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# A Comparative Analysis: Charter Schoolteachers' Perceptions of Empowerment by Management Model

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# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: CHARTER SCHOOLTEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

# OF EMPOWERMENT BY MANAGEMENT MODEL

DISSERTATION

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: CHARTER SCHOOLTEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

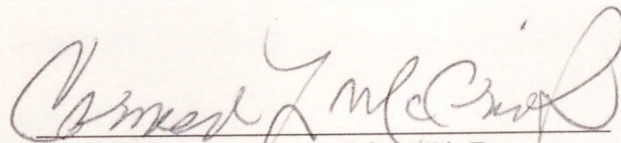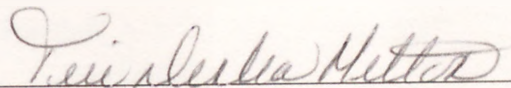OF EMPOWERMENT BY MANAGEMENT MODEL


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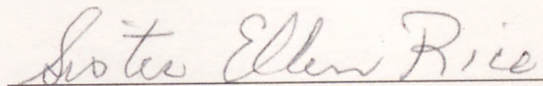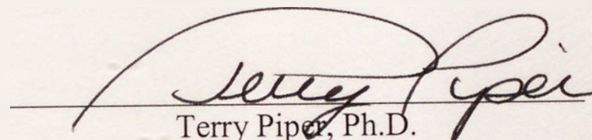
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Ida Bell Holt, who taught me that with knowledge came wisdom. She inspired me to seize every moment to advance my career through education. This dissertation is also dedicated to my sisters, nephews, and nieces in hopes that they will continue their education to advance their careers.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend a warm thank you to Delta Kappa Gamma Society International and my sisters of the Alpha Zeta Chapter for their continued support in my pursuit of a doctorate degree.

Finally, I would like to thank my numerous friends and colleagues who were patient, loving, encouraging, and understanding during my quest to achieve this goal. I could not have completed this dissertation without you.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there were any significant differences in the perceived level of teacher empowerment at charter schools operated by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools operated independently of EMOs.

A mixed method research design was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher deemed the collection and analyses of quantitative data as primacy to the study and the results of the qualitative data served to complement the quantitative data by providing clarity to specific contexts, experiences, and realities of the phenomenon of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment at their school.

Charter schools were established as a result of legislation enacted by the Florida State Legislature in 1996 under Section 1002.33, Charter Schools, F. S. One of the purposes of this legislation was to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school. These opportunities were aligned with teachers' levels of empowerment. The levels of empowerment exercised and experienced by teachers often measured teacher autonomy and/or job satisfaction.

The teachers' perceived levels of empowerment were measured using an objective survey, the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Reinhart, 1992). The subjective data were collected via face-to-face interviews with the researcher and 12 selected charter school third and/or fourth grade teachers; six teachers worked at charter schools managed by an EMO and six worked at charter schools managed independently

of an EMO. Questions were based on Thomas and Velthouse's cognitive model of intrinsic motivation.

This study was conducted using a five-phase design model, where the researcher (a) obtained permission from instructional leaders (principals), (b) obtained permission from charter schoolteachers and distributed surveys to collect demographic and quantitative data, (c) secured and reviewed school site operational documents, (d) collected qualitative data via face-to-face interviews with third and/or fourth grade charter school teachers, and (e) conducted a comprehensive review and analyses of data and research findings.

The results of the quantitative data analyzed were consistent with the results of the analyzed qualitative data. Statistical significance differences of the objective data were determined at the .05 level. The subjective data resulted in four core themes and six sub-themes.

This study revealed that the management model had no impact on charter schoolteachers' levels of empowerment. The management model appeared to have been a seamless entity that operated behind the scenes rather than in the forefront of teachers' areas of responsibilities.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

As we consider the best ways to improve the quality of education for our students, it is instructive to reflect carefully on the words "leadership" and "professional." If "teacher leadership" ever gets the chance it deserves to truly improve education, then it must move beyond a limited concern with new roles and release time toward that which the word "leadership" should always imply: knowing where to go and how to get there. (Schmoker & Wilson, 1994, p. 137)

Schmoker and Wilson (1994) agreed with other researchers, like Datnow and Castellano (2001) that teachers assigned to leadership roles possessed major influences in identifying and implementing effective educational reform. Legislators from many states, such as, Michigan, Minneapolis, and Arizona, supported charter schools as mechanisms for educational reform by sponsoring and passing legislation to establish charter schools within their respective states.

Background of the Problem

Charter schools were public schools that operated through a contract with a sponsoring agency, such as a school board, a business, or a university. In 1996, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation to establish charter schools in the State of Florida. One of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation was to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school site.

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Charter schools were promoted as a new educational reform model. Teachers were essential resources in the delivery of new educational reform models; therefore, their input and contribution to the success of these models were valuable (Dorn, 2002; Ravitch, 2000; Wynne, 2001). Initially, charter schools established in Miami-Dade County were managed by an elected or appointed board of trustees in cooperation with Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) district and region staff. At the initiation of this study, 16 of 27 or 58% of charter school operators in M-DCPS (Miami-Dade County Public Schools, 2003) engaged the services of educational management organizations (EMOs). EMOs were new entities promoted as educational reform models that entered into a contract with an educational institution to deliver school-related services. These services included hiring employees, curriculum development, instructional planning, and budgetary functions (i.e., payroll, purchasing, fringe benefits, and financial audits).

In general, charter school legislation included language that allowed charter school operators the flexibility of hiring non-certified teachers (Anderson, Adelman, Finnigan, Cotton, Donnelly, & Price, 2002; Anderson, Adelman, Yamashiro, Donnelly, Finnigan, Blackorby, & Cotton, 2000; Good & Braden, 2000). However, many EMOs, charter school principals, and boards of trustees aggressively recruited and attracted new and experienced certified M-DCPS teachers to teach at various charter schools. This approach to hiring charter schoolteachers was not unique to M-DCPS. A study by Podgursky and Ballou (2001) indicated that charter schools in other states, like Massachusetts and Michigan, recruited certified, experienced teachers from the local school district because of the willingness of teachers to be included and involved in the

creative process and procedures of charter schools. Their research found that there were better teachers in the traditional public school systems percentage-wise than in charter schools, but traditional public schoolteachers were generally restricted to the rules and regulations of the system in order to adhere to established policies and standards that were consistent for all schools. To that end, charter school legislation supported charter schoolteachers in their quest to realize increased autonomy that enabled them to exhibit leadership skills that contributed to the effectiveness of the charter school.

The widely-publicized national teacher shortage for the next five to ten years heightened the efforts of charter schools to actively recruit certified and experienced M-DCPS teachers. Therefore, in an effort for M-DCPS to compete with charter schools in recruiting and retaining certified experienced teachers, it would be helpful for them and other traditional public school systems to know if teacher autonomy and/or empowerment were priorities and/or realities for teachers who worked at charter schools.

Leadership, teacher autonomy, student performance, and academic achievement constituted several of the purposes of charter school legislation as outlined in Florida Charter Schools (2002) legislation; the expressed intent was to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school site. The levels of empowerment exercised and experienced by various stakeholders often measured autonomy. To that end, this study was an effort to research and collect data to determine if there was no significant difference in charter schoolteachers' perceived level of empowerment regardless of the management model selected by the charter school's board of trustees, specifically EMO managed charter schools or charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

## Statement of the Problem

Empowerment became a part of current rhetoric of educational discourse and exchange (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002; Lightfoot, 1986). Empowerment aided in the understanding and visualization of the human ability within organizations to improve and increase opportunities for autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority (Lightfoot, 1986; Marks & Louis, 1999). It was considered to be a basic element of school reform (Lightfoot). To that end, enactment of charter school legislation in 36 states and the District of Columbia indicated that state legislators viewed the establishment of charter schools as a promising educational reform model.

Educational reform, school reform, and systemic change were common terms used to describe the status and impact of educational initiatives implemented to improve student achievement and performance. These terms had various meanings and impact on effecting educational reforms. Senge (1990) referred to educational reform as the dynamic interaction among all components of various learning organizations. Smith and O'Day (1991) identified components of learning organizations in their definition of educational change that included (a) a unifying vision and goals describing what schools should be like, (b) a coherent system of instructional guidance, and (c) a restructured governance system.

A national study conducted by Quellmalz, Shields, and Knapp (1995) suggested that educational reform involved (a) challenging learning experiences for students, (b) a school culture that nurtured staff collaboration and participation in decision making, and (c) meaningful opportunities for professional growth. An examination of these definitions of educational reform reflected the teacher as a central character in facilitating

educational reform by interacting with students and staff in a continuous effort to impact every aspect of the educational institution.

During the old and new eras of searching for appropriate educational reform models, educators were faced with the challenge to research and explore potential educational reform models to stimulate the educational environment to support and enhance student achievement. Charter schools were promoted as an educational model that supported administrative and teacher autonomy, which lead to improved student achievement and performance. Prior research studies on charter schools focused independently on such areas as (a) student achievement, (b) teacher autonomy and empowerment, (c) parent involvement, (d) reasons for parents choosing charter schools, (e) charter school configurations, and (f) financial status and longevity. Research focused on charter schools and EMOs that targeted their financial relationship and their direct impact on classrooms and student services. There appeared to be a void in the literature that explained teachers' roles and responsibilities at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Dewey stated, "…teachers have as much right to make suggestions to the child as does a head carpenter who lets apprentices know what they are expected to do" (as cited in Ravitch, 2000, p. 199). To that end, research on charter schools did not reflect the impact EMOs had on teachers' perceived level of empowerment and their impact on students and the overall operation of charter schools. This study employed a mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative, and explored teachers' perceptions of their levels of empowerment at EMO-managed charter schools compared to those charter schools operated independently of an EMO.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there were any significant differences in the perceived levels of teacher empowerment at charter schools operated by EMOs as compared to charter schools operated independently of EMOs. At the initiation of this study, literature did not reflect research that focused on the relationship between charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment relative to an EMO managed charter school as compared to charter schools managed independently of an EMO.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study included Vogt and Murrell's (1990) construct of empowerment defined as job satisfaction, which was driven from an intrinsic perspective. Current and future leaders need to establish within the organization a new ethic of shared responsibility to help build infrastructures that assist each employee to meet work-related challenges. According to Vogt and Murrell, leaders nurturing intrinsic empowerment within the school's environment may minimize negative outcomes associated with shared decision making.

Many psychologists referred to motivation as the reason that individuals were aroused to action (Covington, 2000). However, over the past 50 years motivation evolved into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, & Motoike, 2001; Covington). Individuals were extrinsically motivated for tangible rewards, such as good grades, recognition, and/or increased pay. These awards were generally not connected to an action. According to Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991), there were three types of extrinsic motivation: (a) external regulation, (b) introjected regulation, and (c) identified regulation. External regulation referred to those behaviors

that were regulated by rewards and constraints, but introjected regulation behavior

occurred when individuals internalized the contingencies that guided their behaviors--

behaviors that were guided by rules or demands. Introjected regulation behavior also

involved coercion or pressure to perform in a particular manner. This type of behavior

did not support individuals' self-determined or self-efficacy behaviors. Identified

regulation occurred when individuals valued their behavior and believed it was important.

It also appeared to be more self-determined than the other regulatory behaviors.

However, it was defined as extrinsic because the behavior was still instrumental in

accomplishing a goal (Cokley et al., 2001).

In contrast, individuals were intrinsically motivated when they engaged in activities

for their personal satisfaction (Covington, 2000). Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, and

Motoike (2001) further explained intrinsic motivation as those experiences that

stimulated the performance of an activity because of the sensations one received from

participation or involvement. Intrinsically motivated individuals realized satisfaction by

overcoming a personal challenge, learning something new, or discovering things of

personal interest (Covington). Therefore, intrinsic motivation was seen as a characteristic

of self-determined or self-efficacious type behavior.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, Appendix A, focused on Vogt and Murrell's (1990)

cognitive design model of intrinsic empowerment, which could best be defined as a force

of self-motivation led by one's personal choices and events in the environment (Davis &

Wilson, 2000). According to Vogt and Murrell, this cognitive design model encouraged

leaders to establish, within their organization, "a new ethic of shared responsibility to

help build an infrastructure that facilitated each employee's ability to handle responsibilities" (p. 26).

It furthered enabled the leader to create an environment where information would flow vertically and horizontally so that employees would meet shared goals. Once the employees met these goals, it enhanced the leader's ability to motivate them to have pride in their accomplishments and celebrate with confidence. This cognitive design model was aligned with Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) construct of empowerment. This construct of empowerment involved four factors: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice.

The first factor of empowerment, impact, referred to the degree or level of an individual's behaviors that were perceived to produce the desired effects within the task environment. The second factor, competence, was defined as the degree to which an individual performed task activities skillfully with a high level of confidence. The third, meaningfulness, identified the values of the task, goals, or purposes according to the individual's standards. And the fourth, choice, involved the individual intentionally selecting actions that lead to the desired outcomes. These factors were important to identifying teachers' levels of motivation and satisfaction, which offered credibility to teachers' expectations and realizations as positive forces at their schools.

In order for an individual, in this case, a teacher to be empowered, the instructional leader or principal needed to relinquish power associated with empowerment in order to empower others. Power was described as the (a) authority to authorize, (b) capacity to realize self-efficacy, and (c) energy to energize others (Thomas & Velthouse). The license to empower teachers at the school site was the responsibility of the instructional

leader or principal (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Rinehart, Short, Short, & Eckley, 1998). Studies suggested that charismatic and transformational leaders authorized and energized teachers to participate in the operation of schools and realized an increased level of self-efficacy (Bass & Avolio, 1998; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

The cognitive intrinsic motivation model (Thomas & Velthouse) provided a mechanism for interested parties to assess tasks. These task assessments were viewed as interpretations or constructions of reality. Therefore, intrinsic task motivation was not merely influenced by external events but by the way events were construed. These task assessments included impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. Bumpus, Olbeter, and Glover (1998) suggested motivational orientation came from the interaction of task features, individual characteristics, and situational aspects. This interaction offered opportunities for teachers to meet their desire to know, accomplish, and/or experience sensory stimulation (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

### Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study. They were as follows:

1. Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs?

2. Do charter schoolteachers receive a higher level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school?

*Quantitative Data Generation*

The School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Reinhart, 1992) was used to assess and collect data regarding the perceived levels of empowerment selected charter schoolteachers realized at their school. This scale consisted of 38 items (see Appendix B) employing a 5-point Likert scale that measured teachers' overall empowerment using six dimensions: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact. The results were compared with Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) construct of empowerment that included four factors: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice.

*Qualitative Data Generation*

In order to strengthen the results and analyses of the quantitative data collected during this study, a qualitative component was added to gather data that reflected a sample of the experiences and realities of charter schoolteachers' levels and actions of empowerment at schools managed by EMOs compared to schools managed independently of EMOs. The qualitative component involved an interview with each participant. The interviews generated data that reflected the perceptions of participants' general overview of empowerment at their schools, as well as data that reflected specific empowerment opportunities that were provided to them at their schools. In addition, the purpose of the interviews was to ascertain responses to open-ended questions using an interview protocol based on Creswell's (2002) design model (see Appendix C).

## Null and Research Hypotheses

*Null Hypotheses*

The aforementioned research questions were generated based on the following null hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 ($HO_1$): There is no difference between the levels of perceived empowerment for teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 2 ($HO_2$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of impact empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 3 ($HO_3$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of competence empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 4 ($HO_4$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of meaningful empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 5 ($HO_5$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of choice empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

*Research Hypotheses*

Based on the aforementioned null hypotheses, the following constituted the research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 ($H_1$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis 2 ($H_2$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived impact empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis 3 ($H_3$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect levels of perceived competence empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_4$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived meaningful empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_5$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMO will reflect higher levels of perceived choice empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were numerous. However, these limitations did not jeopardize the validity of the research. First, the study was limited to the 162 teachers who worked at the 19 kindergarten through fifth grade elementary charter schools

sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. These teachers instructed and/or served students at the time of this study.

Second, the study was limited to the 118 teachers who worked at the elementary charter schools and volunteered to participate. Their participation involved completing demographic and objective surveys and consenting to participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher.

Third, the study was limited to the accuracy of the participants' responses on the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Reinhart, 1992). This scale allowed the participants to respond to 38 statements regarding their perceived level of empowerment.

Fourth, the study was limited to the six dimensions of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short & Reinhart, 1992), which included decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. This scale was the only instrument used to collect empirical data. Additionally, the six dimensions of this scale were used to develop the first seven interview questions.

Fifth, the study was limited to the four categories of Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) Cognitive Intrinsic Motivation Model, which included impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice. These categories were used as the basis in the development of four of the interview questions.

Sixth, the study was limited to a population sample that had very little diversity in gender and ethnicity. The sample consisted overwhelming of Hispanic female teachers.

Finally, the study was limited to charter schoolteachers with an average number of overall teaching experiences of five years or less and an average of two years or less

teaching experiences at a charter school. Many of these teachers started their teaching career at charter schools after completing a teacher-education program.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

For the purpose of this study, frequently used terms were defined to provide clarity and consistency of context within this document.

*Autonomy*

Autonomy, as defined by Crawford (2001), was teachers' beliefs that they controlled certain aspects of their school life such as scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and planning. Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1999) described autonomy as the ability to become self-reliant and proactive.

*Choice*

Choice was defined by Davis and Wilson (2000) as the ability to intentionally select actions that lead to desired outcomes. Chubb and Moe (2001) suggested that teachers were professionals and should have the authority to exercise a level of autonomy or choice.

*Competence*

Competence was defined as the degree to which an individual performed task activities skillfully with a high level of confidence (Davis & Wilson). Teacher competence was acquired through formal education, on-the-job training, and experience.

*Decision Making*

Crawford (2001) defined decision making as the participation of teachers in making critical decisions that directly affected their work. In addition, this decision making process included administrators, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders who

participated in making school-based decisions regarding budgets, hiring, scheduling, curriculum, and other aspects of school operations.

*Empowerment*

Empowerment was defined as the understanding and visualization of the human ability within organizations to improve and increase opportunities for autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority (Lightfoot, 1986). Empowerment was often experienced as ongoing negotiations, interactions, and dialog with administrators of the organization.

*Extrinsic Motivation*

Extrinsic motivation was defined as motivation guided by tangible rewards such as good grades, recognition, and/or increased pay (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, & Motoike, 2001; Covington, 2000). This type of motivation did not support individuals' self-determined or self-efficacy behaviors.

*Impact*

Impact was defined as the degree or level of an individual's behaviors, which were perceived to produce the desired effects within the task environment (Crawford, 2001). Teacher commitment toward the overall health of the school influenced their personal impact on the operation of the school.

*Instructional Leader*

Instructional leaders were principals who provided leadership of an educational institution to build a vision of possibilities and created collaborative cultures of learning (Zepeda, 2003). These leaders were able to use their position and personal power in order to realize the school's vision and mission.

*Intrinsic Motivation*

Intrinsic motivation was defined as experiences that stimulated the performance of an activity because of the sensations one received from participating (Cokley et al., 2001). Intrinsically motivated individuals realized satisfaction by overcoming a personal challenge, learning something new, or discovering things of personal interest (Covington, 2000).

*Meaningfulness*

Meaningfulness was identified as the value of tasks, goals, or purposes based on the individual's standards (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Meaningfulness was also aligned with teacher participation in school-based decision making.

*Mixed Method Design*

A mixed method design was a procedure that collected both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study and analyzed and reported this data based on a priority and sequence of information (Creswell, 2002). This type of design model was able to confirm research findings from different data sources.

*Professional Growth*

Professional growth was defined as teachers' perceptions of opportunities provided to them in order to grow and develop professionally (Crawford, 2001). Teachers realized professional growth through formal education, on-the-job training, and experience.

*Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy was defined as teachers' perception of being equipped with the skills and the ability to help students learn, were competent in building effective programs for students, and promoted change in student learning (Crawford, 2001). Short and Greer

(2002) stated that self-efficacy was developed as a person acquired self-knowledge and the belief that he or she was personally competent and had mastered the necessary skills to affect the desired outcomes.

*Status*

Status was defined as teachers' perceptions that they had professional respect and recognition from colleagues (Crawford, 2001). Teachers' status with their colleagues was evidenced by their leadership roles at the school site, e.g., modeling instructional lessons and techniques, conducting workshops, and developing curriculum.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study provided additional knowledge and information to charter school operators and other stakeholders in the distinction of which management model (e.g., management by educational management organizations [EMOs] or independently managed of EMOs) afforded teachers a more positive perception of feeling empowered. Additionally, research findings added to the current body of literature that indicated educational reform should include increased teacher empowerment at schools that support and enhance school operations.

This research study also provided data that reflected how a targeted group of charter schoolteachers in Miami-Dade County viewed charter school legislation established to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school, Florida Charter Schools (2002). Specifically, the results of the study suggested how charter schoolteachers perceived their levels of empowerment according to the management model employed at their school (e.g., management by EMOs as compared to management by non-EMOs).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Educational reform had been a concern in the United States since the mid-18th century and has continued to be so into the 21st century. Educational institutions were challenged to meet the needs of an increasing public school enrollment with limited resources in order to create appropriate and effective innovative educational programs (Short & Greer, 2002). According to Darling-Hammond as cited in Walling (1994):

The criticisms of current education reformers . . . are virtually identical to those of the Progressives at the turn of the century, in the 1930s, and again in the 1960s. Many of the reforms we are pursuing today were pursued in each of these eras. (p. 120)

Empowerment became part of today's rhetoric of educational discourse and exchange as a mechanism to effectuate educational reform and school improvement. Conley and Muncey (1999) suggested that recent educational reform movements could be categorized into two phases. The first phase of reform was predicated on the bureaucratic or pyramidal belief that teachers lacked sufficient motivation to invest in improving their teaching. The second phase of reform was called the teacher-professionalism movement, a means where teachers would be empowered to make contributions to the overall operations of the school. Empowerment aided in the understanding and visualization of the human ability, within organizations, to improve and increase opportunities for autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority. It was considered to be a basic element of school reform (Lightfoot, 1986).

