). Teachers are professionals and want to have the opportunity to share decision-making responsibilities for the school. Collaborative leadership can be seen in the professional orientation and quality of learning environment dimensions of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Ohlson (2009) asserted that collaborative leadership and unity of purpose have strong correlations with student attendance and suspensions. Collaborative leadership led to lower student attendance leading the authors to posit that

collaborative leaders were more likely to focus on relationships than enforcing policies. Collaborative leadership may increase teacher retention but can have the opposite effect on student attendance. Dou et al. (2017) proposed that administrative-minded leaders tend to lead schools with weaker climates, and people-minded administrators typically lead schools with healthy climates and collaborative environments. The focus of the administrator becomes the focus of the school. People-minded administrators put the priority on the people rather than administrative tasks. Hallinger (2015) asserted that leaders must be collaborative and build the capacity to grow and increase performance. Huang et al. (2020) noted that collaborative leaders increase the staff's collective desire to improve the school, encouraging teachers to perform better. Collaboration gives opportunities for peers to influence each other in formal and informal contexts. Urick (2020) identified integrated, transitioned, balkanized, and limited as four principal leadership types. Integrated leaders create synergy between teachers and leadership and have a shared leadership style. Transitioned leaders use less shared leadership than integrated and show less leadership in general. Balkanized leaders give power to the teachers and make few centralized decisions. Limited leaders show a lack of leadership. Teachers who work in schools with limited or balkanized leadership are likely to leave the school and possibly the profession. Urick also stated that new principals must establish leadership before they begin to share leadership with teachers. Different leadership styles affect school performance and teacher retention in different ways. Collaborative leadership can positively affect the performance of teachers and students in a school.

Teacher Collaboration

PLCs are a vehicle for teacher collaboration. PLCs promote an ongoing collaboration process and improvement within a school (DuFour et al., 2016). In effective PLCs, teachers meet regularly in teams to support the vision and goals of the school while collaborating regarding student achievement (DuFour et al., 2016). Administrators must provide time and structures to support teacher teams. The organizational structure dimension of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) will provide evidence of a robust PLC within a school as long as the basic assumption dimension supports teacher collaboration. DuFour et al. (2016) noted three big ideas that drive the work of a PLC. These ideas focus on learning, collaborative culture and collective responsibility, and a results orientation. Purposefully designed structures and teams can create an environment where teachers have the same vision and mission. Charner-Laird et al. (2016) indicated that critical dialogue within a PLC would ensure collective responsibility. Colleagues and administrators need to have hard conversations about student achievement and the realities within a school to make continuous improvement. PLCs create opportunities for teacher collaboration that can lead to positive school culture and increased student achievement.

Collaboration can remove barriers to positive school culture. Teacher collaboration is defined as teachers' mutual interaction to perform a shared task (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Teacher collaboration can be a critical factor in producing a positive school culture. The culture in a school helps ensure that students are learning. When teachers collaborate, students benefit from the knowledge of the collective group of teachers. Lockton (2019) noted that teacher collaboration is complex and could look

different in every school. Administrators should strive to understand each teacher team's needs and organize structures to ensure the group's needs are met. Lockton also stated that team members' relationships are more important than following a checklist or satisfying guidelines. The school's culture should foster relationship-building among teachers to provide the most beneficial environment for student growth. Ashley (2017) found that the two most significant barriers to creating a collaborative culture are traditional habits and beliefs and fear of transparency. Positive school culture is one where administrators intentionally break down these barriers. Barriers to collaboration could also be barriers to student achievement.

Teacher collaboration can be beneficial to stakeholders. If teacher collaboration is effective, the results will be seen in the three levels identified by Schoen and Teddlie (2008) in their new model of school culture. Stakeholders can observe effective collaboration in the artifacts, espoused beliefs, and the school's basic assumptions. Vangrieken et al. (2015) established that student performance increases when teachers focus on a specific goal. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) went further to say that even if an individual teacher does not participate or participate well in collaboration, his or her students will still benefit from high-quality, consistent collaboration in the school. Collaboration encourages collective responsibility in a school. Jones and Thessin (2017) and Vangrieken et al. (2015) also hypothesized that students are not the only beneficiaries of these relationships between teachers. Teachers benefit from fewer feelings of isolation and higher motivation in schools that have high levels of collaboration. This teamwork also encourages a growth mindset in educators that can carry over to students in the classroom. Administrators need to be actively involved in collaboration and organize

structures to ensure that teams collaborate effectively (Jones & Thessin, 2017; Kelly et al., 2019; Lockton, 2019). Thessin (2018) identified eight critical factors to ensure that teacher collaboration is effective. Teachers should meet consistently and work collaboratively to create a shared vision and purpose to improve student learning. Teacher teams should establish shared leadership, ensure that meetings are conducive to progress, and develop team goals aligned with building and district initiatives (Thessin, 2018). Thessin (2018) also claimed that teacher collaboration should emphasize context over individual results. Administrators should strive to understand each team's needs and ensure that appropriate structures are in place to meet needs. For collaboration to benefit students and teachers, teamwork needs to be effective, expected, and consistent.

Certain conditions ensure that teacher collaboration is effective. Kelly et al. (2019) noted that school leaders should ensure teachers have appropriate collaboration training. Thessin (2018) and Jones and Thessin (2017) said that schools could increase the likelihood of positive effects on students and teachers by ensuring that supports are in place before beginning collaboration. The supports that Thessin identified were professional development related to PLCs for teachers, school culture focused on collaboration, and school leaders engaged and communicating expectations of the work to be completed. Allowing teachers to meet in groups is not enough to reap the benefits of true teacher collaboration. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) noted that average quality teacher collaboration is correlated with improved student achievement in mathematics and reading. However, higher-quality collaboration is equated with considerable gains in student achievement. Differences in structures and expectations can determine whether or

not student achievement increases due to teachers working together. Administrators are responsible for making sure the appropriate systems and expectations exist.

Teachers who effectively collaborate have many benefits. In addition to student achievement gains, teachers reported feeling less isolated, more motivated, and having higher morale when high-quality collaboration occurred (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Collaboration is essential and should be expected in schools; however, only meeting together does not have the desired effect on teachers or students. High-functioning PLCs analyzed student work, consulted research when questions arose, and discussed classroom observation data (Thessin, 2018). Thessin (2018) also indicated that eight factors helped ensure the effectiveness of PLCs: meeting regularly over time, emphasizing context, aligning with initiatives in the school, working collaboratively, sharing a vision and purpose to improve student learning, establishing shared leadership, and structuring meetings correctly. School leaders should view collaboration through a critical lens to ensure that these factors are organized and supported so that teacher teamwork produces maximum benefits for students and teachers. Collaboration is vital to schools, and effective collaboration can create positive growth in students and teachers.

Students benefit more from teacher collaboration when meetings are consistent and focused. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) asserted that collaboration regarding assessment positively affects student achievement. If teachers have a specific assessment they want students to perform well on, team discussions should prepare students for the assessment. Rather than focusing on the test, collaboration should focus on the standards assessed and what mastery looks like for students. Jones and Thessin (2017) noted that PLCs allowed educators to solve specific problems relevant to the school and the students in the current

context and maintain continuous improvement. Students improve when teachers analyze current data and make adjustments to the curriculum and instruction accordingly. Principals should ensure that teacher teams have a growth mindset and the data collection and analysis are ongoing and accurate (Jones & Thessin, 2017). Principals establish a vision and lead PLCs to develop and meet goals based on student data relevant to the mission. Goddard et al. (2015) emphasized that collaboration should be frequent, formal, and focused on instructional improvements. Administrators are responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met, ensuring that continuous growth is realized. One positive outcome of quality teacher collaboration is student growth.

Administrators set the tone for teacher collaboration. Collaboration is the mediator between instructional leadership and collective teacher efficacy (Goddard et al., 2015). Collective efficacy is a precursor to high student achievement. Teacher self-efficacy also helps ensure teacher retention in the school and the profession (Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). Administrators can move teachers toward higher self-efficacy by designing and ensuring that collaboration occurs. Goddard et al. (2015) expressed that administrators should ensure that teacher collaboration focuses on instructional improvement. The more emphasis administrators put on instructional leadership, the more likely teachers spend collaborative time on tasks that positively affect instruction and student achievement. Data collection and modeling transparency are essential areas for administrators to encourage teachers to collaborate effectively (Jones & Thessin, 2017). If principals are transparent with teachers and show appropriate student data use, teachers will be more likely to engage and improve student achievement. Quality teacher collaboration can be encouraged by supportive administrators.

Professional Development

Professional development is influential in teacher retention decisions and increasing student achievement. When principals prioritize professional development, student achievement increases, and teachers feel more efficacious, which leads to higher teacher retention (Huang et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Administrators should view professional development as a tool to improve outcomes for students and teachers rather than a compliance matter. To ensure that professional development leads to increased teacher effectiveness and student achievement, leaders should ensure that other school conditions are right. Ensuring the conditions are right will indicate that the administrator focuses on the professional orientation dimension at the basic assumption level of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). These conditions include teacher motivation, school culture, and working conditions in the building (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Administrators should ensure that factors for successful professional development are organized and supported. Teacher job satisfaction increases when professional development is relevant to their needs.