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The primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether there were any significant differences in the perceived levels of teachers' empowerment at charter schools operated by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools operated independently of EMOs. In addition, this study identified specific opportunities and levels of empowering roles and responsibilities afforded to teachers working at charter schools, based on the management model of the charter school (i.e., EMO managed or non-EMO managed schools). Current literature did not reflect research studies that focused on the relationship between charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment and EMOs' philosophy of teacher empowerment. This literature review identified historical educational reform efforts geared toward empowering teachers and highlighted any commonality that existed between and among them. This literature review focused on Vogt and Murrell's (1990) construct of empowerment from an intrinsic perspective, a new ethic of shared responsibility to help build an infrastructure that assisted each employee to meet work-related challenges and realize job satisfaction. It also focused on Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) Cognitive Design Model of intrinsic empowerment consisting of four factors, which included (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice. These four factors of the cognitive design model were compared to the six dimensions of Short and Reinhart's (1992) School Participant Empowerment Scale: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact.

Educational Reform

Educational reform, school reform, educational change, and systemic change were terms used to describe the status and impact of educational initiatives implemented to

improve student achievement and performance. Each of these terms had various meanings and impact on effectuating educational reform. Senge (1990) referred to educational reform as the dynamic interaction among all components of various learning organizations. Smith and O'Day (1991) referred to educational change as a three-part system: (a) a unifying vision and goals describing what schools should be like, (b) a coherent system of instructional guidance, and (c) a restructured governance system.

Green (2001) suggested that educational reform should redefine the roles and relationships of school superintendents, principals, and teachers. This redefinition reflected how educational reform efforts changed the way school personnel made instructional decisions and decisions that impacted school governance. Consequently, educators were faced with the challenge to research and explore potential educational reform models that stimulated educational environments that supported and enhanced student achievement.

Many educators used the term educational reform and systemic change to refer to a variety of programs they supported and promoted. However, scholars recognized educational reform and systemic change as mechanisms used to create dramatic increases in student performance and to examine the organizational structure of the institution in order to provide the framework for desired changes to occur (Allen, 1997; Frechtling, 2000; Stolp, 2001). For the purpose of this literature review, any reference to reform was directed to educational reform and systemic change.

*History of Educational Reform*

The call for educational reform can be traced back to the mid-18th century at a time when political, economic, and social changes occurred rapidly (Doll, 1996). At this early

phase in United States history of education, school reform was initiated primarily to improve curricula offerings to satisfy the needs of past societies that were mainly agrarian, industrial, and technological. The trend to respond to current political and social curricula demands to meet the needs of society continued into the 21st century. Educators needed to meet the modern day challenges of published reports and commentaries questioning the lack of progressive responses to such issues as (a) The Soviet Union's Successful Sputnik Space Flight, (b) Why Johnny Can't Read?, (c) A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform, and (d) The Secretary of Education's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills Report. These published reports coupled with the growing dissatisfaction of parents and political officials with public school education propelled educators in a continuous search of research-based reform models that improved student performance and student achievement.

*The Role of Teachers in Educational Reform*

Educational reformers continued to view curricula issues as priority factors in responding to critical reports regarding the state of education in the United States. However, these issues were not the only factors educational reformers believed would lead to true educational reform and systemic change. During the past 20 years, many educational reformers agreed upon the importance of teacher quality and teacher leadership to school improvement efforts (Mayo, 2002; Sherrill, 1999). In addition to supporting school improvement, Mayo believed these areas were important in advancing the concept of teachers as professionals. In order to perpetuate the professionalism of teachers, Sherrill stated that the roles of teachers were expanding and emerging as educators and policymakers looked to improve three major phases of the teaching career

continuum, which included teacher preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development.

As the educational reform movement continued to progress, many stakeholders and entities that had a keen interest in public school systems began to voice dissatisfaction with the status of education, and politicians across the nation became more aggressive with their input and influence on public education at the state level. State legislation was developed to establish standards for curricula content, graduation requirements, and grading public schools. In addition, many states passed legislation to establish educational choice options for parents and students. These options included magnet schools, voucher programs, and charter schools.

## Charter Schools

Charter schools were public schools that operated through a contract with a sponsoring agency, such as (a) a school board, (b) a business, (c) a university, or (d) a public educational institution. The premise on which charter schools were based had been a subject of discourse since the 1980s (Poland, 1996). The first charter school legislation was passed by the State of Minnesota in 1991. This action appeared to have escalated the number of states that began to openly discuss the establishment of similar legislation. Today, charter schools have become a growing phenomena in educational reform. Approximately 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico passed charter school legislation since 1988 (Allen, 1997).

Individuals or entities established charter schools for many reasons. According to the first year report of the Evaluation of the Public Charter Schools Program (Anderson, Adelman, Yamashiro, Donnelly, Finnigan, Blackorby, & Cotton, 2000), there were four

reasons often cited by interested parties for establishing a charter school: (a) realize an educational vision, (b) gain professional autonomy and become empowered, and/or (c) serve a special population of students. This study further revealed that parents and teachers agreed with the philosophical concepts of charter schools, that is, high academic standards, small class sizes, and innovative approaches for instruction.

Charter school legislation emphasized that charter schools were public schools of choice that operated with freedom from many of the local, state, and federal regulations that applied to traditional public schools. The charter (contractual agreement) that was mutually agreed upon between the sponsoring agency and the governing board of the charter school generally addressed two key areas of responsibilities: (a) the ability of the charter school founders to fulfill their public obligations to govern the school responsibly and (b) the degree of freedom that the sponsoring agency allow the charter school board of trustees in order to handle school affairs without micro-managing the process. The basic perception of charter schools was that they were able to exercise more autonomy than the traditional public schools in return for increased accountability.

*Charter School Accountability*

The accountability model for traditional public schools primarily focused on compliance of federal and state laws and/or statutes established to regulate and micromanage the operational aspect of district schools, as well as to ensure that appropriate leaders and bureaucratic controls were in place to operate and manage those schools. In traditional public schools, new rules were established as needed to address any deficits in the operation and/or management of schools. In contrast, the accountability of charter schools was propelled primarily by public marketplaces that

demanded information sharing to the community, the chartering agency, board of

trustees, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the quality and effectiveness of charter

schools. It was assumed that the results of information sharing served as a mechanism for

stakeholders to evaluate satisfactory levels of charter school program accountability

(Manno, Finn, & Vanourek, 2000). Equipped with this information, clients and

stakeholders of the charter school would be able to reward the school for its successes,

punish the school for its failures, and send signals about the need for change.

According to Charter Schools (2000) legislation, charter school accountability

was linked to non-renewal or termination of the charter. Non-renewal or termination of a

charter was based on the (a) failure to meet the requirements for student performance

stated in the charter, (b) failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal

management, (c) violation of law, and/or (d) other good cause shown. At the initiation of

this study, literature did not reflect clearly defined data that indicated strong

accountability measures used by charter schools. The United States Department of

Education published a report on charter school accountability that suggested unclear laws

and lax implementation in many states clouded charter schools' relationships with

government and threatened to replace student performance with compliance as the basis

of school accountability (Hill, Pierce, & Lake, 1998). In 1999, the United States

Department of Education conducted a national study of charter schools. The study

described how some states implemented a centralized, state run approach for charter

school accountability; others utilized a marketplace approach; and still others used a

district-managed framework that relied on local controls augmented by statewide tests.

In addition to these approaches, some charter school management teams were initiating accountability plans unique to their vision and mission. To that end, charter schools developed performance management systems at the school emphasizing a bottom-up accountability plan rather than a top-down system. This bottom-up system allowed for teachers and school administrators to be proactive in providing stakeholders with performance indicators that measured program accountability and effectiveness, which included specific areas that addressed the school's academic, nonacademic, and organizational goals and its compliance with non-waived regulations (Manno, Finn, & Vanourek, 2000).

Lin (2001) analyzed data gathered from charter schools in California, Arizona, and Michigan to determine the effectiveness of charter schools in the areas of student achievement, student demographic, school funding, and teacher efficacy and empowerment. The data indicated that the level of expectations varied and were categorized into (a) students' achieving according to expectations; (b) student demographics needed to be improved to be more inclusive of a more diverse student population; and, (c) school funding, teacher efficacy, and empowerment narrowly met expectations.

Increased teacher efficacy and empowerment could be facilitated through a participative leadership style managed school. Participative leadership referred to leaders who invited subordinates to share in the decision making (Northouse, 2001). Participative leaders engaged in-group behaviors described by Vroom and Yetton (as cited in Baron, 1983) included (a) sharing work problems with followers; (b) soliciting their suggestions, concerns, and recommendations; and, (c) weighing inputs in the

decision making process. Erickson and Gmelch (1977) suggested the benefit of adopting

a team-management approach to school governance included (a) improved quality of

communication and decision making practices, (b) increased staff motivation, and (c)

enhanced coordination of tasks and plans.

*Growth of Charter Schools*

The charter school movement realized tremendous growth since 1990 as an option

to traditional public schools. A national study of charter schools by the United States

Department of Education (1998), listed the 1997 student enrollment for traditional public

school students as 31,526,771, and the charter school student enrollment for the 1998-99

school year as 252,009 (Nelson, B., Berman, Ericson, Kamprath, Perry, Silverman,

Solomon, D., 2000). These statistics indicated approximately 0.08% of students attending

traditional public schools transferred to a charter school. However, the report did not

indicate if any of the charter school students represented by the 0.08% transferred from

any other educational environment, that is, home schooling, private schools, and/or

parochial schools.

*Charter Schools in Florida*

In 1996, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation to establish charter schools in

the State of Florida. One of the 11 purposes of the Charter Schools (2002) legislation was

to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning

program at the school site. Charter school legislation stated or implied that increased

autonomy on the part of stakeholders of any charter school was a crucial element of the

success of the school. It further implied that charter school boards of trustees and school

personnel were free from the bureaucratic hierarchy and management of traditional public school administration.

Initially, charter school founders consisted of three different groups of people: (a) grassroots organizations consisting of parents, teachers, and community members; (b) entrepreneurs; or, (c) existing schools converting to charter status. Charter schools, established as a result of early legislation, generally were very small schools and stakeholders were permitted to exhibit a great deal of autonomy in developing and implementing educational programs. In many situations, teachers and parents organized to develop the design of the charter school, building in levels of autonomy and empowerment for administrators and teachers.

Teachers reported that their choice to work in charter schools were for a variety of reasons, including academic freedom, program flexibility, a family teaching and learning atmosphere, increased decision making, dedicated staff, and enhanced accountability (Bierlein, 1996). However, as charter schools became increasingly popular and attractive for parents and potential charter school founders, the grassroots effort of community stakeholders appeared to wane in favor of big businesses, municipalities, and educational management organizations (EMOs). Charter school EMOs were increasing in number and appeared to be replacing the faces of early charter school founders. The engagement of EMOs was more prevalent in charter schools than in traditional public schools (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999).

Since 1991, charter school research studies addressed (a) the experience and opinions of superintendents and school board members; (b) problem areas of transportation, facilities, special education, and relationships with sponsoring agencies;

and, (c) the operation of traditional public schools compared to the operation of charter schools (Poland, 1996). Additionally, previous research studies on charter schools focused independently on (a) student achievement, (b) teacher autonomy and empowerment, (c) parent involvement, (d) why parents chose charter schools, (e) charter school configurations, and (f) financial status and longevity as an educational reform model. The literature referred to charter schools as part of a movement to reform education and schools. As a result of this extensive proclamation, charter schools were being brought to the forefront of education as new educational reform models. Since teachers were said to be an essential component in the delivery of new educational reform models, their input and contribution to the success of charter schools was valuable.

Educational Management Organizations

Charter schools were often established by groups of parents, teachers, and/or other individuals who had expertise in education, but very little school site business experience. In some cases, this scenario was reversed; charter school operators had more business experience than expertise in educating students (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999). Therefore, in order to be effective and competitive with other charter schools and/or traditional public schools, an EMO was hired to provide specific services. EMOs were new entities promoting themselves as an educational reform model that assisted and/or provided school-related services. These services included hiring employees, curriculum development, instructional planning, and budgetary functions, such as, payroll, purchasing, fringe benefits, and financial audits. EMOs entered into a contract with an educational institution to deliver all or some of the aforementioned school-related services.

*Narrow and Broad Educational Management Organizations*

Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) were classified as narrow or broad. Narrow EMOs were more likely to increase the school's capacity to manage and account for funds, but did not generally affect the school's organizational viability or educational effectiveness outside of their restricted domain (Hill, Lake, & Celio, 2002). The relationship between a narrow EMO and the school was primarily a one-to-one relationship; the school was not affiliated with any other contracted institution of the EMO. However, broad EMOs contracted with a sponsoring agency to work with a network of schools under a common contractual agreement (Hill et al.). Broad EMOs provided a venue for school leaders within the network to participate in information sharing and support, as well as participate in reciprocal school visits to evaluate programs and offer feedback. Schools contracted with a broad EMO were able to make some decisions regarding hiring school personnel and some curricula issues. However, budgeting, hiring the school leader, and major curricula decisions were made by the entity serving as the broad EMO. The relationship between schools and broad EMOs generally reflected a close connection because school leaders realized that their personal level of accountability was high, which in turn contributed to the overall reputation and success of the broad EMO.

*Advantages and Disadvantages of Educational Management Organizations*

According to Hill, Lake, and Celio (2002), there were some advantages and disadvantages to engaging the services of EMOs. Some advantages included (a) substantial financial backing for school start-up and the ability to offer new and renovated schools, (b) the use of political connections to buffer schools from external

demands, and (c) to develop partnerships to access facilities suitable to house an

educational entity. Some disadvantages of engaging an EMO included (a) the lack of

clear lines of accountability and decision making, (b) conflict of priorities as it related to

the school's core mission versus the EMO, and (c) the attraction of unwanted attention

from various external groups with other agendas. However, the relationship developed

between the school and EMO was dependent upon whether the school had a clear sense

of its mission and the leadership to use resources provided from outside without losing its

focus (Hill et al.).

Recently, many charter school operators chose to engage the services of an EMO.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools sponsored 27 charter schools at the initiation of this

study: (a) 14 elementary schools (K-5), (b) 5 elementary/middle (K-7/8), (c) 6 middle (6-

8/9), and (d) 2 senior high schools (9-12). Approximately 58 (16 of 27) percent of these

charter schools engaged the services of EMOs. Comparatively, 70% of charter schools in

Michigan engaged the services of an EMO (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999).

## Empowerment

Empowerment was a word that found its prominence in educational reform in the

1980s (Short & Greer, 2002). Empowerment aided in the understanding and visualization

of the human ability within organizations to improve and increase opportunities for

autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority (Lightfoot, 1986). Leaders or managers

needed to establish within the organization a new ethic of shared responsibility to help

build an infrastructure that assisted each employee to meet work-related challenges (Vogt

& Murrell, 1990). While the infrastructure of an organization was important, a more

concentrated cognitive design model of intrinsic empowerment lead to an effective and

efficient organization. Intrinsic empowerment was defined as self-motivation led by one's personal choices and events in the environment (Davis & Wilson, 2000).

According to Lightfoot (1986), there were three basic assumptions of empowerment. First, opportunities of empowerment should be provided and practiced early on in order for an individual to realize its intrinsic value. Second, the assumption of empowerment was that it needed to be available at every level in the school providing opportunities for administrators, teachers, and students to exert their leadership skills. Third, and finally, empowerment was always in a constant state of fluidity involving ongoing negotiations, interactions, dialog, and some discomfort that often lead to an initiative, autonomy, and responsibility for school staff.

The concept of empowerment had historical linkages to the work of past research and researchers. This concept impacted many work environments as leaders and managers investigated and explored strategies that would ultimately increase workers' productivity and increased or maintained workers' job satisfaction. Additional studies have involved the impact of workers' contribution to decision making and the establishment of improved worker and manager interpersonal relationships. The following historical perspectives portray a view of past research studies related to the concept of empowerment.

*Historical Perspective*

*Scientific management movement.* The concept of empowerment was traced back to the initial stages of the study of organizational behavior. During the late 19th century, organizational behavior studies focused on scientific management. Taylor (as cited in Baron, 1983) agreed with "a leading researcher who suggested in order to maximize the

efficiency of workers, employees had to be carefully selected and trained for their jobs; and work tools and procedures had to be standardized" (p. 12). Taylor further focused his study toward factors that enhanced human motivation in the workplace to the point of realizing increased productivity. Taylor's response was to motivate employees via financial gain. However, over a period of time, increased productivity did not remain constant regardless of the potential for financial compensation. He admittedly overlooked the importance of other factors that influenced workers' motivation, including the need for security and social approval.

Prior to the 1980s and the published report of "A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform," public school leadership was closely aligned with the leadership of the Scientific Management Movement. This movement was authoritarian, teacher-centered, stressed uniform minimum standards and accountability, and directed a singled-path approach to leadership or management. This leadership or management style did little to quell the dissatisfaction of public education for the masses.

*Hawthorne studies.* The human relations movement began with the Hawthorne Studies in 1924, at the Western Electric Company Plant in Hawthorne, Illinois, to increase workers' productivity by changing or improving the work environment (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Short & Greer, 2002). This study expanded over a decade with results that suggested workers' increased productivity appeared to reflect their feelings of competence or a sense of mastery over the job and work environment. These studies supported Taylor's (as cited in Baron, 1983) realization of how important human interaction between and with the workers was toward enhancing workers' level of motivation to increase productivity.

*Scanlon plan.* Researchers, including Mayo (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993) continued to research human relations by studying the nature, leadership, and work behaviors of groups during the 1940s and 1950s. Their focus was narrowed to the study of participative decision making (Short & Greer, 2002). The assumption of participative decision making was the belief that increased productivity was due to the workers' perception that their opinions and insights were included in decisions related to improved work production. Joseph Scanlon developed the concept of participative decision making into a more systemized approach to decision making, which became known as the Scanlon Plan (Short & Greer). Under this plan, workers were encouraged to submit suggestions and make recommendations to improve the company's efficiency and effectiveness (Baron, 1983). Participative decision making has continued to reside in organizations today. However, it has changed its name to such titles as (a) site-based management, (b) school-based management, or (c) shared decision making. In many public schools, the concept of participative decision making allowed for teachers, parents, and students to use their knowledge and energy toward improving schools and student achievement. Elements of the Scanlon Plan continued into the 21$^{st}$ century as many theorists promoted the idea of workers with common assignments meeting regularly in think tanks to network and share their areas of expertise. Many leadership theorists, such as, Covey (1987), Senge (1990), and Kotter (1996), later echoed this concept.

*Theory X and Theory Y.* During the 1960s and 1970s, Theory X and Theory Y, was a result of Mayo's suggestion (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993) that managers assumed workers to be preoccupied by physiological and safety needs, and motivated to make as much money as possible with minimum work output. The concept of Theory X

suggested that workers were lazy and unwilling to accept responsibility, thus justifying a

bureaucratic or pyramidal working structure between managers and workers.

However, McGregor (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993) offered a contrasting

view for Theory Y, where under appropriate conditions; workers were capable of being

self-directed and responsible. He continued to suggest that it was incumbent upon the

managers to determine the appropriate conditions and assure that these conditions existed

for the workers.

Maslow 's work (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993) suggested that Theory Y

indicated that once employees were able to assume more control over their work

environment, personal satisfaction of social, esteem, and self-actualization needs in the

workplace could be achieved. Therefore, it was observed that when the right conditions

were in place, desirable behaviors from the workers within the workforce were realized

from some untapped human resource.

*Increasing interpersonal competence.* Argyris' study (as cited in Hersey and

Blanchard, 1993) suggested that Theory X proponents created work environment

relationships that were poor, shallow, and mistrustful. Therefore, he encouraged a more

humanistic or democratic value driven work environment that supported the development

of trust and authentic relationships, which resulted in increased interpersonal competence,

intergroup cooperation, and flexibility.

*Motivation-Hygiene Theory.* The Motivation-Hygiene Theory was the result of

research conducted by Herzberg and his colleagues at the Psychological Services of

Pittsburgh (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard) to determine the kinds of job-related things

that made workers satisfied or dissatisfied in the workplace. Data collected and analyzed

suggested incidents involving factors such as work, achievement, promotion, recognition, and responsibility as sources of satisfaction but rarely as sources of dissatisfaction (Baron, 1983). Herzberg referred to these factors as motivators. However, those incidents involving factors such as interpersonal relations, working conditions, supervisors, salary, and company policies were identified as causes for job dissatisfaction. These factors were labeled as variables of hygiene, and were identified as extrinsic motivators for improved work quality and production.

Additional research in determining job satisfaction using Herzberg's theory was inconsistent and later was determined not to be the best tool for such determination. However, the value of his theory focused on the importance of psychological growth as a basic condition for job satisfaction (Baron).

*Self-managing teams*. Self-managing teams gave rise to the corporate world in the 1980s and 1990s. These teams as described by Hackman (1986) involved groups of employees who took personal responsibility for (a) the outcome of assigned tasks, (b) managing and monitoring their own performance, (c) seeking needed resources, and (d) taking the initiative to help others improve (Short & Greer, 2002). Self-managing teams were generally leadership mechanisms used to enhance or increase workers' level of autonomy and/or responsibility. However, without input from the workers, self-managing teams defeated the intended purpose by threatening the personal control and autonomy of individual employees, which lead to a decrease in productivity (Short & Greer). Empowered, self-directed teams were different from participative teams because the teams not only made recommendations, but were also held accountable for the results (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 1999). Therefore, self-managing teams needed to be

developed over a period of time in order to learn the intricacies of the operation of self-managed teams and outcome expectancies. Manz and Sims (1987) suggested managers use a bottom-up perspective when using self-managing teams as a part of a leadership model within an organization in order to provide assistance when needed or requested.

As indicated in the historical review of the origin of empowerment in the workplace, workers were instrumental in determining the level of effectiveness and efficiency of an organization as well as to their level of job satisfaction, which could translate to a level of empowerment. Early research to determine job satisfaction had been primarily geared toward non-educational institutions. However, the outcry for educational reform from stakeholders propelled the empowerment of teachers as a critical element of reform efforts to improve schools and therefore was brought to the forefront of many studies to assess teachers' perceptions of empowerment and job satisfaction (Short, Rinehart, & Eckley, 1999).

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggested that intrinsic motivation might be tied directly to the realization of empowerment. Intrinsic motivation referred to the internal, subjective judgments that occurred within individuals as they completed their job-related tasks (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Thomas and Velthouse developed a cognitive model of intrinsic motivation that included four factors: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice. Short and Rinehart (1992) developed the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES), a 38-item instrument, which measured teachers' level of empowerment. This scale was divided into six dimensions: (a) impact, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) decision making, and (f) autonomy.

The four factors of intrinsic motivation were easily aligned with the six dimensions

of the SPES, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

*Alignment of School Participant Empowerment Scale Dimensions and Intrinsic*

*Empowerment Factors*

| School Participant Empowerment Scale Dimensions | Intrinsic Empowerment Factors |
| --- | --- |
| Impact | Impact |
| Professional growth, status, self-efficacy | Competence |
| Decision making | Meaningfulness |
| Autonomy | Choice |

Researchers used the four factors of intrinsic motivation and the six dimensions of

the SPES in many studies to measure an individual's perceived level of empowerment.

*Empowerment Research*

Davis and Wilson (2000) conducted a study to determine the efforts of principals in

empowering teachers and the effect it had on teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and

job-related stress. These researchers explored the impact of empowerment programs,

specifically programs that encouraged teachers' participation in schools' decision making

process, the impact on teachers' self-motivation, and job stress. The targeted population

included principals and teachers from 44 traditional public elementary schools. A 28-item

questionnaire developed by Tymon (1988) was used to gather data related to principals'

empowering behaviors and impact on teachers' perceived levels of motivation to job

satisfaction and/or stress. Additionally, the questionnaire was aligned with Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) four factors of intrinsic motivation (i.e., impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice). The results categorized by the aforementioned four factors of intrinsic motivation reflected by Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from r=.73 to r=.94 for the respondents. The results indicated a significant relationship between principal empowerment behaviors (PEB); specifically, the overall motivation score of r=.38; p<.01, which indicated the higher the PEB score, the higher the level of motivation existed at the school. In addition, the greater the impact of teachers' fulfillment of work-related tasks, as indicated by r=.37; p<.01, the more empowered teachers felt. The ability of teachers to make choices was indicated at r=.36; p<.01. The overall results suggested that principals' empowering behaviors centered on the intrinsic or personal power of teachers (Davis & Wilson).

*Impact.* Impact referred to the degree or level of an individual's behaviors, which were perceived to produce the desired effects within the task environment. Davis and Wilson (2000) suggested the more principals engaged teachers in behaviors that were personally empowering, the more they were able to realize there were options within the workplace, and; therefore, felt their contributions had a greater impact on the overall operation of the school. Teacher commitment toward the overall health of the school influenced the teacher-learning process and personal impact toward the operation of the school. Graham (1996) suggested that commitment was the psychological identification of the individual teacher that related to school goals and maintaining organizational membership and thus becoming involved in completing tasks that went beyond personal interests or satisfaction.

*Competence*. Wilson and Davis (2000) defined competence as the degree to which an individual performed task activities skillfully with a high level of confidence. Teacher competence was aligned with their professional growth, status, and self-efficacy. Short and Greer (2002) suggested teachers' professional growth included opportunities to grow and develop professionally, learn continuously, and expand their own skills through school experiences. Teacher competence or professional growth was acquired through (a) formal education, (b) on-the-job training, and (c) experience. Teacher competence could be developed over a period of time and directed appropriately by school leaders, especially those leaders who used Hersey and Blanchard's' (1993) Situational Leadership Model, a model where leaders matched the task to the skills and abilities of the teacher(s). This leadership management style enhanced teachers' perception of personal impact as well as competency.

Teacher status aligned with competence because many teachers gauged their perceived level of professional respect and admiration from colleagues as a barometer that indicated level(s) of status or acceptance in their field of work or area of expertise (Short & Greer, 2002). Many teachers were concerned that the constant indictment of dissatisfaction of public schools eroded their status with stakeholders in the educational communities. Therefore, the development of personal self-efficacy was important.

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully complete some course of action in order to produce results. Short and Greer (2002) detailed this definition further to state that self-efficacy developed as a person acquired self-knowledge and the belief that he or she was personally competent and had mastered the skills necessary to affect desired outcomes. These beliefs were realized in a

social context in terms of feedback and specific help from colleagues with encouragement, praise, and norms of persistence and achievement. Vermette, Foote, Bird, Mesibov, Harris-Ewing, and Battaglia (2001) suggested that individuals should construct their acquisition of knowledge through involvement, interaction, collaboration, and negotiation in order to learn something at a meaningful level. However, the lack of feedback, non-responsiveness from colleagues, criticism, and norms of neglect created a non-supportive environment and deflated an individual's ability to construct his or her knowledge in the workplace (Milner, 2002). Milner conducted a case study that included an experienced English teacher who experienced a crisis situation, involving parents' dissatisfaction with the teacher's grading policy of gifted students. The teacher had 19 years of teaching experience. The situation was resolved because of the support the teacher received from colleagues, students, and other parents who confirmed her self-efficacy, which continued to afford her successful experiences as a teacher.

*Meaningfulness.* Meaningfulness was identified as the value of the goal or purpose judged according to the individual's own ideals or standards. This dimension of empowerment aligned with teacher participation in school-based decision making. School-based management or decision making implied a shift in the roles and responsibilities of school personnel. The decision making process included administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders who participated in making decisions involving such areas as budgets, hiring practices, scheduling, curriculum, and other aspects of school operations. However, teachers indicated that their participation in school-based decision making was genuine and that their opinions had an impact on the final outcome of an issue (Short & Greer, 2002). For

many teachers, participation in decision making that impacted the operation of schools was a departure from their classroom responsibilities and required additional commitment of time. This personal commitment of time was a choice teachers were willing to make to enhance their meaningfulness to the school, while increasing their level of self-efficacy.

*Choice.* Choice involved the individual intentionally selecting actions that lead to the desired outcome. Teacher autonomy aligned well with teacher choice. Short and Greer (2002) defined autonomy as a dimension of empowerment where teachers believed they could control certain aspects of their work environment, such as, scheduling, curriculum design, selection of textbooks, and instructional planning. Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1999) described a goal of empowerment as the ability of individuals to become self-reliant and proactive. That is to say, one must seize the moment to plan and complete a task rather than waiting to receive cues and/or directions from the leader. In so doing, individuals were prepared to face the consequences of their actions, positive or negative. Schools whose leadership style continued to align with Taylor's scientific management movement (as cited in Baron, 1983), may implement a more bureaucratic-organized school environment, which denied teacher autonomy or teacher choice. Chubb and Moe (2001) suggested that even though teachers were professionals, true professionalism required teachers to be experts in their subject area, content, and methodology, as well as to have the authority to exercise a level of autonomy or choice.

Crawford (2001) conducted a study to examine the difference between charter school and traditional public schoolteachers' perception of autonomy and accountability in charter schools. He selected teacher participants from Colorado and Michigan for this study because of documentation that indicated that these states had strong charter school

legislation. The participants were surveyed using the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES), which had a reliability coefficient alpha of .94. Correlation results of the sub-scales indicated reliability in coefficient alphas of (a) .89 for decision making, (b) .86 for professional growth, (c) .86 for status, (d) .84 for self-efficacy, (e) .81 for autonomy, and (f) .82 for impact (Short & Greer, 2002).

In order to determine content validity of the SPES, three studies were conducted to determine the most inclusive survey items to include in the SPES. Short and Reinhart (1992) used a one-digit difference criterion as the measure to retain survey items. As a result, 38 out of 110 items were deemed as relevant and valid to assess teachers' perception of empowerment.

The findings of Crawford's (2001) study suggested that (a) There were no significant differences between teachers in traditional public schools and teachers in charter schools regarding their perceptions of autonomy; and, (b) Teachers in traditional public schools perceived that they had more opportunities for shared decision making.

The results also suggested that teacher motivation was related to job satisfaction and stress. However, the results also suggested the higher teachers' levels of intrinsic motivation, the more satisfied teachers were with their job and experienced less stress. Additionally, the results showed a significant relationship between principal empowering behaviors and teacher motivation.

*Related Studies*

Short and Reinhart (1993) conducted a research study to investigate the relationship of participants' perceptions of school climate and selected characteristics to participants' perceptions of empowerment among teachers. The study consisted of 257 participants

from six states and eight different schools. The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was the instrument used to measure teachers' perceptions of empowerment. The analysis of the SPES responses focused on the extent to which teachers perceive a level of (a) self-efficacy in the workplace, (b) impact within the school, (c) collaborative relationship, and (d) high status (Short & Reinhart). A stepwise multiple regression was conducted, with results that indicated the three significant predictor variables of climate, experience, and age that were statistically significant predictors of teacher perception of empowerment. The results were based on a significant relationship of an overall F $(3,156) = 31.96$, p=.000. However, the researchers suggested that creating organizations where participants felt greater empowerment might result in greater conflict and lower school climate. Therefore, teachers who were empowered were also sensitive to and aware of conflict resolution strategies, as well as effective communication skills (Short & Reinhart, 1992).

Short, Rinehart, and Eckley (1999) studied the relationship of teacher empowerment and principal leadership orientation. These researchers used the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) to survey teachers from 25 randomly selected elementary schools in the northeast of the United States. A total of 525 teachers out of 678 completed and returned the survey. A multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the teachers' perception of empowerment and teachers' perception of four organizational frames (i.e., structural, human relations, political, and symbolic). Their findings indicated (a) a significant relationship between teachers' perception of empowerment and their perceptions of how principals framed the organization and provided leadership, and (b) schools where teachers believed that they

were empowered viewed their principals as using human relations and interpersonal skills in leading the organization.

The significant relationship of the two factors was indicated by an overall $F = 64.21$, which had a significance of $p=.0001$ (Short et al., 1999). According to the researchers, these findings supported an earlier study by Short and Greer (Short et al.) that found empowering leaders built trust in the organization, built collaborative groups for problem solving, and encouraged risk taking.

Crawford (2001) conducted a research study to explore teacher autonomy and accountability in charter schools. Teachers in Colorado and Michigan were targeted because of the states' perceived strong and expansive charter school legislation (Center for Education Reform, 2000). A total of 20 charter schools and 202 teachers from schools in these states participated in the study. The focus of this study centered on two of the subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)--decision making and autonomy. The findings suggested that there were no significant difference between teachers in traditional public schools and teachers in charter schools regarding their perceptions of autonomy.

Dee, Henkin, and Pell (2002) conducted a study to identify variables associated with perceived support for innovation in site-based managed schools to develop a climate for change. The study was conducted in an urban school district in a southeastern state with a significant number of African American and Hispanic student populations. Eleven elementary schools using a school-based management model were randomly selected. A total of 517 full-time teachers were invited to participate in the study. However, only 295 teachers provided responses to the Siegel Scale of Support for Innovation (SSSI). The

SSSI is a 61-item, self-report instrument, which utilized a 6-point Likert scale. A multiple regression analysis was used to determine the support for innovation in site-based managed schools and to develop a climate change. The analysis suggested that support for innovations did vary among the teachers from the 11 schools that participated in the study. SSSI X (average) for each school ranged from 5.17 to 3.71 or F=8.50, p<.01, Dee et al. found significant, positive associations between perceived support for innovation and communication openness, formalization, and the three types of autonomy (i.e., method, schedule, and evaluation).

Summary

The educational reform movement dating back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century explored

educational strategies to accommodate the needs and demands of society at a given point

in time as societal changes occurred. Many of these reforms were based on scientific

studies and extensive research that included (a) the scientific management movement, (b)

the Hawthorne Studies, (c) the Scanlon Plan, (d) Theory X and Theory Y, (e) increasing

personal competence, (f) the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, and (g) self-managing teams.

The result of these studies assisted in the evolution of leaders' management style from

bureaucratic and pyramid-driven to many variations of participatory decision making or

empowerment. These studies also made a direct connection between workers' perception

of personal or professional empowerment and job satisfaction. The studies suggested that

teachers were empowered as they began to assume ownership in the process of problem-

framing and problem-solving for the overall operation of schools.

Beginning in the 1980s, researchers suggested that empowering teachers was

critical in reform efforts geared toward school improvement and increased student

achievement. To that end, research supported the value of workers' or teachers' perceived

level of intrinsic empowerment, which lead to such improved and beneficial results such

as (a) job satisfaction, (b) reduced stress, (c) increased productivity, and (d) possibly

organization or school ownership.

Additionally, research studies also supported the alignment of Thomas and

Velthouse's (2000) cognitive model of intrinsic motivation with Short and Rinehart's

(1992) six dimensions of empowerment. This alignment indicated that for many teachers

who participated in research studies related it to their perceived level of empowerment.

Indicators of empowerment included their interpretation of job satisfaction as it related to personal impact, competence, meaningfulness, choice, professional growth, self-efficacy, decision making, and/or autonomy.

# CHAPTER III

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The goal of this research study was to determine if there was a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs; and, if charter schoolteachers receive a higher level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school.

This chapter includes a discussion of the study as it related to (a) philosophical perspective, (b) research design, (c) purpose of the study, (d) data generation, (e) population samples, (f) research procedures, and (g) null and research hypotheses. A mixed method--quantitative and qualitative analyses--was used to conduct this study. The quantitative data were collected first followed by the collection of qualitative data. The purpose of using a mixed method research design model was to (a) collect and analyze quantitative data; (b) use the results to present a general picture of the responses of participants; and, (c) continue the analysis of the study by collecting qualitative data to refine, extend, and/or explain the realities that were relative to the quantitative data (Creswell, 2002). Therefore, primacy for this study was given to the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Secondarily, the qualitative component of this study served to strengthen the analyses of the empirical data collected.

Philosophical Perspective

According to The American Heritage College Dictionary (2002), philosophy was

defined as "the investigation of causes and laws underlying reality" (p.1026). Therefore,

the philosophical perspective of this research was described as those doctrines that

framed the study. Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) interpretation of philosophical perspective

was reflected in their definition of paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that encompassed

three philosophical assumptions. These assumptions allowed the researcher to address

several in-depth issues of the research study to ascertain (a) the ontology or the nature of

what was real, (b) the epistemology or the relationship of the researcher to the study, and

(c) the methodology or the process of the research (Creswell, 1998).

A paradigm was further described as a pattern that supported the process of

constructing theories and explanations resulting in a body of knowledge within a social

domain. Paradigms carried their own source of justification and were therefore seldom

related to or challenged by empirical evidence. The two paradigms and/or philosophical

perspectives that supported this study were positivism and constructivism. The mixed

method approach, quantitative and qualitative, to this study was aligned with the basic

assumptions of these two paradigms.

*Positivism*

The philosophical underpinning of positivism suggested that quantitative studies

were empirical, relying on the collection of research data through scientific methods.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), positivism indicated the world's reality that

was steeped and dominated in formal discourse in the physical and social sciences.

Questions and/or hypotheses in search of time-based reality and context-free

generalizations guided a positivist's approach to a research study where an experimental

or manipulative methodology was used to answer questions or verify hypotheses. The

assumption was that empirical data represented the worldview at a specific point in time,

which indicated that data stood alone and spoke volumes without additional

interpretation. This study collected empirical data to reflect charter schoolteachers'

perception of empowerment based on schools' management models (i.e., charter schools

managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs).

*Constructivism*

In contrast to positivism, the philosophical underpinning of constructivism

suggested that a qualitative study presented the realities of the worldview in the form of

multiple intangible mental constructions, which were socially and experimentally based.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), a constructivist philosophy was idealistic in the

sense that it assumed reality to be a construction of the mind, which was communicated

and documented for the consumption of other stakeholders. The researcher reconstructed

qualitative data for consensus and remained open to new interpretations as information

and data sophistication improved (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This redefining of data

assisted the researcher in testing the trustworthiness--authenticity, credibility,

dependability, and confirmability--of constructed qualitative data.

The constructivist paradigm served to add to the ontological foundation of this

study. To that end, the use of a constructivist paradigm assisted the researcher to

investigate if there were any major differences in the perceived level of teacher

empowerment at charter schools operated by EMOs as compared to charter schools

operated independently of EMOs. Teachers, who were provided opportunities to exercise

a level of empowerment, were able to construct a framework of knowledge based on prior experiences coupled with new challenges in order to refine or expand their knowledge. This research study was not passive; it was a research study that placed the researcher in an active role seeking to identify participants, via an interview process, who felt empowered to contribute to the overall operations of the school through mandates or voluntary opportunities. This approach was crucial in order to determine the degree or levels of involvement participants were afforded at their school site. It also provided the researcher with an opportunity to assist participants in constructing their personal interpretations and experiences of empowerment at their school site.

Research Design

A mixed method research design was a procedure for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study and analyzing and reporting these data based on a priority and sequence of information (Creswell, 2002). This quantitative and qualitative mixed method approach facilitated this research study and employed strategies of inquiry that involved collecting data, numeric and text, sequentially to understand the research problem (Creswell).

*Rationale*

This research design method was selected to strengthen the scope of this study by collecting and analyzing both numeric and text data related to an identified phenomenon, charter schoolteachers' perspective of perceived empowerment according to their schools' management model, that is, charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. This mixed method research design model identified the collection of quantitative data as primacy to the study, where the

results were generalized to a larger population. To complement or add value to the quantitative results, the qualitative data analysis served to provide clarity to specific contexts and settings of the aforementioned phenomenon.

*Role of the Researcher*

The researcher assumed a pivotal role in conducting this study. It was crucial for the researcher to establish personal credibility and integrity with all participants in order to develop an honest working rapport to generate valid and reliable data. To that end, the researcher disclosed to all participants personal and professional past working experiences and relationships with charter schools, and further disclosed that there were no personal financial gains as a result of the findings of this study. Each participant was provided with a consent form indicating the procedures that were employed during the course of this study.

The researcher submitted an abstract of this research study proposal to Barry University's Institutional Review Board and Miami-Dade County Public Schools to seek their approval to conduct this research. This action was not only a requirement but also served to protect all participants from any physical or emotional injury by participating in this study. The researcher received approval to move forward with this research study from both of the aforementioned entities.

Proposed Research

*Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there were any significant differences in the perceived levels of teacher empowerment at charter schools operated by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. The literature did not reflect research studies that focused on the relationship between charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment and EMOs' philosophy regarding teachers' roles and responsibilities at the school site.

*Guiding Questions*

Two research questions guided this study. They were:

1. Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs?

2. Do charter schoolteachers receive a higher level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school?

Data Generation

*Quantitative Instrument*

The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Reinhart, 1992) was employed to assess and collect data regarding the perceived levels of empowerment participating charter schoolteachers realized at their school site. The researcher received permission to use this scale to collect empirical data for this study (see Appendix D). This scale consisted of 38 items (see Appendix B) employing a 5-point Likert scale that

measured teachers' overall empowerment using six dimensions: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact. The results of SPES subscales were aligned, analyzed, and compared to Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) construct of empowerment that included four factors: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice.

*Validity.* The SPES was designed to measure elements and perception(s) of empowerment (Short & Reinhart, 1992). After three distinct studies, the SPES was reduced from an original 75-item questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale to the current 38-item scale. These three studies were conducted to determine the content validity of the scale. The first study involved 79 secondary teachers who identified 68 of the 75 items as relevant and valid to assess teachers' perception of empowerment.

The second study involved 250 secondary teachers of which 217 responded to the 68-item scale through a rotation using the Scree test. This process resulted in identifying the six dimensions of empowerment: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact.

The third study involved 176 teacher responses from a pool of 194 participants from three different schools. Two of these schools participated in an intervention program for teacher empowerment and one did not. The analysis of the responses resulted in the reduction of the 68-item scale to the current 38-item, 5-point Likert scale used to assess perceptions of empowerment. Additionally, the analysis of the responses of the two groups of teachers resulted in significant differences between them, which indicated the establishment of discriminate validity of the SPES (Short & Reinhart, 1992).

The SPES' 38-item Likert scale had six subscales that were referred to as dimensions of empowerment. The 38-items were aligned to the empowerment dimensions or subscales, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

*School Participant Empowerment Scale Subscales*

| Subscale | Items |
|----------|-------|
| Decision making | 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38 |
| Professional growth | 2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 31 |
| Status | 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 34 |
| Self-Efficacy | 4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 32 |
| Autonomy | 5, 11, 17, 23 |
| Impact | 6, 12, 18, 24, 29, 36 |

*Reliability.* Short and Reinhart determined the reliability of the SPES by using the Spearman-Brown formula to correlate data generated from the second research study to determine the validity of the instrument. The split half reliability coefficient alpha for the SPES was .94. Correlation results of the subscales indicated reliability in coefficient alphas of (a) .89 for decision making, (b) .86 for professional growth, (c) .86 for status, (d) .84 for self-efficacy, (e) .81 for autonomy, and (f) .82 for impact.