Professional development needs to meet specific criteria for maximum effectiveness. Professional development should be sustained, intense, content-focused, and job-embedded (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Professional development should also support collaboration and be supported by collaboration and offer feedback and reflection opportunities for teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Administrators must design or endorse professional development opportunities that will influence student achievement and teacher efficacy. Huang et al. (2020) posited that principals affect student learning by ensuring that teachers participate

in relevant and ongoing professional development. Principals who deliver or provide consistent access to quality professional development encourage a continuous learning culture in the building. Teachers are more likely to demonstrate growth when they have a voice in the learning events they attend (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Administrators should treat teachers as professionals and support each individual to grow in areas of weakness. Professional development involving teachers or implementing a new program should include administrators (Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). Whitworth and Chiu (2015) said that including administrators would ensure the development of PLCs around the new program, assist with appropriate resource allocation, and be more likely to encourage a change in teacher practice. When administrators can be involved in professional development intended for teachers implementing a new program, teachers are more likely to get the support needed to be successful. Professional development is not equal, and training opportunities should meet specific criteria to ensure teachers' and students' growth.

Teachers will positively affect student learning when their own learning needs are met. Effective professional development is structured learning that improves teaching practices and increases student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Professional development has historically been structured not to result in any changes for students or teachers. Workshops where the speaker talks to teachers for a day and sends them back to the classroom with only notes from the session are unlikely to change teacher performance or improve student learning. A critical element of effective professional development is the incorporation of active learning. Teachers should have the opportunity to try new knowledge in a safe environment before implementing strategies, curriculum,

or techniques with their students. Opportunities to create authentic artifacts and connect their unique experiences with new learning allow teachers to incorporate the knowledge into their existing contexts effectively. Professional development should meet the needs of teachers so that teachers can meet the needs of students.

Collaboration and coaching can result in increased learning opportunities for teachers. In the new model of school culture, collaboration and coaching fall under the organizational structure dimension. Prioritizing this dimension will allow teachers to collaborate and receive coaching on new learning (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Professional development should be connected to collaboration opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This collaboration can be with colleagues inside or outside of the school. The critical requirement is that teachers are provided with a network of other professionals who will engage in conversations around the new learning. As an extension of collaboration, coaching can increase professional development effectiveness and inherently offers the additional benefits of providing feedback and reflecting on the new knowledge. These benefits are magnified when experts provide coaching. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) also postulated that using effective practice models provides teachers with a clear picture of implementing what they have learned in professional development. Some models might include videos or sample lessons that are content-focused, another essential feature of effective professional learning that teachers can quickly implement and feel safe using. Professional development should be ongoing and include collaboration or coaching opportunities if teachers are expected to change classroom practices.

Unity of Purpose

The vision and mission of a school are essential tools to promote growth. Unity of purpose speaks to the collective commitments that staff members make to ensure that everyone is behaving in such a way to move toward the vision and mission (DuFour et al., 2016). The goals set by teacher teams should support the goals set by the school. The school goals are a result of the mission and vision. PLCs allow teachers and administrators to collaborate to create collective commitments (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Teacher teams are more likely to hold each other accountable to collective commitments if they have been part of the process to create those commitments. The school will move toward the vision and mission if administrators and teachers have unity of purpose created through collaboration.

A united purpose will encourage teacher retention. Garcia and Weiss (2019) found that novice teachers were more likely to persevere in teaching if they worked in schools where unity of purpose was created based on collective commitments through the PLC process. PLCs and collective commitments give teachers a greater sense of purpose and belonging. Wang and Degol (2016) posited that students in schools with high-quality interpersonal relationships among adults would have better academic outcomes. School is more than grades and assignments; the relationships in the building affect the well-being of students and adults. Teachers are more likely to stay in a school where students and staff members are happy and growing.

Collegial Support

Educators need the help and support of their colleagues. Collegial support is the level of trust between teachers and the extent to which they work well together (Valentine

& Gruenert, 2006). Administrators must be purposeful in developing structures that allow for relationships between teachers to thrive. Schools that nurture the relationships between colleagues and use collaboration as a tool for obtaining teacher input regarding school policies are more likely to retain teachers (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Administrators should ensure structures are in place so that staff members can collaborate effectively and that formal means of gathering staff input are in place. The quality of the learning environment and professional orientation dimensions of the new model of school culture will show evidence of collegial support in a school (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Collegial support is how teachers support each other in reaching school goals and is critical to positive school culture.

A critical part of collegial support is the relationships between new and experienced teachers. Novice teachers value the support and input from veteran teachers, which will help ensure teacher retention (Burke et al., 2015). Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) noted that mentoring programs lead to lowered stress levels in novice teachers. Teachers with lower stress levels are more emotionally available to build positive relationships with students and colleagues. Mentoring programs also benefit experienced teachers by allowing opportunities to reflect on past experiences and practices (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Administrators will encourage the development of collegial partnerships in schools with well-designed mentor programs. Novice and experienced teachers benefit from the relationships formed in mentor programs.

Learning Partnerships

Parents are critical learning partners. Students achieve more when parents are actively involved in the school (Benner et al., 2016; Day & Dotterer, 2018; Ma et al.,

2016; Park et al., 2017; Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018). Benner et al. (2016) theorized that parental involvement could take on many forms (school-based, academic socialization, home-based). Each school can benefit from different types of parental involvement, but schools should strive to improve parent involvement for the students' benefit. Park et al. (2017) identified three categories of parental involvement. Public-good parental involvement is directed toward school improvement. Private-good parental involvement is aimed at helping their child. The third category is networking and focuses on creating social networks for the school and the students. These three categories of parental involvement are helpful; however, schools need different support types at different times. Schools with strong networks of parents are more likely to raise funds quickly, and schools with strong public-good involvement are likely to demonstrate teacher appreciation in big and small ways without much administration involvement. When schools provide appropriate parental involvement opportunities, the benefits will be evident at the three levels and four dimensions identified by Schoen and Teddlie (2008) in the new model of school culture. Educators must be intentional about providing structures and opportunities for parental involvement. Regardless of how they are involved, schools benefit from parental involvement.

Parental involvement can look different in every school. Day and Dotterer (2018) categorized parental involvement. Home-based involvement ensured that the structure of the home environment supported academics. School-based involvement included parents visiting and regularly communicating with the school. Academic socialization included parents sharing value for education and having high expectations for their academic future and career plans. Day and Dotterer argued that the most beneficial forms of

involvement were a combination of school-based and academic socialization. Students need to know that the adults in their lives have expectations regarding academics and their future. Parental participation in school-based activities and academic socialization communicates to students that parents and the school are congruent with these matters. Roy and Giraldo-Garcia (2018) expressed that school leaders should intentionally create opportunities for parents to be involved. Teachers and administrators should understand each category of parental involvement's benefits and ensure that the school and stakeholders' needs are met by providing parents with the appropriate types of opportunities. Creating partnerships with parents can be beneficial for every student and every school.

Demographic characteristics of the school population can help determine the most beneficial approach to parental involvement. The school and family income level play a role in the amount and type of parental involvement beneficial to students (Benner et al., 2016). School-based involvement is beneficial for low-income students (Avnet et al., 2019; Benner et al., 2016). Students who live in poverty need to see their parents interacting with the school and teachers to reinforce education's importance. Parents living in poverty often have a more difficult time being involved at school due to life circumstances. Schools can facilitate networking among parents to help every parent feel like a valuable part of the school community (Avnet et al., 2019). Networking opportunities can be in person, by phone, or even on a digital platform. School leaders must understand the demographics served by their schools and how the demographics affect parental involvement.

Parental involvement falls into different categories. Benner et al. (2016) identified two characteristics affecting student outcomes: prior achievement and school lunch eligibility. Benner et al. posited that students with one disadvantage countered by an advantage such as high achievement with low family income or low achievement countered by a family income above the poverty level had the most benefits from school-based parental involvement. Students with no disadvantages or both disadvantages reaped no benefits from school-based parental involvement. Families that meet these criteria should be given other types of opportunities to be involved. Benner et al. (2016) also expressed that children from advantaged homes need clearly articulated, high expectations from parents more than they need to see their parents involved at the school. Students from affluent backgrounds may have more opportunities to see their parents interact with other adults in educational settings but need to understand how education's value applies to them as students. Neither students from high- or low-income households benefited significantly from parents' homework help (Benner et al., 2016). This information may indicate that students do not need help on a micro-level with school, but macro-level support is essential. Students need different types of parental involvement, depending on their circumstances.

Learning partnerships with parents can look different at each level of education. High school students whose parents had high school-based involvement and academic socialization levels showed higher educational attainment (Benner et al., 2016). The effects of these parental involvement factors were similar to family income and double the effect of race on higher educational attainment (Benner et al., 2016). Based on these positive effects, high schools should be intentional about parent involvement. Middle

school students need support and structure at home. Avnet et al. (2019) said that the most beneficial parental involvement for middle school students is academic socialization. Adolescents need continuous communication from parents regarding the importance of education and academic performance expectations. Parental involvement in secondary schools can look different than at lower levels.