*Data analysis.* The SPES, a 38-item, 5-point Likert response scale was used to collect data that reflected charter schoolteachers' perceived level of empowerment at their school. An analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were any significant differences of teachers' perceptions of empowerment between the two groups:

charter schools that were managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level or as p<.05. The statistical analysis and display of data were facilitated through the use of SPSS Base 11.5, a data analysis software program.

*Qualitative Instruments*

The qualitative component of this study involved an interview with each consenting participant. The researcher obtained data that reflected the perceptions of the participants' general overview and realities of empowerment at their school, as well as collected data that reflected specific empowerment opportunities that were provided and offered at their school. The interviews consisted of 11 peer-reviewed open-ended questions related to the participants' perceptions of empowerment at their school. The first seven questions collected data that reflected participants' overall perceptions of their levels of empowerment at their school. The final four open-ended questions were aligned with the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of intrinsic motivation (i.e., impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice). The participants were asked to respond to 11 open-ended questions using an interview protocol based on Creswell's (2002) design model (see Appendix C).

*Validity.* Validity was defined as the truth (Silverman, 2000). Therefore, in order to realize a high level of truth in the data collected, several benchmarks were implemented to determine the validity of the data. To assist in this process, Guba's (1981) model to test the trustworthiness of qualitative data was employed. This model aligned data validity with credibility, which could be validated through data triangulation.

The triangulation of data for this study was facilitated by cross checking the data and results through the use of multiple sources. Participants' feedback was a crucial element in determining validity. The participants had an opportunity to review their interview responses that were transcribed to a written format to verify that the researcher had indeed captured the essence of their responses (Milinki, 1999). Reviewing the audiotapes and the researcher's notes of the actual interviews facilitated additional verification of interview responses. In addition, extended fieldwork reviewing school site operational documents (e.g., faculty handbook and school improvement and professional development plans) assisted the researcher's analysis for possible gaps or misinterpretation of data. Using several data sources (e.g., printed school site operational documents) to ascertain changes or collaboration of data collected further triangulated the data for the purpose of verification.

The transferability of the results of a qualitative study added to the validity of data collected (Milinki, 1999). A concerted effort was made to provide a dense or comprehensive description of the participants involved in the study, as well as the context of the study.

*Reliability.* Reliability referred to the degree of consistency with which instances were assigned to the same category by different observers on different occasions (Silverman, 2000). Guba's (1981) model of trustworthiness aligned consistently with the dependability of data collected. Therefore, the researcher documented the procedures and established an interview protocol (see Appendix C) to demonstrate that questions and categories of questions were used consistently (Silverman).

Peer review was another strategy that the researcher used to determine reliability and dependability of data collected for this study. The researcher identified one peer reviewer who was interested in the study and one who had no opinion regarding the concept of charter schools. The peer reviewer who did not have an interest in the study tended to ask more questions regarding the themes and participants' responses; therefore, the researcher was able to identify inconsistencies and realized that the study represented a solid research product (Milinki, 1999). The peer reviewer who had an interest in the study was able to corroborate the findings and suggested other resources.

*Data analysis.* Data was collected via a face-to-face interview with 12 participants. An interview protocol (Creswell, 2002) (see Appendix C), developed to structure and augment an audio taping of the interview, was used to standardize this process. Each interview took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. As indicated, an audio recording device was used to preserve the integrity of the participants' responses, as well as to allow easy access and accountability of data to the researcher. The audiotapes were labeled with an assigned 4-digit numerical code, date, time, location, and other relevant information and stored in a locked file cabinet for security. These data were archived in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office for the duration of the study and then destroyed to maintain participants' confidentiality.

For the purpose of comparative analysis, the six dimensions of the SPES (Short & Reinhart, 1992) were aligned with the four factors of intrinsic empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), as indicated in Table 1, p. 36. These six dimensions and the four factors of intrinsic empowerment were aligned in previous studies (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Thomas & Velthouse) to gauge levels of empowerment.

*Document analysis.* The researcher obtained school operational documents (e.g., faculty handbooks and school improvement and professional development plans) to review and identify expressed and embedded opportunities for teachers to be empowered. To ensure consistency in this process, the researcher developed a document checklist (see Appendix E) to guide the review. Securing access and reviewing school operational documents added another dimension to triangulate the qualitative data for trustworthiness, thus, strengthening the validity of the data.

*Coding for content analysis.* An audiotape recorder was employed to record and archive participants' responses to the interview questions. The researcher transcribed each interview response verbatim according to the participants' assigned 4-digit numerical code in preparation of the analyses. The responses were stored on audiotapes and labeled with each participant's numerical code, date, time, location, and other pertinent information. These audiotapes were stored in a locked file cabinet for the duration of the study and then destroyed to maintain participants' anonymous participation, as well as their confidentiality.

*Data record keeping.* Data record keeping was facilitated through the use of individual interview protocol forms (see Appendix C), audiotapes, document checklists (see Appendix E), computer and online data storage devices using Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Base 11.5. In addition, Microsoft XP Word and Excel software programs were used to store and manipulate data.

## Population Samples

Three different groups of individuals working at elementary charter schools with kindergarten through fifth grades and an enrollment of at least 100 students were invited

to participate in this study. These groups included (a) charter school instructional leaders, (b) charter schoolteachers (kindergarten through fifth grades), and (c) charter schoolteachers assigned to teach third and/or fourth grade students.

*Instructional Leader Participants*

For the purpose of this study, the instructional leader participants were identified as individuals who served as principals of charter schools (Zepeda, 2003). At the time of this study, Miami-Dade County Public Schools sponsored 19 kindergarten through fifth grade elementary charter schools with student enrollments of at least 100 students. The instructional leaders of these charter schools were invited to participate in this study (see Appendix F). Their participation in this study included providing the researcher with access to consenting teacher participants and to school site documents, such as, faculty handbooks and school improvement and professional development plans to review for expressed and embedded opportunities to empower teachers at the school.

*Survey Participants*

Teachers working at the aforementioned 19 elementary charter schools were purposefully invited to participate in the quantitative component of this study because of their potential contribution in the development of a theory or concept regarding the perceptions of charter schoolteachers' levels of empowerment. The levels of empowerment experienced by these teachers were compared based on their schools' management model (i.e., charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools that were managed independently of EMOs).

Approximately 162 kindergartens through fifth grade elementary charter schoolteachers were invited to provide quantitative data for this study (see Appendix G).

A survey (see Appendix H) was provided to all participants in order to collect demographic data (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, years teaching at a charter school, advanced degrees, and area of certification). However, these factors were considered extraneous to the study and were not considered in the analyses. These data served to describe the population sample. Future studies may be conducted to investigate if these factors had a direct impact on teachers' levels of empowerment. It is important to note that demographic data were not used in violation of the sponsoring agency's post unitary status for employee assignment. All surveys were numerically coded for tracking purposes and anonymity of participants was maintained throughout the study.

*Interview Participants*

For the qualitative component of this study, a total of 12 teacher participants from charter schools with different management models, EMO-managed and schools managed independently of EMOs, were invited to participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher (see Appendix I). These teachers were purposefully invited based on their teaching assignment as third and/or fourth grade teachers. Teachers who worked with students in these grade levels were faced with the stress of preparing students to take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Students' performance on this test was, in part, the determining factor for the alpha grading of the school by the Florida Department of Education.

The interview sample was structured to include six charter schoolteachers who worked at EMO managed charter schools and six who worked at charter schools managed independently of an EMO. Participants were selected on a first come, first

selected criteria, based on their school's management model. Once the researcher received six signed interview consent forms from participants who worked at two or more different EMO managed schools and six from participants who worked at two or more different independently managed charter schools, the sample was finalized.

<div align="center">Research Procedures</div>

After the approval of Barry University's Institutional Review Board and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the researcher began to implement the mixed method research study model. The procedures and data collection model for this mixed method study encompassed a 5-phase model. Briefly, in phase one, the researcher obtained permission to participate in this study from instructional leaders who volunteered to participate. These volunteers were principals who had been invited from the 19 kindergarten through fifth grade elementary charter schools sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. During the second phase, the researcher obtained permission from charter schoolteachers to participate in this research study from the aforementioned charter schools by distributing surveys via the U.S. mail to collect demographic and quantitative data. The third phase involved securing and reviewing school site operational documents. Phase four focused on collecting qualitative data via face-to-face interviews with 12 invited third and /or fourth grade teachers. In the fifth phase, the researcher initiated a comprehensive review of analyzed quantitative and qualitative data and research findings. The procedures for each phase of the study were implemented sequentially by each phase as listed.

*Phase One*

In phase one, the researcher requested the names of the charter school administrators and teachers working at the aforementioned 19 elementary charter schools from the Office of Personnel Operations and Records, Miami-Dade County Public Schools. These names were entered into a database and assigned a specific 4-digit numerical code for tracking and future communications with the administrators and/or teachers.

The researcher obtained permission from kindergarten through fifth grade elementary charter school instructional leaders who were invited to participate in this study via a signed consent form (see Appendix F). Their contribution to the study included providing access to consenting teacher participants, as well as access to school site operational documents. The consent form obtained permission to survey and interview charter schoolteachers who volunteered to participate in this research study. These consent forms emphasized measures that were taken to maintain the anonymous participation of consenting schools and survey participants, as well as the confidentiality of participants who were interviewed. The consent forms provided an explanation of the interview procedures and included information regarding the participants' right to withdraw their voluntary participation in this research study.

*Phase Two*

In phase two, the researcher obtained permission from charter schoolteachers to participate in this research study (see Appendix G). A consent form was sent to each of these teachers seeking their permission to participate in the study. In addition, two numeric coded surveys were attached to the consent forms: (a) a survey to collect

demographic data that included, gender, race, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, years teaching at a charter school, highest level of education, and area of certification; and, (b) the School Participant Empowerment Scale. The purpose of the numeric coding of the surveys was to maintain the confidentiality of the participants and to establish a mechanism for the researcher to record the number of surveys returned by the schools' management model.

Consenting participants were asked to return the surveys signed in a self addressed, stamped, and sealed envelope provided by the researcher within five days of receipt of the surveys. Teachers who did not wish to participate were asked to return the surveys and write that they did not wish to participate at the top of the surveys. A follow-up letter (see Appendix J) was sent five days after the first deadline to encourage teachers who did not respond to participate, and/or return the survey as requested.

*Phase Three*

In phase three, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the instructional leaders (principals) at participating elementary charter schools to obtain access to school site operational documents (e.g., faculty handbooks and school improvement and professional development plans) to review for any expressed and/or embedded opportunities for teachers to be empowered at their school. The researcher developed a document checklist (see Appendix E) to ensure consistency in the review process of documents from each charter school.

*Phase Four*

In phase four, the researcher invited, via letter of consent, charter schoolteachers who taught third and/or fourth grade students to participate in a face-to-face interview (see Appendix I). As in phase two, teachers were asked to return the signed consent forms in the self-addressed and stamped envelope to the researcher no later than five days after receipt of the invitation. The researcher recorded the names of the consenting participants by school management model according to the return date. Once the researcher received six consenting participants from at least two different EMO managed charter schools and six from at least two different charter schools managed independently of an EMO, the sample was finalized. The researcher began to schedule face-to-face interviews with the 12 consenting teachers in collaboration with the charter schools' instructional leaders and the participants. These participants were interviewed using a battery of 11 questions. Seven questions were related to teachers' perceptions of empowerment and empowerment opportunities at their school. Four questions were aligned to the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) intrinsic motivational model (i.e., impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice). Additionally, a letter (see Appendix K) was sent to other consenting interview participants to thank them for offering to participate in the interviews.

*Phase Five*

Phase five involved a comprehensive review and analyses of all quantitative and qualitative data that were collected. This review identified gaps in the data collection process that could be adjusted prior to final analyses. Member checking techniques, peer

reviews, and software manipulations (i.e., SPSS Base 11.5 and Microsoft XP Works and Excel) assisted the researcher in identifying gaps in the data.

*Ethical Issues*

In an effort to create and establish an ethical environment and to develop rapport with the participants in this research study, the researcher conveyed to the participants, via the consent forms, built-in measures that were implemented to ensure that the highest ethical standards were employed during and after the completion of the study (see Appendices F, G, I).

The researcher further ensured to all concerned participants that all data collected would be held in confidence and they would remain anonymous (Creswell, 1998) to the extent permitted by law. Any published results or findings of this research referred to group averages only and the names of the participants were not used in the study. All non-recorded data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office for five years and then destroyed (Creswell, 1998) to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher was open to discuss other ethical issues that were raised by any of the participants.

Null and Research Hypotheses

The analysis of data was facilitated for results based on the null and research hypotheses for this study.

*Null Hypotheses*

Data from phase two of this research study were analyzed to test the following five null hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (HO$_1$): There is no difference between the levels of perceived empowerment for teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 2 (HO$_2$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of impact empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 3 (HO$_3$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of competence empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 4 (HO$_4$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of meaningfulness empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Hypothesis 5 (HO$_5$): There is no significant difference between the perceptions of choice empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

*Research Hypotheses*

Based on the aforementioned null hypotheses, the following constituted the research hypotheses:

Hypothesis (H$_1$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of educational EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_2$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived impact empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_3$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived competence empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_4$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived meaningful empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Hypothesis ($H_5$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMO will reflect higher levels of perceived choice empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

## Summary

This chapter identified the research design and methodology that were used to conduct this research study. The research design was a mixed method model used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data with the primary focus of the study geared toward the collection, analyses, and findings of the empirical data. This research designed method was selected to strengthen this study by collecting and analyzing both numeric and text data related to the identified phenomenon of charter schoolteachers' perspective of perceived empowerment according to their schools' management model (i.e., charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs). This design model also facilitated the study of charter schoolteachers' realities of perceived empowerment through verbal constructions of their prior and current experiences, as well as opportunities to exercise empowerment in their work environment.

Short and Reinhart's (1992) School Participant Empowerment Scale was employed to collect quantitative data for this study. In an effort to complement the analyses of these empirical data, a face-to-face interview with 12 third and/or fourth grade charter schoolteachers and the review of school site operational documents were conducted by the researcher to add another reality-based dimension to the study. An analysis of both quantitative and qualitative was conducted to identify any consistent patterns of differences or commonalties in the construct of empowerment between the two groups of participants: charter schoolteachers working at schools managed by EMOs as compared to charter schoolteachers working at schools managed independently of EMOs.

# CHAPTER IV

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter provides the results that were obtained during the investigation of this study. The purpose of this research study was to investigate if there were any significant differences in the perceived levels of teacher empowerment at charter schools operated by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools operated independently of EMOs. A mixed method model--quantitative and qualitative-- was used to conduct this study. The quantitative data were collected first followed by the collection of qualitative data. Primacy for this study was given to the collection and analyses of the quantitative data. Therefore, the qualitative data collected served to reinforce or strengthen the analyses of the empirical data collected and analyzed. This study was conducted using a five-phase design model, where the researcher (a) obtained permission from instructional leaders purposefully selected from charter schools with student enrollment of 100 students or more from kindergarten through fifth grades, (b) obtained permission from charter schoolteachers to participate in this study and distributed surveys to collect demographic and quantitative data, (c) secured and reviewed school site operational documents to identify expressed or embedded opportunities for teachers to be empowered, (d) collected qualitative data via face-to-face interviews with third and/or fourth grade charter schoolteachers, and (e) conducted a comprehensive review and analyses of data and research findings.

There were two research questions that guided this study:

1. Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs?

2. Do charter schoolteachers receive a higher level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school?

The quantitative or empirical data regarding the perceived levels of empowerment for charter school elementary teachers who volunteered to participate in the study were collected via Short and Reinhart's School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). The qualitative data were collected via face-to-face interviews with the researcher and 12 selected charter school third and/or fourth grade teachers; six teachers worked at charter schools managed by an EMO and six worked at charter schools managed independently of an EMO. The interviews consisted of 11 peer-reviewed open-ended questions related to teachers' perceptions of empowerment at their school. These questions were aligned with the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's cognitive model of intrinsic motivation. For the purpose of investigating the relationship between the quantitative data and the qualitative data, the six dimensions of the SPES (impact, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, decision making, and autonomy) were aligned with the four factors of intrinsic empowerment (impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice) (see Table 1, p. 36).

## Quantitative Data Collection

### Phase One

The researcher invited, via a letter of consent (see Appendix F), 19 charter school instructional leaders (principals) at elementary schools with a student enrollment of 100 or more in kindergarten through fifth grades to participate in this study. The researcher received written consent to participate from 12 of the 19 instructional leaders invited to participate, a participation rate of 63%. This rate of participation suggested to the researcher that there was no self-selection bias regarding participation in this study from targeted charter school leaders.

### Phase Two

One hundred sixty-two charter schoolteachers who taught students in kindergarten through fifth grades were invited to participate. The majority (66%) of the invited teacher participants agreed to participate as evidenced via the return of completed surveys and consent forms, as indicated in Table 3. These teachers were asked to respond to two surveys: (a) a Demographic Survey and (b) the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). The demographic survey was used to capture data such as gender, race, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, years of teaching at a charter school, advanced degrees, and area of certification. The purpose of this data was to describe the sample. The SPES collected data regarding participants' perceptions of empowerment at their school. The non-response rate of 28% was below the average for the return of surveys sent through the U.S. Postal Service, as cited by Creswell (see Table 3). Each survey was numerically coded to indicate the type of management model (EMO or non-EMO) of the

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charter school where participants worked, as well as to establish a mechanism to communicate with targeted participants confidentially on an as needed basis.

Table 3

*Survey Response Rates*

| Category | Number | Participation rate |
|---|---|---|
| Invited participants | 162 | 100% |
| Available for analysis | 106 | 66% |
| Surveys not returned | 46 | 28% |
| Did not wish to participate | 10 | 6% |

A 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree) was used to record participants' assessment of their perceptions of empowerment via the SPES. This instrument consisted of 38 items categorized into six subscales: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact. The data collected from the Demographic Survey were considered extraneous to the purpose of this study and were not considered relevant factors in the analyses of the participants' responses to the SPES.

*Sample Demographics*

*Gender.* The overwhelming majority (93%) of the sample was female as indicated in Table 4. Based on the data received from the Office of Personnel Operations and Records, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, this representation was characteristic of the ratio of female-to-male teachers working at elementary charter schools (kindergarten through fifth grades) in Miami-Dade County.

Table 4

*Distribution of Gender*

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Female | 99 | 93.4 |
| Male | 6 | 5.7 |
| Unidentified | 1 | 0.9 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

*Ethnicity.* Approximately 77% of the sample was Hispanic with a small White and Asian representation of less than one fifth (see Table 5). There were no African American charter schoolteachers in this sample. Several charter schools were invited to participate in this study whose instructional staff was comprised of predominantly African American teachers. However, these charter schoolteachers did not volunteer to be included in this study.

Table 5

*Distribution of Ethnicity*

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Hispanic | 81 | 77.1 |
| White | 12 | 11.4 |
| Asian pacific islander | 8 | 7.6 |
| Other | 4 | 3.8 |
| Unidentified | 1 | 0.1 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

*Advanced Degrees.* More than one-third of the teacher participants had masters'

degrees with a small number of those participants with degrees beyond a master, as

indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

*Distribution of Highest Degree Attained*

| Degree | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Bachelor | 67 | 62.9 |
| Masters | 36 | 34.3 |
| Specialist | 1 | 1.0 |
| Doctorate | 2 | 1.9 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

*Areas of Certification.* The participants indicated on the Demographic Survey

their area/areas of certification in one or more of the 47 subject areas that were certifiable

by the Florida Department of Education. As indicated in Table 7, participants were

appropriately certified in the core subject area for an elementary school. More than 75 of

the participants were certified in elementary education and 19 in primary education.

Additionally, 16 participants indicated that they had obtained an endorsement to teach

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Table 7

*Distribution of Certification Among Subject Areas*

| Areas of certification | Number of charter schoolteachers |
|---|---|
| Elementary Education | 77 |
| Primary Education | 19 |
| Middle Grade Mathematics, Reading | 13 |
| Exceptional Student Education | 10 |
| Art, Physical Education | 8 |
| Spanish | 7 |
| Music | 6 |
| Middle Grade Science | 5 |
| Middle Grade English | 4 |
| Middle Grade Integrated , Middle Grade Social Studies, Biology | 3 |
| Preschool, Secondary English, Secondary Mathematics, Secondary Social Science, Coaching, Computer Science, Speech Impaired, Guidance and Counseling | 2 |
| Secondary Journalism, Secondary Speech, Chemistry, Earth Science, Dance, ESOL, Hearing Impaired, Media Specialist | 1 |

Approximately 59% of the sample had certification in one subject area and 34% had certification in two or more subject areas (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Distribution of Number of Certifications*

| Number of certifications | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 62 | 58.5 |
| 2 | 25 | 23.6 |
| 3 | 11 | 10.4 |
| 4 | 1 | 0.9 |
| No response | 7 | 6.6 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

*Teaching Experience.* The charter schoolteachers in this sample were relatively inexperienced teachers (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Mean and Standard Deviation for Teaching Experience (N=105)*

| Teaching experience (years) | Mean | Std. deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Total experience | 5.15 | 4.54 |
| Charter experience | 2.48 | 1.46 |

Note. One participant did not indicate the level of teaching experience

*Enrollment.* An independent-sample *t* test was conducted to determine if the mean school enrollment was the same regardless of management model. The test was significant, $t(84) = 5.63$, $p < .001$. Schools managed independently of an EMO ($M = 443.39$, $SD = 118.70$) on average had lower enrollments than schools managed by an EMO ($M = 753.62$, $SD = 279.058$). The complexity of management was significantly

greater in larger schools managed by an EMO where enrollment averaged 311 more

students.