Parental involvement in elementary school is critical to student success. Avnet et al. (2019) posited that parental involvement is the key to academic achievement in elementary school. Academic achievement in lower grades predicts academic achievement in secondary schools. Avnet et al. also expressed that parents are more likely to be involved in kindergarten with male students but in first grade with female students. Parents of children receiving special education services were more likely to be involved than parents without students receiving additional services. School leaders must be intentional about getting all parents involved. Ma et al. (2016) expressed that the benefits of parental involvement in early elementary school extend through upper elementary grades. A structure or framework for parents' involvement should be in place to provide the most extensive benefits. Parents only coming to school for mandatory events should not be considered beneficial parental involvement. Schools with high levels of parent engagement were found to have a higher percentage of students achieving at or above grade level (Park et al., 2017). Students are more likely to perform well academically when a strong partnership exists between the home and the school. Parental involvement is vital in lower grade levels and can provide benefits beyond the immediate.

Summary

Educators often willingly weather extreme conditions to teach children. Ensuring that positive school culture exists will help teachers persevere in the profession (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Administrators are responsible for understanding what creates a positive environment and ensuring those conditions are met. School culture happens at four dimensions within three levels (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions are the levels of culture. The four school culture dimensions are professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of learning environment, and student-centered focus. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) identified six school culture factors that fit within these levels and dimensions. The factors are collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. School leadership must attend to these factors to make the conditions conducive for teachers to continue teaching and students to learn at high levels. Poverty level can have other implications that make creating a positive school culture more difficult. Underwood (2018) concluded that all factors except professional development were significantly affected by poverty. In schools where many students live below the poverty level, school culture is even more critical than in affluent students and families. High-poverty levels and negative school cultures are conditions that can lead to high teacher turnover.

The literature review indicated each school culture factor's importance and how each factor applies to novice and experienced teachers. Years of experience and the school's poverty level can affect teachers' perceptions of the culture based on the teachers' needs at different experience levels who work in schools with varying poverty

levels. Chapter III discusses the sample and the instrumentation, detailed data collection procedures, analytical methods, and limitations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

School culture is the way the adults in the school handle themselves and interact with others. From working with students to working with parents, the school culture affects the atmosphere of the school. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) determined six factors that affect the perception of school culture. These six factors (collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships) were measured using the School Culture Survey (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). According to the literature review, teachers with varying experience levels need different supports to make them feel valued. The poverty level of the school can also affect the needs of teachers. The effect of these variables on the perception of school culture was examined.

The following null hypotheses were developed to address the research hypotheses:

1. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collaborative leadership measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
2. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of

teacher collaboration measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.

3. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of professional development measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
4. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of unity of purpose measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
5. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collegial support measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.
6. No significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of learning partnerships measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools.

Research Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used to determine the effects of school poverty and teacher years of experience on school culture perception. A causal-comparative approach was appropriate because the cause and effect of behavior that is not manipulated was the subject of the study (Mills & Gay, 2016). The six independent

variables were the school poverty level (high versus low) and years of teaching experience (0-3 years versus 4 or more years). The six hypotheses' dependent variables were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships.

Sample

The participants were certified K-12 teachers in public schools in Arkansas. After Institutional Review Board approval, this survey was sent to 69 schools in Arkansas. The schools were selected based on poverty levels of 90% and above or 69% and below. The Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017) designated schools with 90% or more students qualifying for free or reduced lunch as high poverty, and low poverty schools have 69% or fewer students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Novice teachers have completed 0 - 3 years of teaching, and experienced teachers have completed 4 or more years of teaching (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020). Table 1 shows the teachers' years of experience who completed the survey and school poverty levels.

Table 1

Teacher Years of Experience and School Poverty Level

Teacher Years of Experience	*n*	School Poverty Level %
0-3 Years	61	7-63 (low)
0-3 Years	34	90-97 (high)
4-41 Years	139	16-69 (low)
4-41 Years	65	90-98 (high)

The survey was electronically sent to principals. The principals were asked to forward the survey to teachers; 299 teachers voluntarily completed the survey.

Instrumentation

The research instrument used was the School Culture Survey. The School Culture Survey was developed by Valentine and Gruenert (2006) at the Middle Level Leadership Center to study school culture perceptions. The survey measures perceptions of school culture using six factors: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) discovered the six factors after extensive literature reviews regarding school culture. Gruenert (2005) extensively studied the culture of 81 schools to understand the relationships between the factors and school culture. The school culture survey has been tested extensively through many research studies.

The six factors of the school culture survey are critical to the culture of a school. The first two factors are associated with collaboration between different groups. Ohlson (2009) described collaborative leadership as the willingness of the leader to take input from others and act on the information. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) defined collaborative leadership as the degree to which the leaders support innovation, risk-taking, and sharing ideas from staff members. Collaborative leaders build teams that feel valued and safe. Teacher collaboration is the extent to which teachers work together to accomplish a common goal (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Valentine and Gruenert (2006) recognized teacher collaboration as the extent that teachers participate in constructive dialogue around teaching and learning. Teacher collaboration provides focus and allows every teacher's voice to be heard. School leaders should provide structure and time for

teacher collaboration. Collaboration is essential to ensure that staff members are valued and connected.

The following four factors are also critical but relate to how adults learn and relate to one another. Avalos (2011) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) presented professional development as structured learning that affects teaching practice. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) said professional networks used to obtain information and improve instruction were examples of professional development. Professional development can be led by teachers, administrators, or others outside the school. Continuous learning is vital to ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills to ensure students learn at high levels. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) defined unity of purpose as how teachers work toward a common goal and understand the school's mission. Unity of purpose can be thought of as the collective commitments made by staff. For example, they believe that students can learn at high levels and make decisions after consulting data. Collegial support is teachers working together and having positive professional relationships (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). An example of collegial support is how teachers are willing to help each other with problems (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). Teachers who support each other are more likely to reach goals. Learning partnerships describe the working relationship between parents and the school that support student learning (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). Students can benefit when parents and teachers communicate effectively and work together. When adults are focused on the same goal, are willing to help each other, and have the same high expectations for students, everyone will benefit from the culture.

The survey used in the study aligns with the new model of school culture. Each of the factors measured by the survey can fall into all of the framework's dimensions

(professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of learning environment, student-centered focus). The new model of school culture levels shows how these factors affect the school within the three levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions. The higher the level, the more significant the effect of the factor. For example, if collaborative leadership is a basic assumption (Level 3), every staff member will feel valued, and systems will be in place to allow the leader to hear and act on teacher input.

The survey contained 11 questions related to collaborative leadership, six questions related to teacher collaboration, five questions for professional development, five questions for unity of purpose, four questions related to collegial support, and four questions on learning partnerships. The school culture survey's validity and reliability have been extensively tested in the United States through numerous research projects and dissertations (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). The Cronbach's Alpha Factor Reliability Coefficients on the six components were collaborative leadership (.910), teacher collaboration (.834), professional development (.867), unity of purpose (.821), collegial support (.796), and learning partnerships (.658) (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). Teachers were asked to state the school where they worked and how many years of teaching experience they had. A 5-point Likert scale with a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to indicate teachers' level of perception on each item. Permission to use the survey was obtained by email.

Data Collection Procedures

Institutional Review Board approval was received on February 11, 2021. The School Culture Survey was sent to principals of 69 K-12 public schools in Arkansas.

Principals were asked to email the survey to teachers in the spring semester of 2021. The survey was completed voluntarily and online. The survey introduction explained the study and informed participants that no identifiable information would be used, answers would be anonymous, and participation was voluntary. Respondents indicated that they understood the information before proceeding to the survey. The responses were collected in a password-protected file to maintain confidentiality, school poverty levels were noted, and teachers' responses were sorted by the school poverty level first and then the teachers' years of experience. The data were coded by the independent variable levels and then analyzed.

Analytical Methods

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 27 software was used to analyze the data. A total of 299 teachers at varying grade levels and years of teaching experience responded to the survey. The data were collected from teachers in 69 Arkansas schools, and 40 responses in three groups were randomly selected for analysis; one group had 33 responses. The six independent variables were the school's poverty level (90% or more was high poverty versus 69% and below was low poverty) and years of teaching experience (0-3 years and 4 or more years). Data were collected and coded for school poverty level (0 = low-poverty, 1 = high-poverty) and teacher years of experience (0 = novice, 1 = experienced). The six hypotheses' dependent variables were collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. A 2 x 2 between-groups, factorial ANOVA was conducted to address each of the six hypotheses. Assumptions of normality were checked with histograms before statistical analysis. Levene's test of variance was

used to assess the homogeneity of variances. A two-tailed test with a .05 level of significance was used to test the null hypotheses.