*Management Models*

More than two-thirds of the participants included in this sample worked at charter

schools managed by EMOs (see Table 10). This management model for charter schools

in Miami-Dade County was consistent with the literature which indicated that many

charter schools sponsored by educational institutions in other local, state, and national

locations engaged the services of an EMO.

Table 10

*Charter School Teacher Participants by Management Model*

| Management model | Frequency | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EMO | 75 | 70.8 |
| Non-EMO | 31 | 29.2 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

*School Participant Empowerment Scale Instrument*

The School Participant Empowerment Scale's (SPES) internal consistency was

calculated using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability for the total scale and for all subscales,

except autonomy, indicated excellent scores for reliability, as indicated in Table 11. The

lower reliability of the autonomy subscale was not surprising given only 4 out of 38 items

on the SPES were devoted toward assessing levels of autonomy. However, the autonomy

subscale was sufficiently reliable to be used in the analysis.

Table 11

*School Participant Empowerment Scale Subscales Reliability Score*

| Subscale | Cornbach's Alpha |
| --- | --- |
| Decision making | 0.87 |
| Professional growth | 0.84 |
| Status | 0.86 |
| Self-efficacy | 0.90 |
| Autonomy | 0.65 |
| Impact | 0.85 |
| Total scale | 0.95 |

The total score and each subscale score were calculated as the average response to each item on the 5-point Likert scale of the SPES. All of the subscales were strongly and positively correlated with one another and were statistically significant at the p < .01 in a one-tail *t* test (see Table 12). These strong correlations supported the validity of the instrument.

Table 12

*Pearson Correlations*

|  | Decision | Growth | Status | Self-efficacy | Autonomy | Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision making | - | .605** | .459** | .445** | .607** | .629** |
| Growth |  | - | .764** | .733** | .598** | .794** |
| Status |  |  | - | .863** | .660** | .803** |
| Self-efficacy |  |  |  | - | .692** | .804** |
| Autonomy |  |  |  |  | - | .655** |
| Impact |  |  |  |  |  | - |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

One assumption of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was that the dependent variable comes from a normal distribution. The calculations of data were robust to modest violations of this assumption, but the dependent variable should be at least symmetrically distributed. Figure 1 showed box plots for the SPES total score and all its sub-scores. If the distribution was symmetrical, the line would be approximately in the middle of the box and the whiskers would be approximately of equal length, with few or no extreme values. Extreme values were shown by circles and stars. The total SPES score and the professional growth, status, self-efficacy, and impact sub-score all showed serious asymmetry. Consequently, the researcher attempted to improve the extent to which these variables met the assumption of symmetry through transformations.

*Figure 1: Distribution of the School Participant Empowerment Scale Subscales*
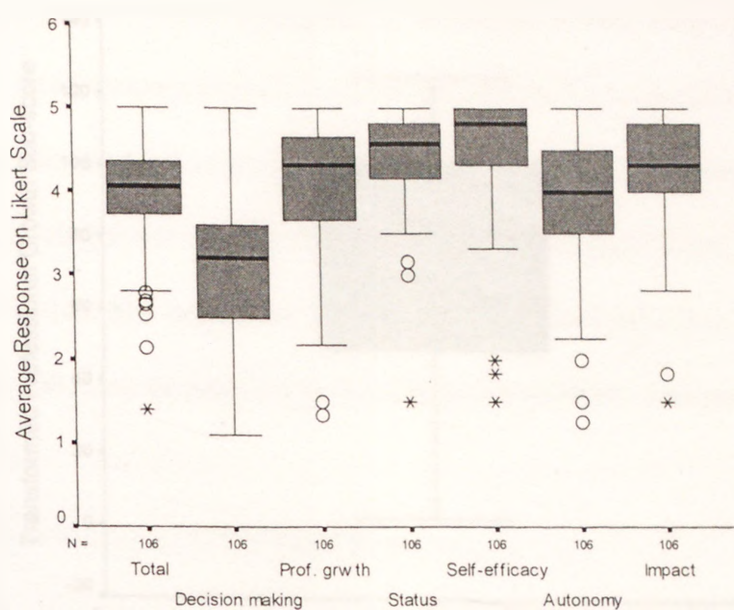


The SPES' total score was squared and the transformed total score was much more symmetrically distributed, as indicated in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: School Participant Empowerment Scale Transformed Total Score*
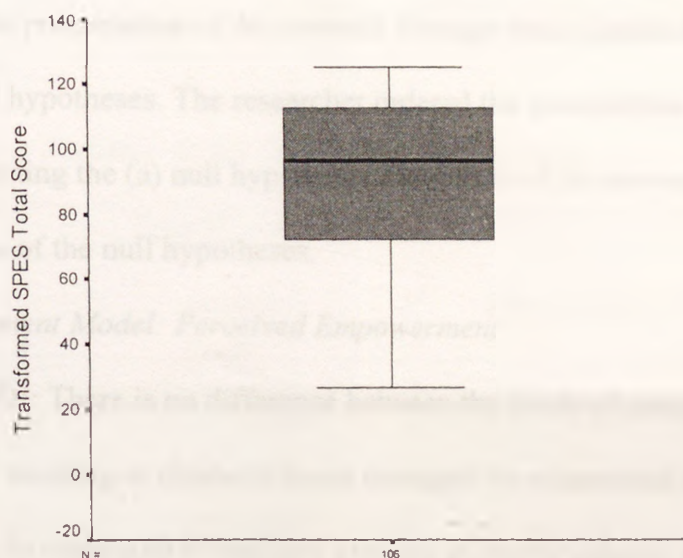


The Professional Growth subscale score was cubed and the transformed score was much more symmetrically distributed, as indicated in Figure 3.

*Figure 3: School Participant Empowerment Scale Growth Subscale Transformed Score*
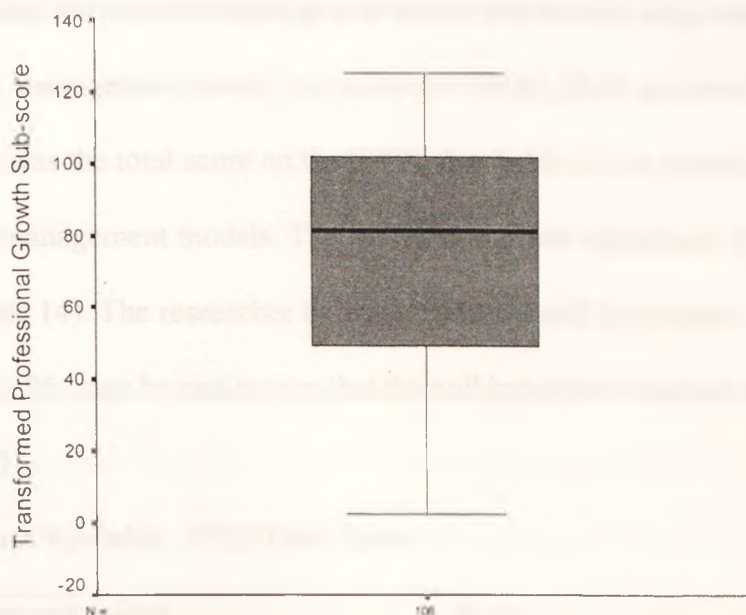


The status, self-efficacy and impact subscale scores could not be improved through transformations; consequently, results for these subscales were interpreted with caution.

Hypotheses Tests Results

The presentation of the research findings was organized sequentially by each of the five null hypotheses. The researcher ordered the presentation of findings in this chapter by presenting the (a) null hypothesis, (b) results of the one-way analysis (ANOVA), and (c) status of the null hypotheses.

*Management Model: Perceived Empowerment*

$HO_1$: There is no difference between the levels of perceived empowerment for teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the total score on the SPES. See Table 13 for means and standard errors for the two management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .006$, $p = .94$ (see Table 14). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The low power of the analysis, .05, may be one reason that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 13

*Dependent Variable: SPES Total Score*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
|---|---|---|
| Non-EMO | 16.089 | .831 |
| EMO | 16.164 | .553 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Table 14

*Dependent Variable: SPES Transformed Total Scores*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | .120 | 1 | .120 | .006 | .940 | .051 |
| Within groups | 2119.397 | 99 | 21.408 | - | - | - |
| Total | 28434.197 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

*Management Model: Impact*

HO$_2$: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of impact

empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as

compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management

model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model,

included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the sub-score on

the SPES impact subscale. See Table 15 for means and standard errors for the two

management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .003$, $p = .95$ (see

Table 16). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The low power of the

analysis, .05, may be one reason that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 15

*Dependent Variable: Total Impact Sub-scores*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
|---|---|---|
| Non-EMO | 4.328 | .122 |
| EMO | 4.320 | .081 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effect

Table 16

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Impact Sub-scores*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | .002 | 1 | .002 | .003 | .954 | .050 |
| Within groups | 46.004 | 99 | .465 | - | - | - |
| Total | 1932.751 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

*Management Model: Competence*

HO$_3$: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of competence empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

The level of perceived competence was aligned with three subscales on the SPES: (a) professional growth, (b) status, and (c) self-efficacy. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived levels of competence in this study, an ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment for each of the aforementioned subscales (see Table 17 through Table 23).

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the sub-score on

the SPES professional growth subscale. See Table 17 for means and standard errors for the two management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .038$, $p = .846$ (see Table 18).

Table 17

*Dependent Variable: Professional Growth Sub-scores*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
|---|---|---|
| Non-EMO | 74.382 | 6.544 |
| EMO | 75.910 | 4.355 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Table 18

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Professional Growth Sub-scores*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Within groups | 50.179 | 1 | 50.179 | .038 | .846 | .054 |
| Between groups | 131444.984 | 99 | 1327.727 | - | - | - |
| Total | 706319.425 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

*Management Model: Status*

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management

model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model,

included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the sub-score on

the SPES Status subscale. See Table 19 for means and standard errors for the two

management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .653$, $p = .421$ (see

Table 20).

Table 19

*Dependent Variable: Status Sub-scores*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Non-EMO | 4.360 | .112 |
| EMO | 4.469 | .075 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Table 20

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Status Sub-scores*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Between groups | .254 | 1 | .254 | .653 | .421 | .126 |
| Within groups | 38.577 | 99 | .390 | - | - | - |
| Total | 2026.000 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

*Management Model: Self-efficacy*

An ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the sub-score on the SPES self-efficacy subscale. See Table 21 for means and standard errors for the two management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = 1.795$, $p = .183$ (see Table 22).

Table 21

*Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy Sub-scores*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
|---|---|---|
| Non-EMO | 4.403 | .119 |
| EMO | 4.495 | .079 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Table 22

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Self-efficacy Sub-scores*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | .792 | 1 | .792 | 1.795 | .183 | .264 |
| Within groups | 43.686 | 99 | .441 | - | - | - |
| Total | 2122.861 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

The ANOVA was not significant for each of the subscales that represented competence (professional growth, status, and self-efficacy) as indicated in Table 23. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The low power of the analysis, 0.26 or less, may be one reason that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 23

*Dependent Variable: School Participant Empowerment Scale Subscale Scores for Competence*

| Sub-scale | df | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional development | 1,99 | .04 | .85 | .05 |
| Status | 1,99 | .65 | .42 | .13 |
| Self-efficacy | 1,99 | 1.80 | .18 | .26 |

*Management Model: Meaningfulness*

HO$_4$: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of meaningful empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Meaningfulness in this study was aligned with one subscale on the SPES: decision making. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived level of meaningfulness in this study, an ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment for the aforementioned subscale. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The

dependent variable was the sub-score on the SPES decision making subscale. See Table 24 for means and standard errors for the two management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .124$, $p = .726$ (see Table 25). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The low power of the analysis, .06, may be one reason that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 24

*Dependent Variable: Meaningfulness (Decision Making Sub-scores)*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
|---|---|---|
| Non-EMO | 3.152 | .154 |
| EMO | 3.087 | .103 |

Tests of Between Subjects Effects

Table 25

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Meaningfulness (Decision Making Sub-scores)*

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | .091 | 1 | .091 | .124 | .726 | .064 |
| Error | 73.156 | 99 | .739 | - | - | - |
| Total | 1048.340 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

*Management Model: Choice (Autonomy)*

HO$_5$: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of choice empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

Choice in this study has been aligned with a subscale on the SPES: autonomy. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived level of choice in this study, an ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment for the aforementioned subscale. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable was the sub-score on the SPES autonomy subscale. See Table 26 for means and standard errors for the two management models. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1,99) = .278$, $p = .599$ (see Table 27). The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The low power of the analysis, .08, may be one reason that the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 26

*Dependent Variable: Choice (Autonomy Sub-scores)*

| Management model | Mean | Std. error |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Non-EMO | 3.801 | .147 |
| EMO | 3.894 | .098 |

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Table 27

*Dependent Variable: Transformed Choice (Autonomy Sub-scores)*

| Source | Type III sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig. | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | .186 | 1 | .186 | .278 | .599 | .082 |
| Within groups | 66.022 | 99 | .667 | - | - | - |
| Total | 1575.368 | 101 | - | - | - | - |

Summary (Quantitative Data Collection)

Data for the quantitative section of this study were obtained from 106 participants. These participants taught at charter elementary schools that were managed by an educational management organization (EMO) or independently of an EMO. Approximately 71% of the participants taught at charter schools that were managed by an EMO and approximately 29% taught at schools that were managed independently of an EMO.

The guiding question for the quantitative section of this study was: Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs? A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment. The independent variable, management model, included two levels: EMO and non-EMO. The dependent variable included the total score of the School Participant Empowerment Scale and the subsequent six subscale scores. The subscale scores for decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact were calculated separately. The findings indicated that there were no statistical significant differences between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by an EMO as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of an EMO.

## Qualitative Data Collection

### Phase Three

There were 12 charter school principals who consented to participate in this study: 10 females and two males, which included seven Hispanics, three Whites, and two African Americans. The researcher scheduled a meeting with these principals to review school site documents (i.e., faculty handbooks and school improvement and professional development plans) for expressed or embedded opportunities for teachers to be empowered at their school. However, the researcher was only able to review school site documents at nine different schools, six from EMO managed charter schools and three from charter schools managed independently of an EMO. Three of the six EMO managed schools submitted the same documents (see Table 28). These schools were managed by the same EMO and used the same faculty handbook. The independently managed charter schools submitted different documents.

Three of the twelve charter schools did not confirm or reschedule a meeting with the researcher. These three charter schools were managed independently of an EMO.

Table 28

*School Site Documents*

| Management model | School site documents reviewed | School site documents not submitted | Duplication of documents received |
|---|---|---|---|
| EMO | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| Non-EMO | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 9 | 3 | 3 |

The researcher and the two peer reviewers reviewed six different charter school faculty or employee handbooks for opportunities that may have been listed or embedded in the handbooks for teachers to be empowered. However, these handbooks made no references to opportunities for teachers to exercise their leadership abilities. These handbooks were more alike than different. They contained references to school policies, regulations, and benefits. The handbooks had the same basic order of presentation of the content.

The charter schools' school improvement plans were generic in scope. These plans identified each school's goals, objectives, and the results. There were no indications of direct teacher leadership responsibilities. The professional development plans were not specific. There was a list of workshops and registration procedures produced by the sponsoring agency that charter schoolteachers could attend. The schools did not have a schedule of assigned workshops or a scope and sequence for teachers to attend workshops based on a master plan. However, participants reported that the administrators

at their school were very supportive in their quest to attend any workshop(s) that were deemed beneficial for teachers and students.

Phase Four

The research question that guided the qualitative section of this study was: Do charter schoolteachers receive a certain level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school? In order to get responses to this question, the researcher invited, via letter of consent, 69 charter schoolteachers who taught third and/or fourth grade students to participate in a face-to-face interview. During this study, these charter schoolteachers taught at one of the 19 elementary charter schools sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools with an enrollment of at least 100 students.

The researcher received 27 signed Oral Interview Consent Forms and Demographic Surveys from charter schoolteachers who consented to an interview by the researcher, which constituted a return rate of approximately 39% (see Table 29). The researcher recorded the names of consenting participants by school management model and according to the return date. The names of the teachers were entered into a database and assigned a specific 4-digit numerical code for tracking and future communications with the participants. Once the researcher received six consenting participants from at least two different EMO managed charter schools and six from at least two different charter schools managed independently of an EMO, the sample was finalized. The data collected from the Demographic Surveys were considered extraneous to the purpose of this study and were not considered relevant factors in the analyses of the participants' responses to the interview questions. The purpose of the demographic data was to describe the sample.

Table 29

*Qualitative Response Rate*

| Category | Number | Participation rate |
|---|---|---|
| Invited participants | 69 | 100% |
| Consent forms not returned | 42 | 61% |
| Available for interview | 27 | 39% |

*Qualitative Sample Demographics*

    *Gender.* The overwhelming majority (25 of 27 or 93%) of respondents in this sample were females (see Table 30). However, only 12 participants were interviewed as proposed. This sample included six female teachers from charter schools managed by an EMO; and five female teachers and one male teacher from charter schools managed independently of an EMO (see Table 31).

Table 30

*Distribution of Gender*

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 25 | 93 |
| Male | 2 | 7 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

Table 31

*Distribution of Gender Interviewed*

| Gender | Male | Female |
|--------|------|--------|
| EMO | 0 | 6 |
| Non-EMO | 1 | 5 |
| Total | 1 | 11 |

*Ethnicity.* Approximately 78% of the sample was Hispanic with a small number of African American, Asian Pacific Islander and White charter schoolteachers (see Table 32). This sample had one African American female teacher and one African American male teacher. This anomaly was not left to chance. The researcher purposefully contacted charter school principals who had African American teachers on their staff and asked for their assistance in getting teachers of the aforementioned ethnicity to volunteer to participate in this study; this action resulted in two African American teachers volunteering to participate, one male and one female.

Table 32

*Distribution of Ethnicity*

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 21 | 78 |
| African American | 2 | 8 |
| White | 2 | 8 |
| Asian Pacific Islander | 1 | 4 |
| Other | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

The interview sample by management model was ethnically diverse for such a

limited number of participants (see Table 33).

Table 33

*Interview Sample by Ethnicity*

| Ethnicity | EMO | Non-EMO |
|---|---|---|
| African American | 0 | 2 |
| Hispanic | 4 | 3 |
| White | 2 | 1 |

*Degrees and Certification.* The 12 charter schoolteachers interviewed held

bachelor degrees and were appropriately certified in the area they taught or were assigned

(see Table 34).

Table 34

*Area of Certification*

| Management model | Degree | | Area of certification | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bachelor | Masters | Elem. Ed. | ESE |
| EMO | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Non-EMO | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |

*Teaching Experience.* The interview sample of 12 charter schoolteachers had a total of 106 years of overall teaching experience. However, there were two teachers who had relatively extreme numbers of years of teaching experiences when compared to the overall sample. One teacher from an EMO managed school had 30 years of teaching experience which accounted for 50% of the overall experience from that portion of the sample. One teacher from a non-EMO managed school had 20 years of teaching experience which accounted for 43% of the overall experience from that portion of the sample (see Table 35). These data entries greatly increased the overall years of teaching experience for the sample for each management model included in this study, i.e., EMO and Non-EMO.

Table 35

*Number of Years Teaching Experience*

| Management model | Total teaching years | Average years teaching | Total years at charter schools | Average years at charter schools |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EMO | 60 | 10.0 | 31 | 5.2 |
| Non-EMO | 46 | 8.8 | 19 | 3.2 |
| Total | 106 | - | - | - |

## Phase Five

*Research Questions*

The guiding question for the qualitative component of this study was: Do charter

schoolteachers receive a certain level of empowerment based on a specific management

environment at the charter school? The researcher anticipated that the responses to this

question would lend creditability to the results and analyses of the quantitative data

collected during this study. The qualitative data reflected a sample of the realities of

charter schoolteachers' levels and actions of empowerment at schools managed by an

EMO compared to schools managed independently of an EMO.

*Face-to-Face Interviews*

*Interview Design.* The face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher obtained

data that reflected the perceptions of 12 charter schoolteachers' interpretation of teacher

empowerment at their schools. Each charter schoolteacher was asked 11 peer reviewed

open-ended questions designed to collect data that would describe their perceptions of

external and intrinsic empowerment at their schools. The first seven questions collected

data that reflected participants' overall perceptions of their levels of empowerment at their school. These questions were designed purposefully to gather data that would align with the quantitative data collected from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and its six subscales: (a) impact, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) decision making, and (f) autonomy. The final four open-ended questions were aligned with the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's cognitive model of intrinsic motivation: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice (see Table 1, p. 36).

*Interview Protocol.* An interview protocol, as recommended by Creswell, was developed to structure and augment an audio taping of the interview in order to standardize this process. The interview protocol was used consistently so that all participants would have the benefit of the same structured interview. There were times when the researcher asked a participant to explain further or give examples when the responses consisted of one-word or vague answers.

Interviews were conducted at each participant's school in a private office or conference room designated by the principal. Each interview took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. As previously indicated, an audio recording device (tape recorder) was used to preserve the integrity of the participants' responses, as well as to allow easy access and accountability of data to the researcher. The audiotapes were labeled with the participant's 4-digit numerical code, date, time and location of the interview and stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office as a security measure. However, the audiotapes were destroyed at the conclusion of this study in order to maintain the confidentiality of all participants. Additionally, the researcher took notes of the

participants' responses during each interview. These data were archived in the aforementioned locked file cabinet and after five years will be destroyed to maintain participants' confidentiality.

*Data Triangulation (Trustworthiness)*

In order to triangulate the data for trustworthiness, the researcher instituted a three-step plan. First, the researcher assigned each participant a 4-digit numerical code and transcribed their interview responses verbatim from the audiotapes. However, the researcher deleted any identifying references to the school or school personnel. In addition, the researcher made several parenthetical notations to clarify any vague references made by the participants. Once the audiotapes were transcribed, the researcher created a grid to map the responses according to participants' code and management model. There were 11 questions with responses from 12 participants which totaled 132 general units of perceived perceptions. In most cases, these units were easily divided into smaller units and were initially color coded using multiple color pens. Some units were appropriately doubled and tripled coded because they were applicable to more than one of the developing themes.

The researcher developed an organizational chart and organized or grouped small units into four core themes: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice. These core themes were too large and therefore six sub-themes were developed: (a) impact, b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) decision making, and (f) autonomy.

Secondly, each participant was emailed or sent via U.S. mail a copy of their transcribed responses to the interview questions for participants' verification of content.

Participants were asked to respond with any corrections or additions within five days of receipt of the transcribed document. As a result, the researcher did not receive any responses from the participants, which indicated to the researcher that the transcribed interviews were accepted as valid.

Finally, the researcher contacted two local educators who were involved with teacher education programs to ask for their assistance in triangulating or testing the trustworthiness of the data. The researcher identified and contacted one educator who worked with the public school system and was interested in the impact that charter schools appeared to have on school districts as a new educational reform initiative. Another educator worked with one of the local universities and expressed a position of neutrality to the concept of a charter school and its potential impact on traditional public schools. These two educators volunteered to serve as peer reviewers for the qualitative data collected for this study.

The peer reviewers were given a copy of the participants' coded and transcribed responses to the interview questions. They also received a copy of the responses that the researcher organized into four core themes and six sub-themes. The researcher and the two peer reviewers met and after much discussion, agreed upon the identified themes and sub-themes as proposed by the researcher.

*Research Hypotheses Findings*

The presentation of the research findings was organized sequentially by each of the five research hypothesis. The researcher ordered the findings as listed below:

1. Each research hypothesis proposed for this study.

2. An explanation of the core domain stated in the research hypothesis.

3. The interview question(s) used to collect data related to the research hypothesis.

4. A brief description of participants' overall responses to the interview question(s) by management model, EMO and non-EMO.

5. A sample of participants' responses to the interview questions when appropriate.

6. The researcher's analyses and findings based on the participants' responses to the interview questions.

*Management Model: Perceived Empowerment*

Hypothesis 1 ($H_1$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

The first seven interview questions (see Appendix C) collected data that represented the participants' overall perception of empowerment at their school, as well as the realities of participants executing activities that represented or reflected different levels of empowerment. These questions allowed each participant to express their personal perception of empowerment as it related to their position as a teacher, as well as their observations of empowerment bestowed upon or exhibited by their colleagues.

Question One: How would you describe teacher empowerment? This question specified each participant's definition of empowerment. There was an array of responses regarding the definition of empowerment. The participants (N=6) who taught at EMO managed schools generally described empowerment with their ability to control the environment in the classroom. Their responses stressed the need to be empowered to

select and acquire the appropriate materials and resources; and, to be flexible with the instructional strategies and techniques used in the classroom based on students' needs. In addition, these participants felt that collaboration with other teachers was also a feature of teacher empowerment.

A female Hispanic participant with six years of overall teaching experience, five of the six years at a charter school teaching fourth grade students, spoke passionately about her experiences and opportunities at the school. She had a bachelor's degree and was certified in elementary education. She emphasized that one of her professional goals was to obtain a master's degree to increase her knowledge and skills in her chosen area. This participant's responses to the description of teacher empowerment summarized the overall responses of participants who worked at EMO managed schools. She stated:

> I would describe teacher empowerment as the ability to influence my students and colleagues. It is important for teachers to be in control of the instructional program in order to provide for the needs of their students. The teacher needs to have the flexibility to alter the content and strategies to deliver the instructions. Teacher empowerment also is important as it relates to the interaction between and among colleagues, as well as the respect and integrity that is an integral part of teacher collaboration. (Code 4000 - EMO)

The participants who taught at charter schools that were managed independently of an EMO had similar and different definitions of teacher empowerment. Some of the participants' (N=4) responses were aligned with participants who worked at EMO managed schools; these responses focused on students in the classroom. However, a couple of participants' (N=2) responses appeared to expand beyond the classroom.

An example of a description of teacher empowerment going beyond the walls of the classroom was expressed by a male, African American fourth grade teacher with six years of teaching experience, two of which were at charter schools. This participant had a master's degree and certification in elementary education. The participant was also enrolled in a graduate program at one of the local universities for an Ed.D. degree in educational leadership. He offered a description of teacher empowerment:

> Teacher empowerment can be described as a teacher who is given power and has the authority to authorize decisions, basically, a decision maker. That person can make things possible and their opinion and/or decision has power or validity.
>
> (Code 5000 – Non-EMO)

Question Two: Are you a proponent of teachers being empowered? Please explain your position. The participants (N=11) working at charter schools regardless of management model (EMO or non-EMO) overwhelmingly agreed that they were proponents of teachers being empowered. Their responses indicated that empowering teachers had a direct impact on students and the classroom environment.

One fourth grade female Hispanic teacher, with six years of teaching experience, all at the same charter school had a bachelor's degree and was certified in elementary education. This participant conveyed the sentiments of the 11 participants (EMO managed schools [N=6] and non-EMO managed schools [N=5]) in her response to being a proponent of teacher empowerment. She responded:

> Yes, I am a proponent of teachers being empowered. Every classroom is different. Therefore, teachers are in a position to assess the needs of their students better than anyone else. They should have the liberty to establish their academic program based

on the materials and resources available. Teachers should be empowered to make decisions in their classroom. (Code 4001 – EMO)

However, out of the 12 responses, there was only one participant (N=1) who expressed a view that was contrary to the other participants (N=11). This participant was an African American female second-third grade combination teacher, with three years of overall teaching experience and only one year at a charter school. This participant had a master's degree with certification in elementary education and was expected to complete all course work for a Ph.D. in biology from one of the local universities in December 2006. She expressed the need for teachers to have established boundaries for teacher empowerment or input from an administrator before a decision is made. She stated:

Anything that you do too much of is not good. You have to set a limit. So in a sense, if someone has a limit...I'll be a proponent of it (teacher empowerment). But, if they go over the limit, I would not consider it to be a good thing. Going over the limit is when a teacher just makes a decision without talking about it with the people they are working with. Whatever decision they want to make, they should talk to whoever is in charge and let them know what they are going to do and see if they can do it or not. (Code 5001 – non-EMO)

Question Three: Do you feel empowered at your school site? Explain your position. All of the participants (N=12) expressed feeling empowered at their school regardless of the management model. Participants spoke of how supportive their administrators were in providing the necessary resources for students and classroom instruction. In addition, responses indicated that their ideas and/or suggestions were taken into consideration and often times implemented.

A white female exceptional student education (ESE) teacher, with a master's degree and certification in ESE had four years of overall teaching experience at the same charter school. This participant provided ESE services for students at the charter school who had been evaluated and assigned an educational plan through the staffing process. By virtue of her position, this participant interacted with administrators, teachers, students and parents, as well as staff from Miami-Dade County Public Schools district and regional offices. The interaction with the aforementioned educators and school site personnel provided the participant with opportunities to express succinctly the view points of the other participants very well. She stated:

I feel empowered because I am counted on. I can make decisions and I am listened to. I am heard. I am not ignored. My insights are not ignored. My feeling of empowerment is more intrinsic. I think everybody has the ability to be intrinsically empowered. Some people need structure. But that doesn't mean that structure will alter their empowerment. Teacher preparation (certification) gives the teacher an automatic level of empowerment to teach students. (Code 6000 – non-EMO)

Question Four: What makes you feel unempowered at your school site? Explain. The majority (7 out of 12 or 58%) of the participants stated that they never felt unempowered at their schools. These responses were from participants (N=4) who worked at charter schools managed by an EMO and participants (N=3) who worked at charter schools managed independently of an EMO. However, there were participants (N=5) who did not agree with the majority, participants (N=2) from EMO managed schools and participants (N=3) from schools managed independently of an EMO. Their

responses did not cast a negative perception of either management model, but reflected their lack of control due to federal, state and local regulations.

One of the participants, a female white third grade teacher with 20 years of overall teaching experience, 16 years at a traditional public school and four years at the charter school, was very passionate about her response to question four. This participant had a bachelor's degree and was certified in elementary education. She expressed that obtaining a master's degree was one of her goals for the future. This participant's response summarized the sentiments expressed by the participants who felt unempowered with issues controlled outside of the charter school. She responded by saying:

> Yes. It does not have anything to do with the administration of the school. The ways in which I feel unempowered has more to do with seeking resources and/or help for students who are in need of services such as psychological evaluations, speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc. Often it takes several months for these evaluations to be completed with the results, in many cases, being incorrect. This situation has caused the need for the students to be evaluated again with a more appropriate assessment. Therefore, I feel unempowered when I see children struggling for many, many months without having access to quality assessments that can only help the children. For me, it is very frustrating to watch students suffer the consequences of a time management issue that I can not control. (Code 6001 – non-EMO)

Question Five: Who is the person responsible to empower teachers at your school site? Explain. All of the participants' (N=12) responses indicated that the administrators at their school were responsible for empowering teachers. The configuration of

administrators varied from principals, co-principals, assistant principals, directors, lead

teachers, and any combination of the titles listed. However, there were participants (N=2)

who worked at EMO managed charter schools who included in their responses sentiments

of teachers empowering themselves or other teachers.

A third grade, Hispanic teacher with seven years of teaching experience, four of

which at the charter school, was very passionate with her response to question five. This

participant had a bachelor's degree and certification in elementary education. She

summarized the sentiments of teachers empowering themselves and other teachers. She

stated:

> I think teacher empowerment is allowed from above. It is permitted, but teachers
>
> can empower themselves. Colleagues can empower each other. Everybody has
>
> weaknesses and strengths. We have to become very aware of how interdependent
>
> we are. Everyone can be empowered in their own way. (Code 7000 – EMO)

Question Six: Describe the level of teacher empowerment at your school. The

participants' responded to their level of empowerment by using a wide-range of

descriptors. The participants (N=6) at EMO managed schools described their level of

empowerment in multiple ways; however, the general consensus was that the level of

teacher empowerment ranged from five-to-nine on a scale from one-to-ten, with ten being

the high end of the scale. Participants indicated that approximately 80% of the teachers

were involved in developing the students' educational plan within the boundaries

established by Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Participants (N=6) from non-EMO managed schools had similar responses to

describe their level of empowerment at their school. These participants felt that the level

of empowerment for teachers at their school was even and limitless. Their general comments indicated that teachers were in charge of creating their own level of empowerment and that everybody did their own thing in the classroom.

Overall, these participants (N=12), regardless of management model, were comfortable with their level of empowerment. Their main concern was that they needed to be empowered in the classroom to make decisions regarding the delivery of instruction and any other factors associated with such decisions.

A female Hispanic participant who had five years of overall teaching experience at the same charter school, possessed a bachelor's degree with certification in elementary education, and taught fourth grade, summarized the general consensus of the participants. She stated:

> The support of the administrators in this school makes me feel empowered. They are willing to go the extra mile in order to get the resources that we need. (Code 4002 – EMO)

Question Seven: How would you improve or increase the level of teacher empowerment at your school site? Several of the participants (N=4) working at EMO managed schools were satisfied with their level of empowerment and saw no need for any increase in empowerment levels at this time. However, there were participants (N=2) with varying opinions. These participants were satisfied with their current level of empowerment, but wanted opportunities to increase their knowledge base.

One female Hispanic participant who taught fourth grade students expressed a need to increase her knowledge of technology, specifically the Internet. This participant had 30 years of overall teaching experiences; six of those years were at the charter school. She

had a bachelor's degree and was certified in elementary education. This participant was confident that the administrators at the charter school would be supportive in her quest. In response to how to improve or increase the level of empowerment, her personal declaration was:

> I think it (empowerment) is an individual thing. I have told them (administrators) that I am interested in getting more information on the use of the Internet. So I know that they are looking for opportunities for me. (Code 7002 - EMO)

Participants (N=2) from non-EMO managed charter schools agreed with the majority of the participants (N=4) from EMO managed schools; they were satisfied with their level of empowerment as well. However, other participants (N=4) from non-EMO managed charter schools indicated that the increased level of empowerment at their school was the responsibility of the individual teacher. In their opinions, teachers needed to create opportunities to empower themselves by seeking opportunities to become more involved in the overall operation of the school.

One Hispanic female participant had only three years of overall teaching experience and it was at the same charter school. This participant had a bachelor's degree and was certified in elementary education. She summarized the essence of other participants (N=4) from non-EMO managed schools in her response to question seven. She stated:

> In order to improve or increase the level of empowerment at my school, I would need to attend all the Board and Administrative meetings and conferences. I can get a better understanding of the role of everyone. (Code 5002 – non-EMO)

The results of the researcher's analyses of the first seven interview questions did not support the research hypothesis: Teachers working at charter schools managed

independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. There were minor differences in the responses to the interview questions by participants working at charter schools managed by an EMO compared to those participants working at charter schools managed independently of an EMO. These differences were not substantive enough to support this research hypothesis.

*Management Model: Perceived Impact Empowerment*

The final four open-ended questions were aligned with the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of intrinsic motivation (i.e., impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice). These questions were designed to identify the participants' intrinsic motivation. This was motivation guided by the participants' experiences that stimulated their performance of an activity because of the sensations they received from participating. These four factors were crucial in identifying teachers' levels of motivation and satisfaction, which ultimately would lend credibility to their expectations and realizations as positive forces at their schools.

Hypothesis 2 ($H_2$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived impact empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Question Eight: What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that impact the overall operation of your school? This question focused on participants' perceived level of impact on the overall operation of the school or the degree of individual's behaviors, which were perceived to produce the desired effects within the charter school's environment.

Participants (N=3) at charter schools managed by an EMO discussed their work

toward and actually receiving an accreditation for their school by the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools as having a tremendous impact on the overall

operation of the school. However, all of the participants (N=6) who worked under this

management model responded to activities that impacted the overall operation of the

school as those activities that were categorized as extracurricular activities. These

participants stressed their involvement in such activities as the school's safety patrols,

United Way fund raisers, school plays, book fairs, after school tutoring, and various

school clubs.

In contrast, the participants (N=6) at schools managed independently of an EMO

failed to indicate any involvement in extracurricular activities. These participants

discussed different activities that impacted the overall operation of the school. The

majority of the participants (N=4) emphasized their ability to attend workshops and

return to the school as the teacher trainer of the content acquired. Another participant

(N=1) stated that teachers were able to collaborate on curricular issues per their grade

level and across all grade levels. And yet, another participant (N=1) indicated that

teachers were given an opportunity to reflect upon their own personal mission statement

regarding their goals as a teacher working at the charter school. As a result, they were

able to collaborate with a renewed vigor to redesign and redevelop the school's mission

statement, which impacted the overall operation of the school.

The researcher's analyses of the responses to the eighth interview question did not

support the research hypothesis: Teachers working at charter schools managed

independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived impact empowerment than

teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. There were minor differences in the responses to the interview question by participants working at charter schools managed by an EMO compared to those participants working at charter schools managed independently of an EMO. These differences were not substantive enough to support this hypothesis.

*Management Model: Competence (Professional Growth, Status and Self-efficacy)*

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived competence empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Question Nine: What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that allow them to exhibit their technical skills with confidence in the overall operation of your school? Technical skills were defined as the degree to which an individual could perform tasks or activities skillfully with a high level of confidence and competence. The researcher equated the level of perceived competence with participants' responses that were related to their (a) professional growth, (b) status and (c) self-efficacy.

1. *Professional Growth.* Professional growth was defined as teachers' perceptions of schools providing them with opportunities to grow and develop professionally. Participants (N=12), regardless of management model, were appropriately certified to teach the subject or area assigned. These participants indicated that they had many opportunities to attend workshops to enhance or increase their content area knowledge, as well as acquire new instructional strategies and techniques. Further emphasis was placed on the supportive attitude of their administrators to identify and

fund attendance at workshops requested by participants. Participants also indicated that many of their colleagues were seeking advanced degrees and National Board Certification.

2. *Status.* Status was defined as teachers' perceptions of respect and recognition they received from their colleagues. Participants (N=4) from EMO managed schools expressed how teachers frequently volunteered to model lessons for other teachers. Other participants (N=2) stressed how teachers worked together to develop curriculum and strategies to share among their grade levels.

   The participants (N=6) at non-EMO managed schools responses focused more on teachers sharing ideas and having informal conversations regarding student-related issues. These participants were self-starters by initiating and developing workshops based on their strengths in order to share with other teachers and students as needed or requested.

   The aforementioned activities showed that participants, regardless of management model, acknowledged and respected the expertise of their colleagues.

3. *Self-efficacy.* Self-efficacy was defined as teachers' perception of being equipped with the skills and ability to help students learn, were competent in building effective programs for students, and promoted change in student learning.

   Participants' (N=6) from EMO managed schools were complimentary toward teachers who sponsored student clubs. They indicated that these

teachers were very good at their sponsorship and many of them did not receive monetary compensation.

Participants (N=6) from non-EMO managed schools indicated that teachers at their school had technical skills that brought additional value to the school. One participant had a musical background. Since there were no formal music classes, the participant engaged the students three days a week with informal music classes during lunch and for students who remained after school on those days. Another teacher (non-participant) was singled out for leadership with producing the school's yearbook with input from teachers and students.

There were minor differences in the responses to this interview question by participants working at charter schools managed by an EMO compared to those participants working at charters managed independently of an EMO. These differences were not substantive enough to support the research hypothesis: Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived competence empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

*Management Model: Meaningfulness (Decision Making)*

Hypothesis 4 ($H_4$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived meaningful empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Question Ten: What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that add value to the overall operation of your school? The level of perceived meaningful empowerment was defined as the value of the task or purpose based on the individual's

standards. The researcher associated the meaningfulness of a task with participants' responses that were related to decision making.

All of the participants (N=12), regardless of the school's management model, indicated that they were the decision maker in their classroom. These decisions were based on what was in the best interest of students. Decisions made independently of input from administrators involved the selection of resources and materials, as well as the strategies and techniques used for the delivery of instruction. Participants believed that they were in a better position to make these decisions because of the amount of contact time they spent with students compared to the amount of contact time administrators spent with them.

Many decisions directly impacted the classroom and were beyond the control of the participants. These decisions were basically federal, state, and local mandates. One participant, a female Hispanic third grade teacher, with ten years of teaching experience, five of them at a charter school, with a bachelor's degree and certification in elementary education, spoke firmly in responding to this question. This response summarized the general feelings of the participants. She stated:

I am allowed to teach using my own style. We use a specialized curriculum, but I am allowed to teach using my own strategies and resources. There are other teachers that teach a little differently based on their teaching style…We all have the same basic curriculum and philosophy…We just tweak it according to our personality. (Code 6002 – non-EMO)

The researcher's analyses of the responses to question ten did not support the research hypothesis: Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of

EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived meaningful empowerment than teachers

working at charter schools managed by EMOs. There were no differences in the essence

or spirit of the responses. Therefore, the participants' responses did not support the

research hypothesis.

*Management Model: Choice (Autonomy)*

Hypothesis 5 ($H_5$): Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of

EMO will reflect higher levels of perceived choice empowerment than teachers working

at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Question Eleven: What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that

provide for teacher autonomy and support the overall operation of your school? The level

of perceived empowerment of choice was defined as the ability to intentionally select

actions that lead to the desired outcomes. The researcher associated teachers having

choice options in their school with participants' responses to question eleven that related

to teacher autonomy.

All of the participants (N=12), regardless of management model, associated

choice or autonomy with their ability to (a) design and deliver educational plans for

students, (b) volunteer to lead or sponsor extra curricular student activities, (c) develop

and conduct workshops, and (d) coordinate Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

strategies with other federal, state and local mandates. These participants expressed the

highest respect for their principals and other administrators at the school. According to

these participants, the administrators were supportive of their needs and desire to improve

the classroom environment with the resources they needed. Additionally, administrators

worked hard to provide teachers with internal and external workshops that were required or requested.

One participant, a female Hispanic, fourth grade teacher with a bachelor's degree and certification in elementary education was fanatical in her response. This participant has six years of teaching experience, five at the charter school. She summarized participants' responses as:

> The principal is wonderful. The assistant principal is wonderful. They are always giving ideas. They are former teachers so they know where we are. Our reading leader is fantastic…wonderful…always coming forth with new information for us. Since they work together like a little triangle, they are very in-tuned to what is needed in our classroom. (Code 7001 – EMO)

There were minor differences in the responses to interview question eleven by participants working at charter schools managed by an EMO compared to those participants working at charters managed independently of an EMO. Therefore, the differences were not substantive enough in content to support the research hypothesis: Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMO will reflect higher levels of perceived choice empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs.

Summary (Qualitative Data Collection)

Data for the qualitative section of this study were obtained from 12 participants who taught third and/or fourth grade at charter elementary schools that were managed by an educational management organization (EMO) or independently of an EMO. Six of the participants taught at EMO managed schools and six taught at charter schools managed independently of an EMO.

The guiding question for the qualitative component of this study was: Do charter schoolteachers receive a certain level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at the charter school?