Limitations

Several limitations existed. First, since the study was a quantitative, causal-comparative study, no attempt at manipulating the independent variables was made. Mills and Gay (2016) explained that a causal-comparative study examines the behavior of a group without modifications. The survey sought only perceptions on different school cultural components. Second, the method of distributing the survey was somewhat unreliable. Principals were asked to forward the survey to teachers rather than teachers receiving the survey from an outside source. The surveys might not have been distributed promptly. Third, the survey was administered during a global pandemic in the spring of 2021. Allen, Jerrim, and Sims (2020) found that teaching during the pandemic raised teachers' stress levels; increased stress could affect school culture perceptions. Fourth, the assumption was made that the respondents completed the survey honestly. Teaching credentials were not verified, and the assumption was that the respondents were certified K-12 teachers. Another assumption was that respondents understood the questions on the survey. Fifth, the data collected on the respondents also caused limitations. Demographics, other than the poverty level of the school, were not considered in this study. Teachers were asked to provide their years of experience in teaching and the school's name where they currently taught, but no gender or personal demographic information was collected. The schools represented in the survey included urban and rural, and multiple school buildings in some districts were surveyed.

Summary

In this quantitative, causal-comparative study, data were collected from 299 K-12 teachers in Arkansas. Perceptions of school culture were measured with the School Culture Survey (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). The data were analyzed using a 2 x 2 ANOVA to examine the six hypotheses. In the next chapter, the results of the data analysis for the study and each hypothesis were analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purposes of this study were six-fold. The purposes were to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas, each measured by the School Culture Survey, for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) identified the six school culture factors: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. The six hypotheses were tested using 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs on a random sample of 40 responses per group (low-poverty novice, low-poverty experienced, high-poverty experienced), except for the high-poverty novice group with only 33 responses. The independent variables for each hypothesis were school poverty level and teacher years of service.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collaborative leadership measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of responses in each group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were also

screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 2 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for collaborative leadership by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Collaborative Leadership Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	42.02	7.76	40	44.97	7.74	33	43.36	7.83	73
Exper	44.68	6.72	40	45.53	7.41	40	45.10	7.04	80
Total	43.35	7.33	80	45.27	7.51	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 0.76$, $p = .521$, indicated that homogeneity was not significant, therefore not violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range, except for the high-poverty experienced group. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .006$; high-poverty novice, $p = .005$; low-poverty experienced, $p = .300$; high-poverty experienced, $p = .002$). All groups except the low-poverty experienced violated the assumption of normality. Although these abnormalities existed with the data, the

factorial ANOVA was robust to violations of normality (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan 2015). No extreme outliers were present. The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Collaborative Leadership by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	136.75	1	136.75	2.50	.116	0.016
Years	97.57	1	97.57	1.78	.184	0.012
Poverty*Years	41.67	1	41.67	0.76	.385	0.005
Error	8162.70	149	54.78			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.76$, $p = .385$, $ES = 0.005$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not significantly affect the perception of collaborative leadership. Since no significant interaction effect existed, the main effects were examined separately. No significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 2.50$, $p = .116$, $ES = 0.016$ or teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 1.78$, $p = .184$, $ES = 0.012$. The means of survey scores for collaborative leadership as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 2.

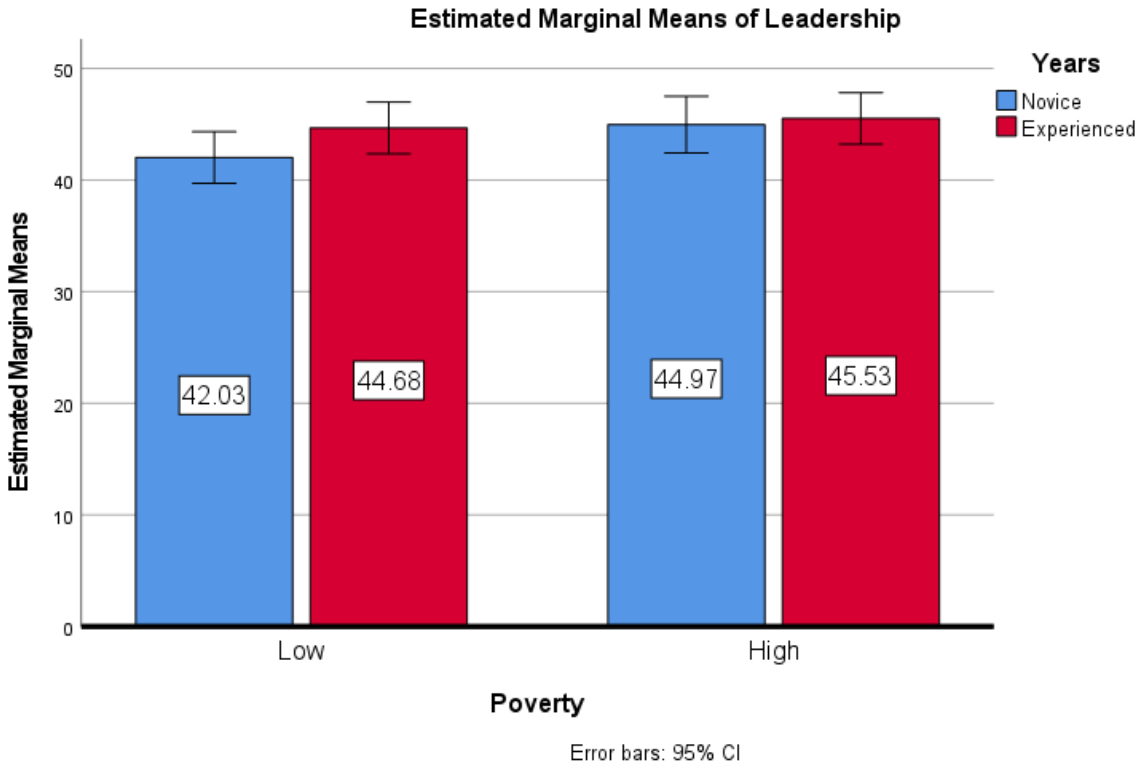

Figure 2. Means for collaborative leadership by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the collaborative leadership scores was higher in the high-poverty teachers (M = 45.27, SD = 7.51), but the difference was not significant compared to the mean of the low-poverty teachers (M = 43.35, SD = 7.33). Similarly, although the mean of the experienced teachers (M = 45.10, SD = 7.04) was higher than the novice teachers (M = 43.36, SD = 7.83), no significant difference existed. The analysis results indicated no combined or individual effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of collaborative leadership as measured by the School Culture Survey. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects were retained.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of teacher collaboration measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of responses in each group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were reviewed. Table 4 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for teacher collaboration by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Teacher Collaboration Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	20.10	3.87	40	22.24	4.55	33	21.07	4.30	73
Exper	21.20	4.72	40	22.92	3.97	40	22.06	4.42	80
Total	20.65	4.32	80	22.62	4.23	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 0.54$, $p = .655$, indicated that homogeneity was not significant, therefore not violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range, except for the low-poverty experienced group. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .075$, high-poverty novice, $p = .357$, low-poverty experienced, $p = .151$, high-poverty experienced, $p = .145$). Based on these data, the assumption of normality was confirmed. No extreme outliers were present. The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Teacher Collaboration by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	142.04	1	142.04	7.75	.006	0.049
Years	30.18	1	30.18	1.65	.201	0.011
Poverty*Years	1.66	1	1.66	0.09	.764	0.001
Error	2730.84	149	18.33			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.09$, $p = .764$, $ES = 0.001$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not combine to affect the perception of collaborative leadership significantly. Since no significant interaction effect existed, the main effects were examined separately. A

significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 7.75$, $p = .006$, $ES = 0.049$. The effect size was small (Cohen, 1988). No significant effect was indicated by teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 1.65$, $p = .201$, $ES = 0.011$. The means of survey scores for teacher collaboration as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 3.

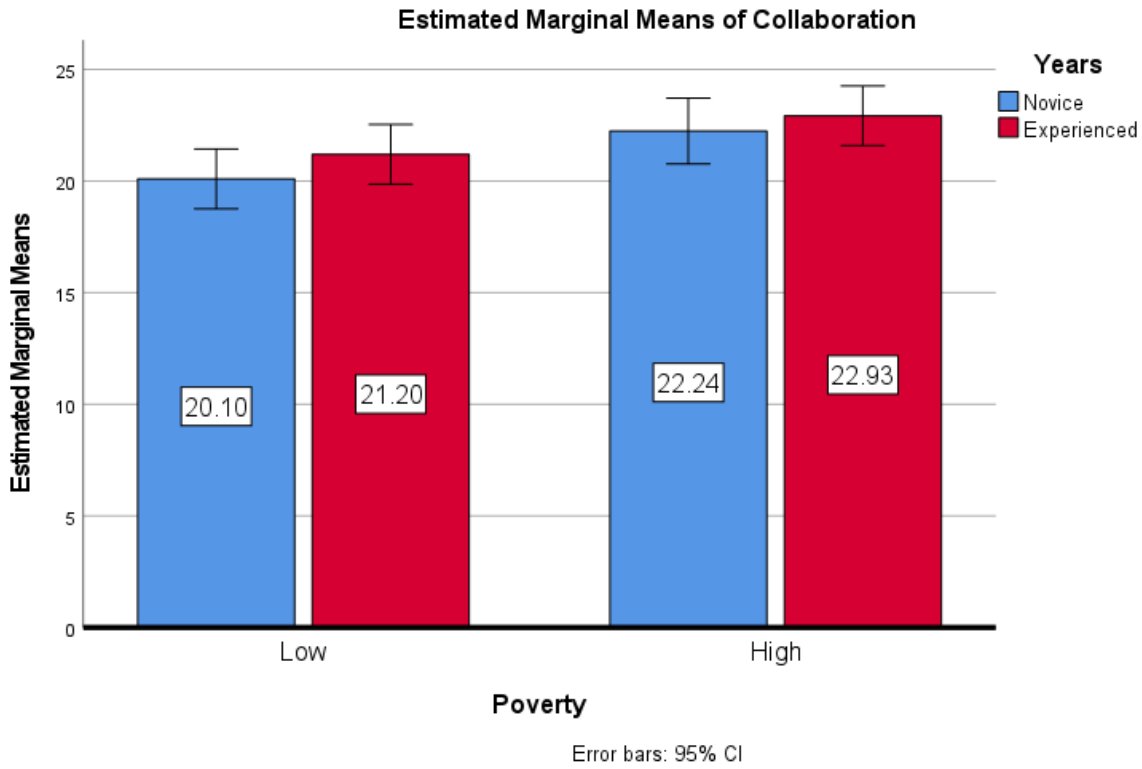

Figure 3. Means for teacher collaboration by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the teacher collaboration scores was significantly higher in the high-poverty teachers ($M = 22.62$, $SD = 4.23$) compared to the mean of the low-poverty teachers ($M = 20.65$, $SD = 4.32$). Similarly, although the mean of the experienced teachers ($M = 22.06$, $SD = 4.42$) was higher than the novice teachers

(M = 21.07, SD = 4.30), no significant difference existed. The analysis results showed no combined effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of teacher collaboration as measured by the School Culture Survey. However, school poverty level did show a significant effect on the perception of teacher collaboration regardless of teachers' years of experience. The hypotheses for the interaction effect and the main effect of teachers' years of experience were retained, the main effect hypothesis for school poverty level was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of professional development measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of responses from each group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were also screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 6 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for professional development by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Professional Development Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	20.02	2.57	40	20.91	3.07	33	20.42	2.82	73
Exper	20.90	3.32	40	20.90	3.23	40	20.90	3.26	80
Total	20.46	2.98	80	20.90	3.14	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 0.80$, $p = .496$, indicated that homogeneity was not significant therefore not violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range, and no extreme outliers were present. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .050$, high-poverty novice, $p = .035$, low-poverty experienced, $p = .004$, high-poverty experienced, $p = .021$). All groups violated the assumption of normality. Although these abnormalities existed within the data, the factorial ANOVA was robust to violations of normality (Leech et al., 2015). The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Professional Development by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	7.42	1	7.42	0.79	.375	0.005
Years	7.12	1	7.12	0.76	.385	0.005
Poverty*Years	7.42	1	7.42	0.79	.375	0.005
Error	1394.90	149	9.36			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.79$, $p = .375$, $ES = 0.005$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not combine to affect the perception of professional development significantly. Since no significant interaction effect existed, the main effects were examined separately. No significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 0.79$, $p = .375$, $ES = 0.005$, or teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.76$, $p = .385$, $ES = 0.005$. The means of survey scores for collaborative leadership as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 4.

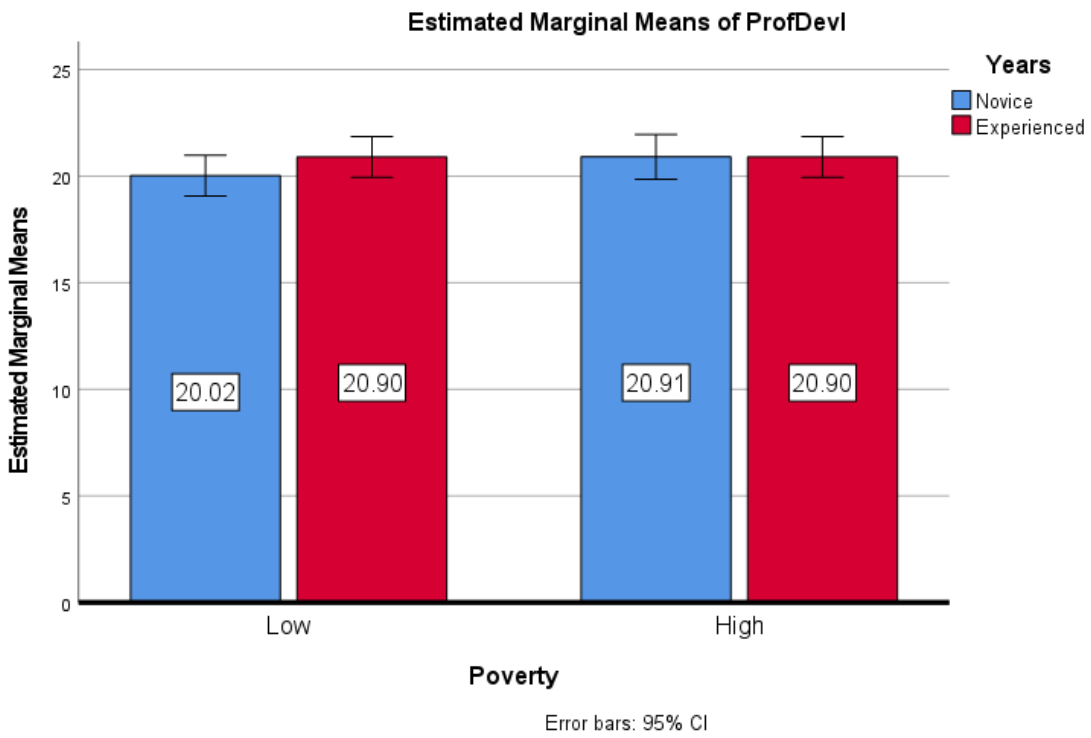

Figure 4. Means for professional development by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the professional development scores was higher in the high-poverty teachers (M = 20.90, SD = 3.14), but the difference was not significant compared to the mean of the low-poverty teachers (M = 20.46, SD = 2.98). Similarly, although the mean of the experienced teachers (M = 20.90, SD = 3.26) was higher than the novice teachers (M = 20.42, SD = 2.82), no significant difference existed. The analysis results showed no combined or individual main effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of professional development as measured by the School Culture Survey. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects were retained.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of unity of purpose measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of responses per group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were also screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 8 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for the unity of purpose by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Unity of Purpose Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	20.45	3.49	40	21.09	3.61	33	20.74	3.54	73
Exper	20.50	3.86	40	21.70	2.94	40	21.10	3.46	80
Total	20.48	3.66	80	21.42	3.25	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 0.64$, $p = .592$, indicated that homogeneity was not significant, therefore not violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range except for the low-poverty experienced group. No extreme outliers were present. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .024$, high-poverty novice, $p = .004$, low-poverty experienced, $p = .001$, high-poverty experienced, $p = .004$). All groups violated the assumption of normality. Although these abnormalities existed within the data, the factorial ANOVA was robust to violations of normality (Leech et al., 2015). The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Unity of Purpose by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	32.18	1	32.18	2.65	.106	0.017
Years	4.13	1	4.13	0.34	.561	0.002
Poverty*Years	2.97	1	2.97	0.24	.622	0.002
Error	1809.03	149	12.14			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.24$, $p = .622$, $ES = 0.002$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not combine to affect the perception of unity of purpose significantly. Since no

significant interaction effect existed, the main effects were examined separately. No significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 2.65$, $p = .106$, $ES = 0.017$, or teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 4.13$, $p = .561$, $ES = 0.002$. The means of survey scores for unity of purpose as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 5.