Face-to-face interviews were conducted by the researcher to obtained data that reflected the perceptions of 12 charter schoolteachers' interpretation of teacher empowerment at their schools. These teachers were asked 11 peer reviewed open-ended questions that described their perceptions of external and intrinsic empowerment at their schools. The first seven questions collected data that reflected participants' overall perceptions of their levels of empowerment at their school. These questions were designed purposefully to gather data that would align with the quantitative data collected from the School Participant Empowerment Scale and its six subscales. The final four open-ended questions were aligned with the four factors of Thomas and Velthouse's cognitive model of intrinsic motivation.

After the analyses of the participants' responses to the interview questions, the researcher organized the data into four core themes: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice, and, six sub-themes: (a) impact, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) decision making, and (f) autonomy.

Participants' responses to the 11 open-ended questions were more alike than different. The differences were minor when compared to the depth and breath of the responses. The participants, regardless of management model, EMO or non-EMO, generally agreed that they were empowered and comfortable with the level of empowerment at their school. However, their level of empowerment centered on the freedom and the flexibility to teach and select materials and other resources as needed. Participants also expressed being empowered to develop, conduct, and/or attend workshops to continue their professional growth.

The findings indicated that charter schoolteachers did not receive a certain level of empowerment based on a specific management environment (EMO or non-EMO) at their charter school. This sample of participants showed that teachers working at charter schools managed by an EMO had no more opportunities or advantages of being empowered at their schools than teachers working at charter schools that were managed independently of an EMO.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research study, findings, and presents the conclusions and recommendations. The chapter is divided into five sections: (a) summary of the study, (b) discussion of the findings, (c) conclusions, (d) recommendations, and (e) chapter summary.

### Summary of the Study

*Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to investigate if there were any significant differences in the perceived level of teacher empowerment at charter schools operated by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools operated independently of EMOs. Charter schools were public schools that operated through a contract with a sponsoring agency, such as a school board, a business, or a university. In 1996, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation to establish charter schools in the State of Florida. One of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation was to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school. Charter schools were promoted as an educational model that supported administrative and teacher autonomy, which would lead to improved student achievement and performance.

Empowerment became a part of educational discourse and exchange (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002; Lightfoot, 1986), which aided in the understanding and visualization of the human ability within organizations to improve and increase opportunities for autonomy,

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responsibility, choice, and authority (Lightfoot, 1986; Marks & Louis, 1999). Therefore, determining teachers' levels of empowerment became an integral part of this study as it related to charter schools and their management model.

*Significance of the Study*

The results of this study suggested that charter schoolteachers' perceived levels of empowerment were not based on any management model implemented at their school (e.g., management by EMOs as compared to management by non-EMOs). The results of this study revealed that the power to empower teachers did not rest with the management model of the school, but rather levels of teacher empowerment relied on the management style of the principals or administrators who were in positions to authorize, relinquish, and transfer power to teachers who demonstrated competence. In addition, teachers were able to empower themselves as they worked with their colleagues in different social systems to hone their area(s) of expertise to become empowered.

*Method*

In this study, a mixed method research design was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher deemed the collection and analyses of quantitative data as primacy to the study, where the results were generalized to a larger population. However, the results of the qualitative data served to complement the quantitative data by providing clarity to specific contexts and realities of the phenomenon of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment at their school.

*Population Sample*

At the initiation of this study, the sample was generated from the 19 elementary charter schools (kindergarten through fifth grades) sponsored by Miami-Dade County

Public Schools, with an enrollment of 100 students or more. This sample consisted of

three groups: (a) instructional leaders or principals, (b) charter schoolteachers

(kindergarten through fifth grades), and (c) charter schoolteachers (third and/or fourth

grades). A total of 130 participants (see Table 36) from 19 elementary charter schools

sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools volunteered to participate in this study.

The majority (92 %) of the participants were females (see Table 36).

Table 36

*Participants by Gender and Sample Group*

| Gender | Principals | Charter Schoolteachers (K-5) | Charter Schoolteachers (3-4) |
|--------|-----------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Female | 10 | 99 | 11 |
| Male | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| Total | 12 | 106 | 12 |

The majority (73%) of the participants who volunteered to participate in this study

were Hispanic (see Table 37). At the initiation of this study, this percentage was aligned

with the ratio of ethnicities in charter schools in Miami-Dade County. There were only

five elementary charter schools that had predominately African American founders,

faculties, boards of trustees, and teachers.

Table 37

*Participants by Ethnicity and Sample Group*

| Ethnicity | Principals | Charter Schoolteachers (K-5) | Charter Schoolteachers (3-4) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 7 | 81 | 7 |
| White | 3 | 12 | 3 |
| Asian Pacific Islander | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| African American | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Unidentified | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 12 | 106 | 12 |

*Quantitative Instrument*

One hundred sixty-two charter schoolteachers were invited to participate in this research study. The majority (N=106 or 66%) of the invited teacher participants agreed to participate. These teachers were asked to respond to two surveys. The first survey, the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (Short & Reinhart, 1992) collected data regarding the perceived levels of empowerment selected charter schoolteachers realized at their school site. This scale consisted of 38 items (see Appendix B) employing a 5-point Likert scale that measured teachers' overall perception of empowerment using six

dimensions: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact.

The second survey was a Demographic Survey developed by the researcher. This demographic survey was used to capture data such as gender, race, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, years of teaching at a charter school, advanced degrees, and area of certification. These data were considered extraneous to the purpose of this study and were not considered relevant factors in the analyses of the participants' responses on the SPES. However, the purpose of these data was simply to describe the sample.

An analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there were any significant differences of teachers' perceptions of empowerment between the two groups: charter schools that were managed by EMOs as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. Statistical significance differences were determined at .05 level. The statistical analysis and display of data were facilitated through the use of SPSS Base 11.5, a data analysis software program.

*Qualitative Instruments*

The researcher invited the 69 charter schoolteachers who taught third and/or fourth grade students to participate in a face-to-face interview, 27 or 39% of participants returned signed Oral Interview Consent Forms and Demographic Surveys. However, only 12 participants were interviewed as proposed, six teachers from EMO managed charter schools and six from charters schools managed independently of an EMO.

The interviews consisted of 11 peer-reviewed open-ended questions related to teachers' perceptions of empowerment at their school. The first seven questions were geared toward participants' overall perceptions of their levels of empowerment and the

final four open-ended questions were aligned with Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) cognitive model of intrinsic motivation in search of responses that would reveal actions that motivated teachers intrinsically. The researcher purposefully designed the interview questions so that a minimum of four core themes and six sub-themes would evolve from the participants' responses. The four core themes were (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice (Thomas & Velthouse); and, the six sub-themes were (a) impact, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) decision making, and (f) autonomy.

## Discussion of the Findings

The priority of this research study was to investigate if there was a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs. Secondarily, the study investigated if charter schoolteachers received a higher level of empowerment based on a specific management environment at charter schools.

Empirical or quantitative data were collected and analyzed from a positivist's approach, meaning the result of this data represented the world's view at a specific point in time. In contrast, the qualitative data were collected and analyzed from a constructivist's approach, which assumed life's experiences or realities to be a construction of one's mind.

The results of analyzed quantitative data suggested that there were no significant differences in charter schoolteachers' perception of empowerment at their schools regardless of management model; and the result of analyzed qualitative data suggested

that charter schoolteachers did not receive higher levels of empowerment based on a specific management style.

*Hypotheses Testing*

The mixed method design of this research study was based on five hypotheses. The null hypotheses were the guiding force behind the investigation of the quantitative component of the study; the results of the research hypotheses guided the qualitative component. The discussion of the findings of these two sets of data was paired sequentially because of their relationship to the study and each other. The two methods of data collection and analyses provided a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the investigation. To that end, quantitative data reflected participants' responses from an objective perspective and qualitative data served to complement the empirical data from participants' responses through mental reconstructions of their experiences and realities regarding the same phenomenon, charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment based on a management model.

The following narrative contains a discussion of the results of an investigation of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. This discussion was generated based on the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the School Participant Empowerment Scale survey and participants' responses to 11 interview questions organized into four core themes: (a) impact, (b) competence, (c) meaningfulness, and (d) choice; and, six sub-themes: (a) decision making, (b) professional growth, (c) status, (d) self-efficacy, (e) autonomy, and (f) impact.

*Null Hypothesis One (HO₁).* There is no difference between the levels of perceived empowerment for teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the total empowerment score of participants' responses to the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) survey. The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, were presented in Table 13. The ANOVA, Table 14, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .006$, $p = .94$, effect size=.075. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level. Therefore, considering the results of the ANOVA, the first null hypothesis was not rejected.

*Research Hypothesis One (H₁).* Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. Analyzed qualitative data (responses to the first seven interview questions) did not support this research hypothesis.

Participants' responses to the first seven interview questions suggested that charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment were not higher based on a specific management model, EMO or non-EMO. In fact, the responses suggested that the realities of their experiences of being empowered were more alike than different. Therefore, the data did not support this research hypothesis.

*Discussion One.* The results of the quantitative data analyzed for the null hypothesis (HO₁) were consistent with the results of the qualitative data analyzed for the research hypothesis (H₁). The retention of the null hypothesis was clearly corroborated by

participants' non-supportive responses to the first research hypothesis. Participants' responses, regardless of management model, defined teacher empowerment as the ability to have academic freedom within their classrooms and to create an educational plan to accommodate the needs of students. Specifically, all participants wanted and had similar experiences of freedom and flexibility to control their classrooms, including (a) the design of the curriculum, (b) selection of resources and materials, and (c) implementing instructional strategies and techniques.

Based on participants' responses, their realities of empowerment were met with support from their administrators and colleagues. Principals transferred power, a mechanism for principals to give authority or to authorize an action, to teachers to serve as managers of their classrooms. The efforts that charter school principals put forth to empower teachers resulted in increased teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and reduction in job related stress (Davis & Wilson, 2000), as indicated by participants' constant proclamations of being satisfied with their job and school selection. These factors were examples of intrinsic motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) that guided teachers toward career longevity.

The result of the objective data for the SPES' total score and the participants' intrinsic motivation enabled these teachers to realize one of the purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation--ownership of the learning program at the school, in this case, teacher ownership of students' educational plan.

*Null Hypothesis One (HO₂).* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of impact empowerment between teachers working at charter schools

managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

An ANOVA was used to analyze the SPES' impact subscale score. The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, were presented in Table 15. The ANOVA, Table 16, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .003$, $p = .95$, effect size=.008. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level. Therefore, considering the results of the ANOVA, the second null hypothesis was not rejected.

*Research Hypothesis Two (H₂)*. Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived impact empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. Analyzed qualitative data (responses to interview question eight) for participants' perceived perceptions of impact empowerment did not support this research hypothesis.

Participants' responses to the eighth interview question suggested that charter schoolteachers' perceptions of their impact on the overall operation of the school were not higher based on a specific management model. In fact, the responses reflected no appreciative differences in participants' experiences and realities of empowerment levels and/or opportunities at their school. Therefore, participants' responses supported the retention of the second null hypothesis.

*Discussion Two*. The results of the quantitative data analyzed for the null hypothesis (HO₂) were consistent with the results of the qualitative data analyzed for the research hypothesis (H₂). Participants' responses reflected that teachers associated perceptions of impact within the school as their involvement with students. The participants, regardless

of management model, expressed that their major impact primarily focused on their work with students, within the classroom or extracurricular activities. Working with students was an area participants could control with ease. Principals authorized teachers to move forward with the task of educating students. Maslow (as cited in Hersey & Blanchard, 1993), suggested that employees, in this case, teachers, were able to assume control over their work (task) environment and, therefore, received personal satisfaction of social, esteem, and self-actualization in their workplace. Teachers' job satisfaction at this level was more intrinsic than extrinsic.

However, participants also emphasized opportunities to assume leadership roles in creating and conducting professional development activities for colleagues. A collegiate environment existed among and between teachers partly because of the concerted efforts of all teachers for the good of the school and especially the students. According to Conley and Muncey (1999), this collegiate environment was called the teacher professionalism movement, a means where teachers would be empowered to make contributions to the overall operations of the school. These teachers were able to find their niche and share their area of expertise, i.e., sponsorship of students' extra curricular activities, sharing and modeling lessons, and training other teachers.

The result of the objective data for the SPES' impact subscale suggested that participants' responses gave value and/or brought realization to one of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation, opportunities for teachers to have new opportunities and ownership of the learning program at the school. Again, participants' responses to the eighth interview question supported the retention of the second null hypothesis.

*Null Hypothesis Three (HO₃).* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of competence empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

The level of perceived competence was aligned with three subscales on the SPES: (a) professional growth, (b) status, and (c) self-efficacy. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived level of competence in this study, an ANOVA for each of the aforementioned subscales was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment.

The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, for the SPES' subscale, professional growth, were presented in Table 17. The ANOVA, Table 18, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .038$, $p = .864$, effect size=1.528. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level.

The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, for the SPES' subscale, status, were presented in Table 19. The ANOVA, for the status subscale, Table 20, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .653$, $p = .007$, effect size=0.109. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level.

The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, for the SPES' subscale, self-efficacy, were presented in Table 21. The ANOVA, for the self-efficacy subscale, Table 22, did not reveal a statistically significant

difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = 1.795$, $p = .018$, effect size=0.092. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level.

The average effect size 0.58 of the mean scores for the subscales of professional growth, status, and self-efficacy (competence) was less than one point, which means that the effect size was non-existent. Therefore, considering the results of the ANOVAs, the third null hypothesis was not rejected.

*Research Hypothesis Three (H₃).* Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived competence empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. Analyzed qualitative data (responses to the ninth interview question) did not support this research hypothesis.

Participants' responses to the ninth interview question suggested that charter schoolteachers' perceptions of their level of competence were not higher based on a specific management model. The responses reflected no appreciative differences in participants' experiences and realities of empowerment levels and/or opportunities at their school. Therefore, participants' responses supported the retention of the third null hypothesis.

*Discussion Three.* The results of the quantitative data analyzed for the null hypothesis (HO₃) were consistent with the results of the qualitative data analyzed for the research hypothesis (H₃). Participants' responses, regardless of management model, were consistent in expressing the support teachers received from principals and other administrators at their schools regarding their attendance to professional growth activities, within or outside the boundaries of the school. Administrators were willing to

invest school funds to meet registration and travel responsibilities that accompanied many professional development opportunities.

Participants indicated that teachers developed an internal system of interdependence between each other and relied on the expertise of colleagues to fill any academic or instructional gaps they had. These teachers developed curriculum, modeled lessons, selected materials and supplies, and served as teacher trainers whenever the need occurred. These activities allowed novice, experienced, and master teachers to create a professional bond that resulted in mutual respect and status within the school. As a result, teachers were able to exhibit their technical skills and levels of competence within the school's environment.

Teachers' perception of their self-efficacy was also enhanced by participating, receiving, and interacting with their colleagues in structured and/or informal settings. Characteristics of acquiring professional development opportunities, status, and self-efficacy intersected from many directions. Bandura (1997) suggested that interacting with colleagues in formal or informal discourse would help teachers realize their level of competence. Colleagues can validate one's worth in different settings. These teachers created venues to highlight the strengths of colleagues and to minimize the resistance to go to others for assistance. Short and Greer (2002) offered that teachers' professional growth included opportunities to grow and develop professionally, learn continuously, and expand their skills through school site experiences.

Teachers must construct their acquisition of knowledge through involvement, interaction, collaboration, and negotiation in order to teach and learn something meaningful (Vermette et al., 2001). Participants' adopted this theory as they created

opportunities to continue their acquisition of knowledge. Charter schoolteachers represent a small subset of educators when compared to teachers in traditional public schools. Therefore, many charter schoolteachers find comfort with each other, regardless of management model.

In this study, participants' responses to competence (professional growth, status, and self-efficacy) levels were confined to the boundaries within the school, and more specifically to their classrooms. The researcher noted that the participants did not indicate any aspirations beyond the classroom. These participants were focused on doing the best job to help students learn. Charter schools were basically viewed as an institution operating in a vacuum, with the exception of input from the sponsoring agency. They were different from traditional public schools that operated as a collective group, providing opportunities for professional growth and advancement at many levels due to attrition of personnel through promotions, leaves, retirement, relocations, and other mechanisms. Participants expressed that there were very little personnel attrition through transfers, resignations, or retirements on the part of teachers, administrators, and staff. Overall, their staff was happy and content. Therefore, charter schoolteachers did not see many opportunities to advance professionally to another position within or outside of the school.

The result of the objective data for the competence subscale verified that participants' responses to interview questions gave value to one of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation, opportunities for teachers to have new opportunities at the school. These opportunities included show casing their area(s) of expertise and sharing that expertise with others, as well as receiving benefits from the

expertise of others. Again, participants' responses to the ninth question supported the retention of the third null hypotheses.

*Null Hypothesis Four (HO₄)*. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of meaningful empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

The level of perceived meaningfulness was aligned with the SPES' subscale, decision making. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived level of meaningfulness in this study, an ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment for the decision making subscale. The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, were presented in Table 24. The ANOVA, Table 25, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .124$, $p = .726$, effect size=0.065. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 level. Therefore, considering the result of the ANOVA, the fourth null hypothesis was not rejected.

*Research Hypothesis Four (H₄)*. Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs will reflect higher levels of perceived meaningful empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. Analyzed qualitative data (responses to interview question 10) did not support this research hypothesis.

Participants' responses to the 10th interview question suggested that charter schoolteachers' perceptions of their meaningfulness or the decision making in the overall operation of the charter school were not higher based on a specific management model.

The responses reflected no appreciative differences in participants' experiences and realities of empowerment levels and/or opportunities at their school. Therefore, participants' responses to the 10th interview question supported the rejection of the fourth null hypothesis.

*Discussion Four*. The results of the quantitative data analyzed for the null hypothesis ($HO_4$) were consistent with the results of the qualitative data analyzed for the research hypothesis ($H_4$). Participants' responses regarding decision making were basically confined to those issues that impacted the operation of their classroom, including making decisions that were in the best interest of students. Participants felt that most teachers were equipped to make decisions based on the degrees earned and the area of certification acquired.

Participants' were keen on making decisions regarding the direction and content of professional development options. According to their responses, principals were supportive, but basically deferred to teachers to seek possible and potential opportunities for professional development and then ask for administrative support when needed or required. In contrast, Greer and Short (2002) offered that decision making opportunities for teachers would be a departure from their classroom responsibilities and require additional commitment of their time. The findings of this study did not reflect such opportunities neither the desire to do so on the part of the participants at this time. One participant from a non-EMO managed school made the observation that many of the teachers at her school were young and committed to raising their families before advancing their careers.

The result of the objective data for the SPES' decision making subscale verified that participants' responses gave value to the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation, opportunities for teachers to experience new opportunities and have ownership of the learning program at the school. Again, participants' responses to the 10th question supported the retention of the fourth null hypothesis.

*Null Hypothesis Five (HO5).* There is no significant difference between the perceptions of choice empowerment between teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs as compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs.

The level of perceived choice was aligned with the SPES' subscale, autonomy. Therefore, in order to accurately measure the perceived level of choice in this study, an ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the management model and teacher empowerment for the autonomy subscale. The mean and standard deviation for each treatment group, EMO and non-EMO managed schools, were presented in Table 26. The ANOVA, Table 27, did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $F(1,99) = .278$, $p = .599$ effect size=0.093. Statistical significance differences were determined at the .05 levels. Therefore, considering the result of the ANOVA, the fifth null hypothesis was not rejected.

*Research Hypothesis Five (H5).* Teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMO will reflect higher levels of perceived choice empowerment than teachers working at charter schools managed by EMOs. Analyzed qualitative data (responses to interview question 11) did not support the research hypothesis.

Participants' responses to the 11th interview question revealed that there were no appreciative differences in participants' realities and experiences of empowerment levels and/or opportunities at their school. Therefore, participants' responses to the 11th interview question supported the retention of the fifth null hypothesis.

*Discussion Five.* The results of the quantitative data analyzed for the null hypothesis ($HO_5$) were consistent with the results of the qualitative data analyzed for the research hypothesis ($H_5$). There were very little differences in participants' responses to interview question 10 and question 11. Participants equated their ability to make decisions as the same as having the autonomy to control and direct the order of their classroom. Empowerment, as described by Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1999), was the ability of individuals to become self-reliant and proactive; therefore, seizing the moment to plan a task rather than waiting to receive cues and/or directions from the leader, in this case, the principal. This was the type of empowerment participants' wanted and received from their principals in order to control the inner workings of their classroom. In a similar study conducted by Crawford (2001) to explore teachers' perceptions of decision making and autonomy between teachers in traditional public schools and charter schools, the results also suggested that there were no significant differences between the two groups.

The result of the objective data for the autonomy subscale verified that participants' responses gave value to one of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter Schools (2002) legislation, opportunities for teachers to have new opportunities and ownership of the learning program at the school. Again, participants' responses to the 11th interview question supported the retention of the fifth null hypotheses.

## Conclusion

This investigation was limited in scope; however, the results strongly suggested that there were no differences between charter schoolteachers' empowerment levels at their school site based on a specific management model, educational management organizations (EMO) compared to non-EMO. The comparative analysis of this investigation did not present any data that represented extreme or moderate opinions and/or opportunities that would create a clear distinction between the two management models and the ability to empower one group of teachers compared to another group.

The investigation of this study suggested to the researcher that charter schoolteachers were faced with implementing a new reform initiative without the benefits of developing curriculum unique to their vision or mission. It further suggested that teachers were not involved in decision making outside of their classrooms. Based on the purposes and the spirit of Florida's Charter School (2002) legislation, as communicated to parents, community leaders, governmental agencies, grassroots organizations, and educators, charter schoolteachers' levels of empowerment were not as sophisticated or advanced as the researcher had envisioned. The management of charter schools was not an inclusive model of management as many would ascribe to or describe.