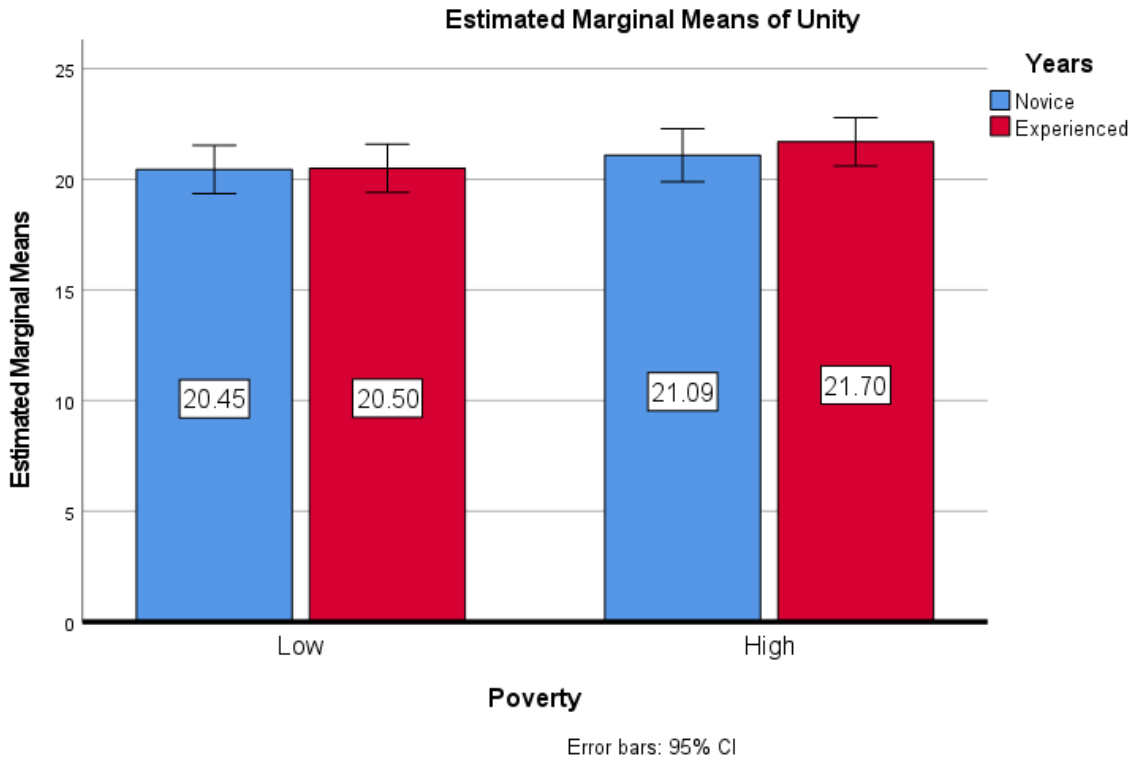

Figure 5. Means for unity of purpose by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the unity of purpose scores was higher in the high-poverty teachers ($M = 21.42$, $SD = 3.25$), but the difference was not significant compared to the mean of the low-poverty teachers ($M = 20.48$, $SD = 3.66$). Similarly, although the mean of the experienced teachers ($M = 21.10$, $SD = 3.46$) was higher than

the novice teachers (M = 20.74, SD = 3.54), no significant difference existed. The analysis results indicated no combined or individual effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of unity of purpose as measured by the School Culture Survey. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects were retained.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collegial support measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of responses per group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were also screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 8 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for collegial support by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 10

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Collegial Support Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	16.65	2.33	40	16.73	2.55	33	16.68	2.42	73
Exper	17.37	2.47	40	17.25	1.85	40	17.31	2.17	80
Total	17.01	2.41	80	17.01	2.20	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 1.54$, $p = .207$, indicated that homogeneity was not significant therefore not violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range, except in the low-poverty experienced group. No extreme outliers were present. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .043$, high-poverty novice, $p = .027$, low-poverty experienced, $p < .001$, high-poverty experienced, $p = .029$). All groups violated the assumption of normality. Although these abnormalities existed within the data, the factorial ANOVA was robust to violations of normality (Leech et al., 2015). The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 10.

Table 11

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Collegial Support by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	0.22	1	0.02	0.00	.949	0.000
Years	14.78	1	14.78	2.79	.097	0.018
Poverty*Years	0.39	1	0.39	0.07	.787	0.000
Error	790.52	149	5.31			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.07$, $p = .787$, $ES = 0.000$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not combine to affect the perception of collegial support significantly. Since no significant interaction effect existed, the main effects were examined separately. No significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 0.00$, $p = .949$, $ES = 0.000$, or teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 2.79$, $p = .097$, $ES = 0.018$. The means of survey scores for collegial support as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 6.

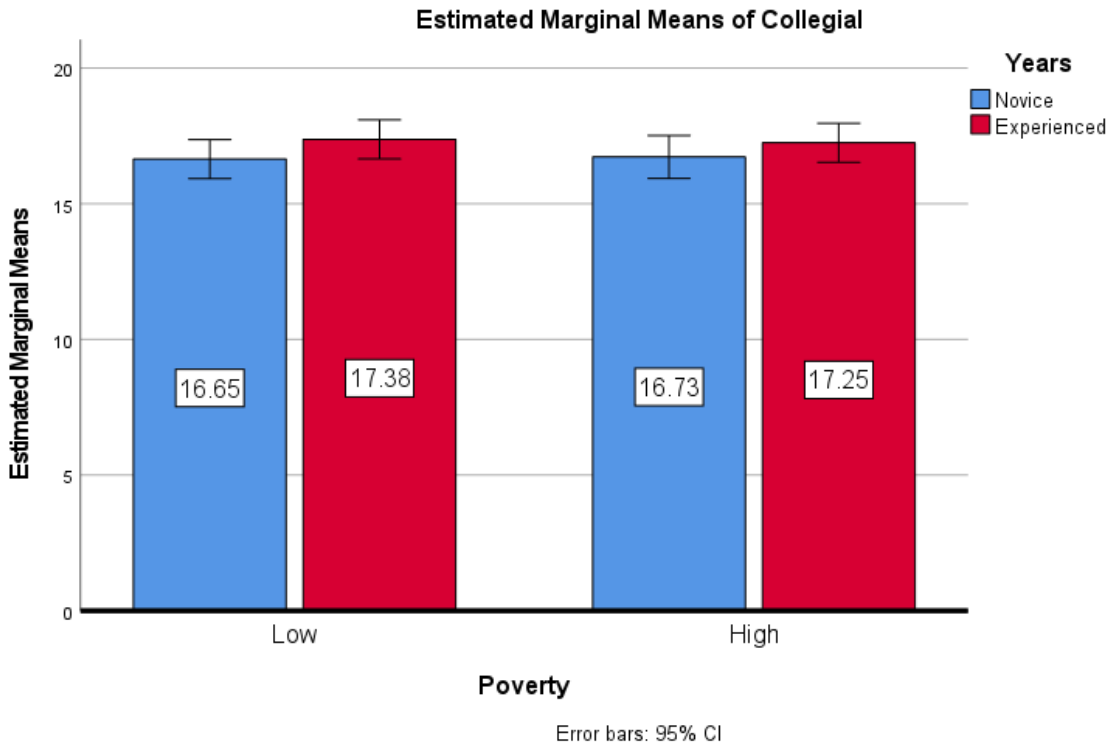

Figure 6. Means for collegial support by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the collegial support scores for the high-poverty teachers (M = 17.01, SD = 2.20) was equivalent to the mean of the low-poverty teachers (M = 17.01, SD = 2.41). In addition, although the mean of the experienced teachers (M = 17.31, SD = 2.17) was higher compared to the novice teachers (M = 16.68, SD = 2.42), no significant difference existed. The analysis results indicated no combined or individual effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of collegial support as measured by the School Culture Survey. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects were retained.

Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of learning partnerships measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted on a random sample of survey responses in each group to test this hypothesis. Before the factorial ANOVA analysis, the data were examined for missing values and entry errors. Data were also screened for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 11 displays the group means and standard deviations for survey responses for learning partnerships by poverty level and years of experience.

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations, and Numbers for Learning Partnerships Perceptions

	Poverty Level								
	Low			High			Total		
Exp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Novice	13.95	3.00	40	13.09	3.60	33	13.56	3.29	73
Exper	13.93	2.15	40	13.53	2.83	40	13.72	2.51	80
Total	13.94	2.60	80	13.33	3.18	73			

Note. Low = Low-poverty school; High = High-poverty school; Exp = Teacher Years of Experience; Novice = 0-3 years of teaching experience; Exper = 4 or more years of teaching experience.

Levene's test of equality of variance, $F(3, 149) = 2.73$, $p = .046$, indicated that homogeneity was significant; therefore, the assumption was violated. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range, and no extreme outliers were present. The Shapiro Wilks test was used to test for normality in the four groups (low-poverty novice, $p = .033$, high-poverty novice, $p = .454$, low-poverty experienced, $p = .227$, high-poverty experienced, $p = .217$). The low-poverty novice group violated the assumption of normality, but normality existed in the other groups. Although this abnormality existed within the data, the factorial ANOVA was robust to violations of normality (Leech et al., 2015). The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis are displayed in Table 12.

Table 13

Factorial Analysis of Variance Results for the Perception of Learning Partnerships by School Poverty Level and Teacher Years of Experience

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Poverty	15.06	1	15.06	1.78	.184	0.012
Years	1.59	1	1.59	0.19	.665	0.001
Poverty*Years	2.00	1	2.00	0.24	.627	0.002
Error	1259.38	149	8.45			

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

Results of the factorial ANOVA analysis revealed no significant interaction between school poverty level and teacher years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.24$, $p = .627$, $ES = 0.002$. The data indicated that school poverty level and teachers' years of experience did not combine to affect the perception of unity of purpose significantly. Since no

significant interaction effect was found, the main effects were examined separately. No significant effect was indicated by school poverty, $F(1, 149) = 1.78$, $p = .184$, $ES = 0.012$, or teachers' years of experience, $F(1, 149) = 0.19$, $p = .665$, $ES = 0.001$. The means of survey scores for learning partnership as a function of school poverty and teachers' years of experience are shown in Figure 7.

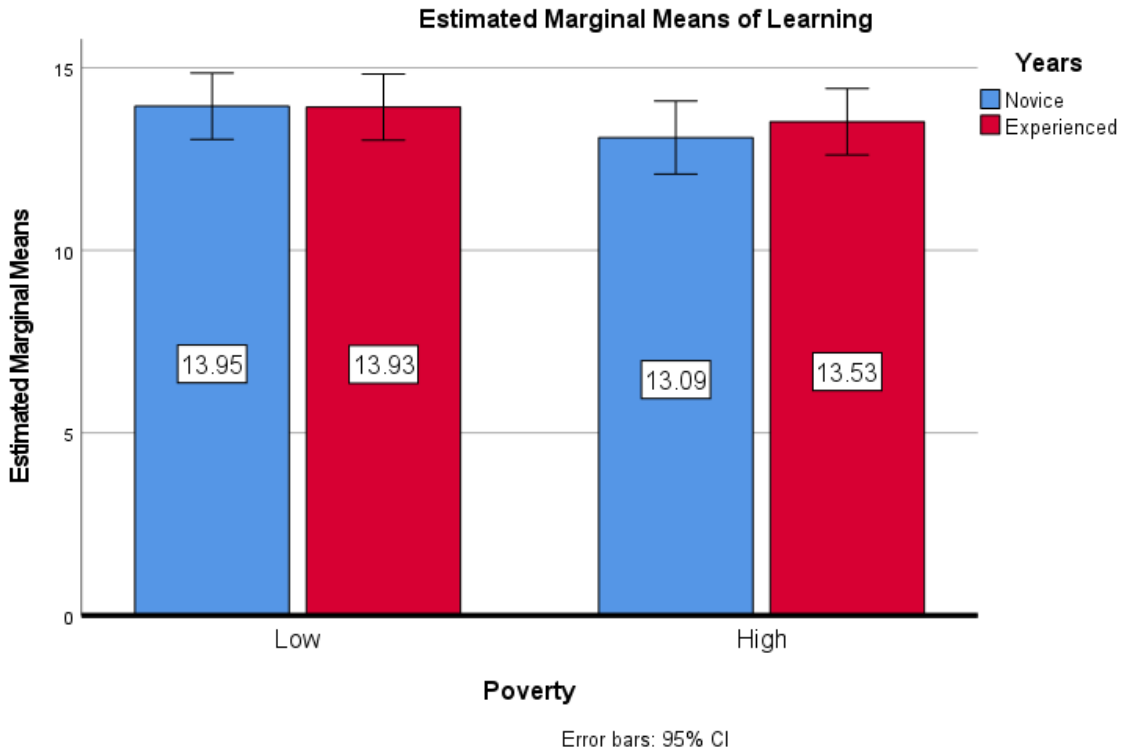

Figure 7. Means for learning partnerships by school poverty level and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding the main effect results, the mean of the learning partnerships scores for the high-poverty teachers ($M = 13.33$, $SD = 3.18$) was lower than the low-poverty teachers' mean ($M = 13.94$, $SD = 2.60$), but the difference was not significant. Similarly, although the mean of the experienced teachers ($M = 13.72$, $SD = 2.51$) was higher than the novice

teachers (M = 13.56, SD = 3.29), no significant difference existed. The analysis results indicated no combined or individual effect of school poverty level or teachers' years of service on the perception of learning partnerships as measured by the School Culture Survey. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects were retained.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas, each measured by the School Culture Survey, for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) identified the six school culture factors: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. The six hypotheses were tested using 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs on a random sample of survey responses from each group. The independent variable for each hypothesis was school poverty level and teacher years of service. Table 13 summarizes the results of the interaction and main effects for each of the six hypotheses.

Table 14

Summary of Statistical Significance of School Poverty Level and Teachers' Years of Experience on School Culture Perception by Hypothesis

Variables	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6
Poverty	.116	.006	.375	.106	.949	.184
Years	.184	.201	.385	.561	.097	.665
Poverty*Years	.385	.764	.375	.622	.787	.627

Note. Poverty = Poverty level of school; Years = Years of teaching experience.

No significant interaction between school poverty level and teachers' years of service existed for any of the six hypotheses. For Hypothesis 2, a significant main effect of poverty on the perception of teacher collaboration existed, but the effect size was small. Chapter V will include a discussion of the findings for each hypothesis and a discussion of the implications for practice.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

School culture is an essential concept for educational leaders to understand. Teacher perceptions of school culture may indicate the likelihood of a teacher to remain in the profession and at the school. School culture is multifaceted. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) identified six factors that influence school culture: collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. This study was conducted to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas of school culture. This chapter will discuss the findings and implications of the six hypotheses related to the theoretical framework and explore recommendations based on the data analysis.

Findings and Implications

The purpose was to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas of school culture. The data were analyzed using six 2 x 2 between groups factorial ANOVAs. The independent variables for each of the hypotheses were school poverty level and teacher years of experience. The dependent variables for the six hypotheses were teacher perceptions of collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships. The findings

indicated that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to create a significant effect on teacher perceptions in any of the six school culture factors. School poverty level did have a significant individual effect on teacher collaboration perception. The findings did not support Underwood's (2018) study of teachers in six secondary schools in Arkansas. Underwood (2018) found that poverty level did significantly affect all factors except professional development. Underwood studied teachers at six rural secondary schools in Arkansas, and the current study included teachers in 69 Arkansas schools and included teachers at all grade levels. An additional consideration might be that this study was conducted during a pandemic, which could cause additional stress on teachers (Allen, Jerrim, & Sims, 2020). Teaching in a blended environment (virtually and face-to-face) and dealing with students in and out of quarantine was a reality that was unique to the 2020-2021 school year. Additional stress might influence teacher perceptions of the school culture factors.

Collaborative Leadership

Hypothesis 1 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collaborative leadership measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of collaborative leadership significantly. Similarly, neither school poverty level nor teacher years of experience showed a significant individual effect on teacher perception of collaborative leadership. Hallinger (2015) expressed that leaders should be collaborative and build capacity in adults. Investing in adults is essential in any school environment and is not

specific to the poverty level of students in the building or the experience level of teachers. Teachers value collaborative leaders (Burkhauser, 2017). If leaders create structures to facilitate teacher input, teachers are more likely to remain in schools and stay in the profession (Burke et al., 2015). Collaborative leaders trust teachers and allow for autonomy in the classroom, which is essential to teachers (Young, 2018). Autonomy can be afforded to every teacher regardless of school poverty level or years of experience. Novice teachers need effective mentor programs to grow and develop efficacy (Nguyen et al., 2020). If collaborative leadership is valued at the professional orientation dimension, as explained in the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008), administrators ensure novice teachers are heard, and their needs are met through an effective mentoring program. Experienced teachers want assurance that they are safe and supported by administrators (Redding et al., 2019). Needing to feel safe and supported transcends poverty levels, and the need is met through the culture of the building and the leadership. Leadership is a critical factor in school culture for high- and low-poverty schools, and teachers of all experience levels need leaders to be collaborative. The leaders set the tone for the building and must understand and meet teacher needs so that teachers can meet student needs.

Teacher Collaboration

Hypothesis 2 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of teacher collaboration measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of teacher

collaboration significantly. Teacher years of experience did not show a significant individual effect on teacher perception of teacher collaboration; however, a significant effect was noted based on school poverty level. Teachers in high-poverty schools had a significantly higher mean score for teacher collaboration on the school culture survey than the teachers in low-poverty schools. These data could indicate that teachers in the high-poverty schools surveyed are given more dedicated time for collaboration. As a state, Arkansas has focused on PLCs in recent years. Schools can apply for programs where PLC experts work directly with the staff to improve collaboration and student performance. High-poverty schools, where many students are not performing at grade level, are encouraged to apply. High-poverty schools also receive additional Title 1 monies that train teachers in effective collaboration.

Collaboration benefits students. Thessin (2018) asserted that eight factors ensure that teacher collaboration is effective: teachers should meet consistently, the work should be sustained over time, teachers should work collaboratively, create a shared vision to improve student learning, emphasize student achievement in the context of the school's reality, team goals should align with building and district goals, teachers should share leadership, and agendas and other meeting structures should be implemented. Regardless of poverty level, schools can establish protocols for teacher collaboration, and teachers of all experience levels can participate equally if the structures are in place. Structures for collaboration are found at all levels and dimensions of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Artifacts of high levels of teacher collaboration can include improved student performance and increased teacher retention. The school's organizational structure will include built-in time for teachers to collaborate if the leaders

value collaboration. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) posited that time for collaboration was one factor in retaining novice teachers in the school and profession. Likewise, Carrillo and Flores (2017) found that experienced teachers attributed teacher collaboration to job satisfaction, supporting this study's results. Effective teacher collaboration helps teacher retention. Teachers in schools of high and low poverty find collaboration essential to student growth and teacher satisfaction.

Professional Development

Hypothesis 3 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of professional development measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of professional development significantly. Similarly, neither school poverty level nor teacher years of experience had a significant individual effect on teacher perception of professional development. According to Huang et al. (2020), when principals prioritize professional development, teachers feel more efficacious and are more likely to remain in the profession. Principals of schools at various poverty levels can create environments where teachers are encouraged to grow continually. Garcia and Weiss (2019) expressed that teachers are more likely to demonstrate growth when they have a voice in professional development content. Leaders can create feelings of autonomy, especially to experienced teachers, by allowing teachers to choose professional development opportunities that help meet their professional goals. Professional development is considered structured learning opportunities (Avalos, 2011), and mentor programs for novice teachers fall into this

category. Novice teachers are more likely to stay in the profession if they are part of a high-quality mentor program (Burke et al., 2015). The quality of the learning environment dimension of the new model of school culture indicates if a school leader values professional development. Teachers cannot become stagnant in professional growth if students are expected to grow academically. This study's findings indicate that teachers at high-poverty and low-poverty schools who are novice or experienced perceive professional development similarly.

Unity of Purpose

Hypothesis 4 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of unity of purpose measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of unity of purpose significantly. Similarly, neither school poverty level nor teacher years of experience showed a significant individual effect on teacher perception of unity of purpose. School leaders are responsible for creating a school mission and vision, though this should be done collaboratively with teachers. Unity of purpose is the extent to which everyone in the building is working toward the same outcomes based on the mission and vision. Indicators of unity of purpose that might appear in any or all of the dimensions of school culture include collective commitments that teachers make to each other (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). PLCs create a structure that allows the staff to create and stay focused on those commitments (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Types of collective commitments vary widely from school to school and could be influenced by poverty level; however, unity of

purpose indicates that staff members are moving in the same direction. Novice and experienced teachers will play different roles in establishing and meeting goals but should focus on the same goals. Teachers of all experience levels are more likely to stay in the profession when everyone on the staff is working toward the same goals (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Unity of purpose is an essential factor for leaders to consider and foster in a school.

Collegial Support

Hypothesis 5 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of collegial support measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of collegial support significantly. Similarly, neither school poverty level nor teacher years of experience showed a significant individual effect on teacher perception of collegial support. Collegial support indicates the level of trust between colleagues (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). The level of collegial support will heavily influence the quality of the working environment dimension of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Creating trust among colleagues must be intentional by administrators. Building trust can be facilitated by ensuring that structures are in place that allows teachers to collaborate and by modeling that every voice has value. These constructs can be implemented at schools with all poverty levels and are helpful to teachers regardless of experience. Carrillo and Flores (2017) asserted that experienced teachers gather a great deal of job satisfaction from their relationship with colleagues and leadership. The

collegial support provided between novice and experienced teachers are also crucial. Novice teachers need the help and guidance of experienced teachers to help them grow professionally (Burke et al., 2015). Mentoring novices allows experienced teachers to practice self-reflection and improve their craft (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Mentoring relationships help increase the feelings of collegial support throughout the building. Collegial support is an imperative factor of school culture and should be developed intentionally.

Learning Partnerships

Hypothesis 6 stated that no significant difference will exist by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions of learning partnerships measured by the School Culture Survey for K-12 teachers in 69 Arkansas schools. Data analysis revealed that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not combine to affect teacher perceptions of learning partnerships significantly. Similarly, neither school poverty level nor teacher years of experience showed a significant individual effect on teacher perception of learning partnerships. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) defined learning partnerships as the working relationships between school staff, parents, and students. Avnet et al. (2019) found that the type of parental involvement that is most beneficial varies by economic status, but involvement is vital in every situation and to every student. Avnet et al. also indicated that the type of parental involvement that is beneficial changes with each school level. Avnet et al.'s research could suggest that the grade level is more critical than the school poverty level when considering how to get parents involved for the most benefit. When designing opportunities for learning partnerships, administrators should ensure that grade

level is considered and that families from all income levels have appropriate opportunities to be involved. The student-centered focus dimension at each level of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) will indicate if schools value and provide opportunities for learning partnerships. These data suggest that teacher perception of learning partnerships does not vary based on school poverty level or years of experience but is important to teachers.

Recommendations

Potential for Practice/Policy

This study examined the effects of school poverty level by teacher years of experience on teacher perceptions of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey. The results suggested that school poverty level and teacher years of experience did not significantly affect teacher perception of school culture. The six factors that contribute to school culture, as identified by Valentine and Gruenert (2006), were explored through the literature review. These six factors provide insight into ways that leaders can affect school culture.

School leaders can create a positive school culture by attending to the six factors of school culture. In schools with positive school culture, leaders invite and expect collaboration and teacher input (Von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Teachers who feel valued are more likely to remain at the school. Leaders of schools with a positive school culture ensure that the schedule includes time for teacher collaboration (Jones & Thessin, 2017). Consistent, effective collaboration ensures teachers feel like they belong and can make a difference. Professional development increases the feeling of efficacy among teachers (Huang et al., 2020). School leaders can increase teacher efficacy, a critical

factor in improving student achievement, by providing quality professional development that teachers indicate is needed. Effective school leaders create unity of purpose among the staff by creating a solid vision and mission and the collective commitments to reach the vision and mission (DuFour et al., 2016). Each collaborative team should be working toward the same goals that move the school closer to the vision and mission. As teams work toward the school's mission, vision, and goals, teachers need to support each other. The administrator can nurture collegial support through strong support for collaboration, especially between novice and experienced teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Teachers need time with each other to improve practice and maintain high morale. Administrators should also understand the importance of learning partnerships. Parental involvement is critical at any stage of K-12 education, but opportunities should look different based on the grade level (Benner et al., 2016). Creating opportunities for parents to be involved is essential to positive school culture as these opportunities help ensure teachers feel supported by the community. School leaders are vital in developing a positive school culture. School culture is complex and requires leaders to give attention to the six factors. The importance of these factors is not specific to poverty level or teacher years of experience. Teachers need administrators to create a positive school culture.

Leaders can examine the dimensions and levels of the new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) to ensure that the school's priorities are evident in the dimensions and levels. Schools can use the School Culture Survey (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006) to measure the school culture. Collaboration between leaders and staff members regarding the survey results and working together to improve low scores can help improve school culture. Improving school culture can improve teacher retention

(Whalen et al., 2019; Young, 2018; Zavelevsky & Lishinsky, 2019). Positive school culture also increases student achievement (Banerjee et al., 2017; Torres, 2019). Understanding the culture of the school and the factors that make up the culture is essential for administrators. Efforts to improve school culture must begin with understanding the current reality and where to focus efforts for improvement.

Future Research Considerations

The findings determined no significant effect of school poverty level by teacher years of service on teacher perceptions of school culture. A small individual effect for teacher collaboration in high-poverty schools existed. This significant result could indicate an emphasis on collaboration in schools with high-poverty and low student achievement. Perceptions of each factor of school culture (collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships) were measured by the School Culture Survey (Valentine & Gruenert, 2006). Additional research in the following areas is recommended:

1. Future research using the School Culture Survey on these schools while teachers are not experiencing a pandemic could provide insight into the effects of pandemics on school culture. Additional stress on teachers due to the pandemic might have affected teacher perception of the six factors (Allen, Jerrim, & Sims, 2020).
2. Also, research that provides a longitudinal view of teacher perceptions of school culture could provide beneficial information. Surveys could be given multiple times during the year and examined across multiple years.

3. Quantitative research using the School Culture Survey to gather more information about teacher perceptions of the six factors could be beneficial. Quantitative research would allow for teachers to provide details and expand on the six factors.
4. Future research could explore the effects of perception of school culture based on the gender, race, or ethnicity of teachers.
5. School culture could be examined based on elementary or secondary teachers only.
6. Research into leadership styles and the effects on school culture could be beneficial. Von Fischer and De Jong (2017) indicated that school culture is more positive when administrators practice servant leadership. Hallinger (2015) also indicated that leaders are the most critical factor in school culture.
7. Research that examines the link between school culture and formal mentor programs could potentially improve teacher retention. Whalen, Majocha, and Van Nuland (2019) indicated that formal mentor programs increased the likelihood of novice teachers staying in the profession.

Conclusion

School culture is a complex concept and one that has been studied repeatedly over time. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) developed a new model of school culture that served as the theoretical framework. The new model of school culture provided levels and dimensions that explain the dynamics and interrelationships of various school culture elements. Administrators should ensure that each dimension (professional orientation, organizational structure, quality of learning environment, and student-centered focus) is

attended to at every level (artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions). The experience of students and teachers depends on the attention to these dimensions and levels.

Administrators are critical to developing positive school culture. Leaders should be collaborative and encourage and expect collaboration among teachers. PLCs can provide the structure needed for effective teacher collaboration (DuFour et al., 2016). PLCs also provide increased opportunities for ongoing professional development, unity of purpose, and collegial support. Purposeful planning for learning partnerships appropriate for the community and the school can also contribute to a positive school culture (Park et al., 2017). Administrators must employ structures for positive school culture, and training should allow teachers to participate and benefit. These structures are beneficial at schools of all poverty levels and for teachers at all levels of experience.

This study was conducted to determine the effects by years of experience between teachers at high-poverty schools versus low-poverty schools on teachers' perceptions in six areas of school culture. Valentine and Gruenert (2006) identified six factors of school culture (collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnerships). They developed the School Culture Survey to measure teacher perceptions on the six factors. The survey was given to K-12 teachers at 69 Arkansas schools. Teacher years of experience and school poverty level did not significantly affect teacher perceptions in these six areas. School poverty level did show a significant effect on the perception of teacher collaboration. Teachers working in high-poverty schools assigned higher scores to teacher collaboration, though the effect size was small. Even though this study was limited in scope, school leaders

should understand the factors contributing to positive school culture and improving teacher retention and student achievement.

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