Charter schools were promoted as a new educational reform model that would provide new opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program (Charter Schools, 2002). Green (2001) suggested that educational reform should redefine the roles of superintendents, principals, and teachers. This redefinition should reflect how new reform efforts should change the way school personnel make instructional decisions and decisions that impact the governance of the school. However, this investigation failed

to identify any creative curriculum design models and instructional strategies. Teachers implemented a traditional curriculum model, partly because of the many local, state, and federal required mandates that consumed teachers' contact hours with students. This investigation also failed to identify any impact that charter schoolteachers had on the governance of the school. The charter schools resembled a traditional public school where the management model was similar to a school-based budget model; meaning the principal was in control of the school's budget and staff without any assistance from the region or district offices.

During the past 20 years, reformers (Mayo, 2002; Sherrill, 1999) agreed that teacher quality and teacher leadership would lead to school improvements efforts. Sherrill further stated that the roles of teachers were expanding and there were three major phases that would assist in this expansion: (a) teacher preparation, (b) induction, and (c) ongoing professional development. The participants in this study all agreed that these phases were available to them via administrative support or personal commitment and/or goal. These participants were eager to expand their knowledge base, either within the boundaries of the charter school or at external institutions of higher learning.

It was clear that charter schoolteachers had easy access to their administrators and were able to make recommendations for school improvement or other issues that they deemed important. However, most of these recommendations were not made in a structured environment, e.g., faculty- or school-related committee meeting. These recommendations were received at any time and at any location that were convenient for both parties. Principals tended to respond positively to well thought-out recommendations and suggestions made by teachers.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Scanlon (as cited in Baron, 1983) developed the concept of participative decision making; it was later known as the Scanlon Plan. It was a plan that encouraged workers to submit suggestions and make recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the company. This method of participative decision making continued to serve it's purpose in 2007 at charter schools and perhaps traditional public schools as well.

Currently, there is a shortage of teachers nationwide; the state of Florida is no exception. Charter schoolteachers had the option to work in traditional public schools. However, many of them were intrinsically motivated to work at a charter school, even though most traditional public schools had more opportunities for advancement and empowered positions outside of the classroom. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) suggested that intrinsic motivation was tied directly to the realization of empowerment. Therefore, charter schoolteachers, at this point in their careers, felt empowered and satisfied with their jobs. These teachers were satisfied with the level of empowerment they possessed-- total control of their classroom and students' educational plan. They were not tempted by external motivation, e.g., higher pay, benefits, etcetera.

## Recommendations

*Further Research*

This study was very limited in scope and context of a growing phenomenon of educational reform that give parents and students educational options. Central to these options were qualified teachers providing educational services to students, while advancing their self-worth through the lens of others, e.g., administrators, colleagues, parents, students, communities, etcetera. One's self-worth can be established through

levels of empowerment earned and/or received as a result of demonstrated competence and readiness.

Miami-Dade County has seen a tremendous growth in the number of charter schools in the past five years, which resulted in more charter schoolteachers with varying experiences. Currently, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has 57 charter schools: elementary, middle, K-8, and senior high schools, as compared to the 27 charter schools at the initiation of this study. This represents a growth of 30 or 47% additional charter schools sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Therefore, further research studies are needed to expand the scope of charter schools engaging educational management organizations and if these entities have any correlation to empowering charter schoolteachers.

It is recommended that studies be conducted to investigate this study further with consideration of the following parameters:

1. Expand the sample of the study to include a larger selection of participants and include elementary, middle, K-8, and senior high school charter schoolteachers.

2. Expand, to the extent possible, the population sample to include more diversity of gender and ethnicity.

3. Include charter schoolteachers' demographic data as an integral part of the study and findings.

4. Conduct a longitudinal study to determine if levels of empowerment increase based on teachers' seniority at the charter school.

5. Define management models that represent non-educational management organizations.

6. Consider student achievement as a factor associated with teacher empowerment and management model.

*Implication for Practice*

There were 11 purposes outlined in Florida's Charter School (2002) legislation. Many of these purposes stressed improved student learning using different and innovative learning methods. It is important to note that many elementary charter schools are making positive grades based on the results of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, with little or no new innovations.

One of the primary purposes of Florida's Charter School legislation was opportunities for teachers to have new opportunities and ownership of the learning program at the school. The Florida Legislators should review the statute to ensure that all purposes intended through the Charter School legislation are being upheld, specifically new opportunities for teachers. According to the results of this study, charter schoolteachers have ownership of the learning program within the established boundaries of the sponsoring agency.

Additionally, this study did not reveal any new opportunities for teachers, that is, teachers were doing the job that they were trained and prepared to do, teach students. This researcher did not observe, nor did the charter schoolteachers emphasize in their responses, any involvement in new opportunities to impact the charter school. Clearly, there were no indications of teachers empowered to make relevant decisions to the overall operation of the schools. However, these charter schoolteachers were satisfied with their level of empowerment.

## Summary

This research study resulted in determining that there were no significant differences between the perceived levels of charter schoolteachers' perception of empowerment at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to charter schools managed independently of EMOs. Based on the responses from the School Participant Empowerment Scale survey and responses from interviews of 12 charter schoolteachers, representing both management models (EMOs and non-EMOs), they were satisfied with their level of empowerment.

Charter schoolteachers' empowerment resided within the boundaries of their classroom. They were empowered to be the managers of their classrooms, making decisions that would impact student learning, including the selection of materials and supplies, instructional strategies and techniques, curriculum design, and students' educational plan.

This study added to the current base of literature that relates to charter schoolteachers, empowerment, and educational management organizations. These topics were linked together throughout the study. The results of this study will add an additional dimension to each of the aforementioned topics:

1. Charter schoolteachers' personal experiences and realities of empowerment;

2. Empowerment defined within a limited scope and context with satisfactory outcomes; and

3. Educational management organizations' impact of empowering teachers or lack of impact.

Finally, this study revealed that the management model had no impact on charter schoolteachers' levels of empowerment. The management model appeared to have been a seamless entity that operated in the background or behind the scenes rather than in the forefront of teachers' areas of responsibilities.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A

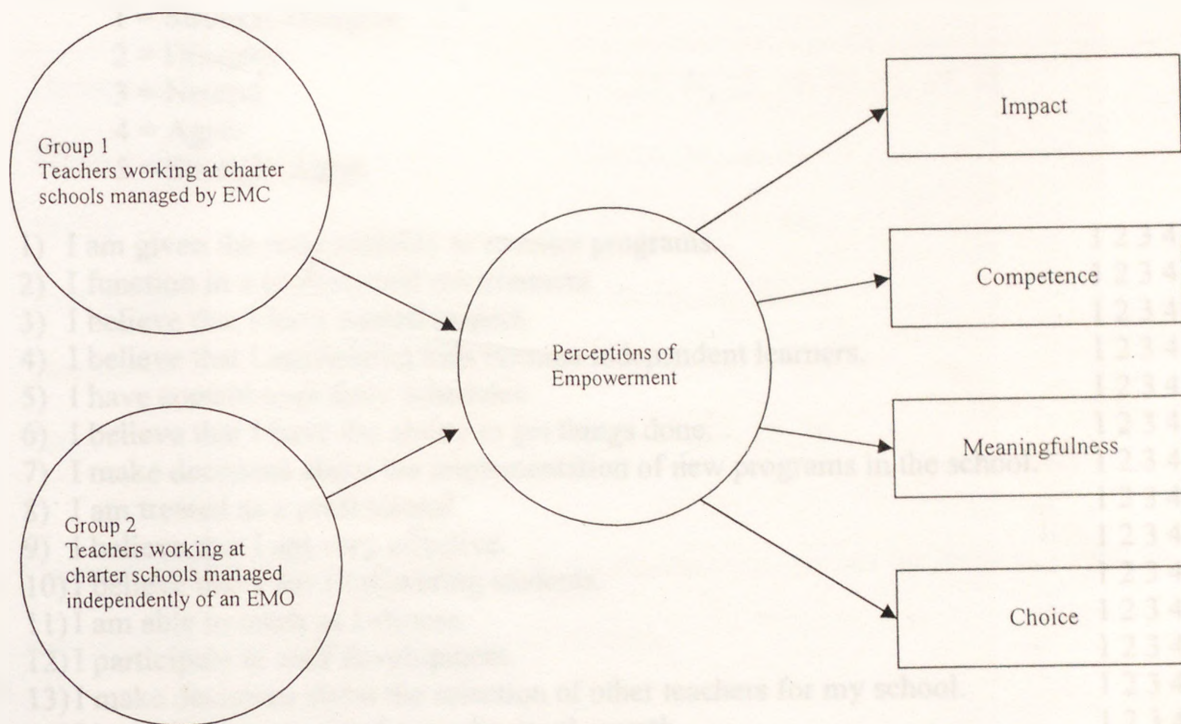*Figure 1:* Conceptual framework

Independent variables                    Dependent variables

Target participants                      Intrinsic cognitive
                                         empowerment factors

Appendix B

School Participant Empowerment Scale

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

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

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

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) I am given the responsibility to monitor programs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2) I function in a professional environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3) I believe that I have earned respect. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4) I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5) I have control over daily schedules. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6) I believe that I have the ability to get things done. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7) I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8) I am treated as a professional. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9) I believe that I am very effective. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10) I believe that I am empowering students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11) I am able to teach as I choose. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12) I participate in staff development. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13) I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14) I have the opportunity for professional growth. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15) I have the respect of my colleagues. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16) I feel that I am involved in an important program for children. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17) I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18) I believe that I am having an impact. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19) I am involved in school budget decisions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20) I work at a school where kids come first. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21) I have the support of my colleagues. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22) I see students learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23) I make decisions about curriculum. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24) I am a decision maker. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25) I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 26) I am given the opportunity to continue learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 27) I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 28) I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 29) I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

30) I can determine my own schedule.    1 2 3 4 5
31) I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.    1 2 3 4 5
32) I perceive that I am making a difference.    1 2 3 4 5
33) Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.    1 2 3 4 5
34) I believe that I am good at what I do.    1 2 3 4 5
35) I can plan my own schedule.    1 2 3 4 5
36) I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students.    1 2 3 4 5
37) My advice is solicited by others.    1 2 3 4 5
38) I have the opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.    1 2 3 4 5

| Subscale | Items |
| --- | --- |
| Decision making | 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38 |
| Professional Growth | 2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 31 |
| Status | 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 34 |
| Self Efficacy | 4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 32 |
| Autonomy | 5, 11, 17, 23 |
| Impact | 6, 12, 18, 24, 29, 36 |

Calculate the mean for each subscale by totaling circled responses for items in a subscale and divide by the number of items in the subscale.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Project: An Investigation of Charter Schoolteachers' Perception of Empowerment at Charter Schools Managed by Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) As Compared to Charter Schools Managed Independently of EMOs

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Position of Interviewee: _____

Interviewee's Code: _____

1.    The purpose of this research study is to investigate if there is a significant difference between charter schoolteachers' perceived level of empowerment for teachers working at charter schools managed by an educational management organization compared to those teachers working at charter schools managed independently of an educational management organization.

2.    Elementary (K-5) charter schoolteachers will be the targeted population to participate in this study. The study is a mixed method design that will involve quantitative data collection followed by the collection of qualitative data to support the analysis of the quantitative data. Approximately 130 charter schoolteachers will provide responses to the School Participant Empowerment Scale. However, only 12 of those charter schoolteachers will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview to answer open-ended questions.

3.    Your participation in this study will be confidential. The use of a tape recorded is to ensure that the researcher capture and transcribe your exact responses. Once the researcher transcribes your responses, you will be given an opportunity to review them for accuracy. In addition, your responses will be coded in order to maintain continuity and integrity of the analyses.

4.    The interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

5.    I will now turn on the tape recorder and identify you as participant (insert code).

Research questions:

1.    How would you describe teacher empowerment?

2.    Are you a proponent of teachers being empowered? Please explain your position.

3.    What makes you feel empowered at your school site? Explain.

4.    What makes you feel unempowered at your school site? Explain.

5.    Who is the responsible person or administrator at your school site to empower teachers? Explain.

6.    Describe the level of teacher empowerment at your school.

7.    How would you improve or increase the level of teacher empowerment at your school site?

8.    What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that impact the overall operation of your school? (Impact)

9.    What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that allow them to exhibit their technical skills with confidence in the overall operation of your school? (Competence)

10.    What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that adds value to the overall operation of your school? (Meaningfulness)

11.    What activities are teachers involved in or responsible for that provide for teacher autonomy and support the overall operation of your school? (Choice)

Appendix D

Permission Verification

**From:** Paula Short [PShort@tbr.state.tn.us]
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2003 2:41 PM
**To:** 'Holt, Helen'
**Subject:** RE: School Participant Empowerment Scale
Helen:

The attached file contains the instrument and scoring guide. The following article provides the psychometrics for the instrument. Let me know if you need anything else.

Short, P. M., & Rinehart, J. S. (1992). School Participant Empowerment Scale: Assessment of level of participant empowerment. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 54(4), 950-961.

Paula

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615-366-3903 (fax)
pshort@tbr.state.tn.us

-----Original Message-----
**From:** Holt, Helen [mailto:HoltH@sbab.dade.k12.fl.us]
**Sent:** Thursday, May 01, 2003 1:24 PM
**To:** 'shortp@umsystem.edu'
**Subject:** School Participant Empowerment Scale

Good Afternoon Dr. Short:

Thank you so much for returning my telephone call. I am an Administrative Director for Personnel Employment and Staffing for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Additionally, I am a graduate student at Barry University seeking an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. I have submitted my Intent to Submit a Proposal for review and hopefully approval. I will continue to refine my dissertation topic...An Investigation of Charter Schoolteachers' Perceptions of Empowerment at Charter Schools Managed by Educational Management Organizations Compared to Charter Schools Managed Independently.

I am requesting permission to use your School Participant Empowerment Scale as an instrument to collect quantitative data. In addition, if you could direct me to any literature that addresses the validity and reliability of the scale, I would be very appreciative. You may email me at the above email address or holth@bellsouth.net. My mailing address is:

Helen Holt
8907 NW 194 Terrace
Miami, FL 33018
(305) 995-7478 (WK)
(305) 995-7402 (WK Fax)
(305) 829-3307 (HM)
(305) 829-2940 (HM Fax)

Appendix E

Document Checklist

| Documents | Teacher Empowerment Strategies/Opportunities | *Comments* |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty Handbook | | |
| School Improvement Plan | | |
| Professional Development Plan | | |
| Charter School Proposal | | |
| Other | | |

BARRY UNIVERSITY
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER CONSENT FORM

Appendix F

Instructional Leader Consent Form

Date, 2004

Dear Participating Charter School Instructional Leader:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is "An Investigation of Charter Schoolteachers' Perceptions of Empowerment at Charter Schools Managed by Educational Management Organizations as Compared to Charter Schools Managed Independently." The research is being conducted by Helen Holt, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of education.

The aims of the research are to determine: (a) Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs? and (b) Do charter schoolteachers realize an increased level of empowerment based on the management model at the charter school? In accordance with these aims, participants in this study will include: (a) 19 instructional leaders (principals) from charter schools with at least 100 students enrolled, (b) approximately 130 elementary (K-5) teachers, (c) and 12 teachers assigned to teach third or fourth grade students.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to do the following: read and sign the Instructional Leader Informed Consent Form, allow access to consenting teacher participants, and to school site operational documents, such as, the faculty handbook and the school improvement and professional development plans. The process for completing these documents should take approximately 30 minutes.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects on your employment. Should you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed forms and return in the self-addressed and stamped envelope to the researcher within five days receipt of said documents. Should you decline this invitation, please write at the top of the consent form "I do not wish to participate" and return as indicated above.

There are no known potential psychological, physical, and/or social risks or harm linked to this research. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment. The results of the study may also provide vital information of teacher

empowerment and the overall operations of schools to charter school instructional leaders and other stakeholders.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and the names of the charter schools or the participants will not be used in the study. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Your signed consent form will be kept separately from the data in a locked file. Research data and your signed consent form will be destroyed after five years of the study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Helen Holt, at (305) 829-3307, my supervisor, Dr. Carmen McCrink, at (305) 899-3702, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Nildy Polanco, at (305) 899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

Voluntary Consent

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this study by Helen Holt and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment.

_____     _____
*Signature of Participant*          *Date*

_____     _____          _____     _____
*Researcher*                            *Date*              *Witness*                                          *Date*

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)

Appendix G

Survey Participant Consent Form

Dear Participating Charter Schoolteacher:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is "An Investigation of Charter Schoolteachers' Perceptions of Empowerment at Charter Schools Managed by Educational Management Organizations as Compared to Charter Schools Managed Independently." The research is being conducted by Helen Holt, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of education.

The aims of the research are to determine: (a) Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs? and (b) Do charter schoolteachers realize an increased level of empowerment based on the management model at the charter school? In accordance with these aims, participants in this study will include: (a) 19 instructional leaders (principals) from charter schools with at least 100 students enrolled, (b) approximately 130 elementary (K-5) teachers, (c) and 12 teachers assigned to teach third or fourth grade students.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to do the following: read and sign the Survey Informed Consent Form, complete the Demographic Data form, and the School Participant Empowerment Scale. The process for completing these documents should take approximately 30 minutes.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects on your employment. Should you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed forms and return in the self-addressed and stamped envelope to the researcher within five days receipt of said documents. Should you decline this invitation, please write at the top of the consent form "I do not wish to participate" and return as indicated above.

There are no known potential psychological, physical, and/or social risks or harm linked to this research. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment. The results of the study may also provide vital information of teacher empowerment and the overall operations of schools to charter school instructional leaders and other stakeholders.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and the names of the charter schools or the participants will not be used in the study. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Your signed consent form will be kept separately from the data in a locked file. Research data and your signed consent form will be destroyed after five years of the study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the

study, you may contact me, Helen Holt, at (305) 829-3307 or (305) 995-7478, my supervisor, Dr. Carmen McCrink, at (305) 899-3702, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Avril Brenner, at (305) 899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

**Voluntary Consent**

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this study by Helen Holt and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment.

_____          _____

*Signature of Participant*          *Date*

_____          _____

*Researcher*          *Date*          *Witness*          *Date*

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)

Appendix H

Demographic Survey

*Participant Code:* _____

Please respond to the following:

1. Gender ❑ Female ❑ o Male ❑

2. Ethnicity ❑ African American ❑ Hispanic ❑ White

❑ Asian Pacific Islander ❑ Other

3. Educational Levels ❑ Bachelors ❑ Masters ❑ Specialist ❑ Doctorate

❑ Other

4. Number of years of teaching experience _____

5. Number of years teaching at a charter school _____

6. Area(s) of certification _____

7. Number of students enrolled in your school _____

Elementary Level Coverage

❑ Elementary Education (grades K-6)
❑ Pre-kindergarten/Primary Education (age 3 through grade 3)
❑ Preschool Education (birth through age 4)

Middle Level Coverage

❑ Middle Grades English (grades 5-9)
❑ Middle Grades General Science (grades 5-9)
❑ Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum (grades 5-9)
❑ Middle Grades Mathematics (grades 5-9)
❑ Middle Grades Social Science (grades 5-9)

Secondary Level Coverage

❑ Drama (grades 6-12)
❑ English (grades 6-12)
❑ Journalism (grades 6-12)
❑ Mathematics (grades 6-12)
❑ Speech (grades 6-12)
❑ Social Science (broad field; grades 6-12)

Science Areas

❑ Biology (grades 6-12)
❑ Chemistry (grades 6-12)
❑ Earth-space Science (grades 6-12)
❑ Physics (grades 6-12)

Elementary and Secondary Coverage

❑ Art (grades K-12)
❑ Athletic Coaching (grades K-12)
❑ Computer Science (grades K-12)
❑ Dance (grades K-12)
❑ English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL; grades K-12)
❑ Health (grades K-12)
❑ Humanities (grades K-12)
❑ Music (grades K-12)
❑ Physical Education (grades K-12)
❑ Reading (grades K-12)

Foreign Language Areas

❑ Chinese (grades K-12)
❑ French (grades K-12)
❑ German (grades K-12)
❑ Greek (grades K-12)
❑ Hebrew (grades K-12)
❑ Italian (grades K-12)
❑ Japanese (grades K-12)
❑ Latin (grades K-12)
❑ Portuguese (grades K-12)
❑ Russian (grades K-12)
❑ Spanish (grades K-12)

Exceptional Student Education Areas

☐ Exceptional Student Education (grades K-12)
☐ Hearing Impaired (grades K-12)
☐ Speech-Language Impaired (grades K-12)
☐ Visually Impaired (grades K-12)
☐ Educational Media Specialist (grades K-12)
☐ Guidance and Counseling (grades PK-12)
☐ School Psychologist (grades PK-12)
☐ School Social Worker (grades PK-12)

Other Areas:

_____

_____

Appendix I

Interview Participant Consent Form

November 16, 2006

Dear Participating Charter Schoolteacher:

Your participation in a research project is requested. The title of the study is "An Investigation of Charter Schoolteachers' Perceptions of Empowerment at Charter Schools Managed by Educational Management Organizations as Compared to Charter Schools Managed Independently." The research is being conducted by Helen Holt, a student in the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of education.

The aims of the research are to determine: (a) Is there a difference between the levels of perceived empowerment of teachers working at charter schools managed by educational management organizations (EMOs) as compared to teachers working at charter schools managed independently of EMOs? and (b) Do charter schoolteachers realize an increased level of empowerment based on the management model at the charter school? In accordance with these aims, participants in this study will include: (a) 19 instructional leaders (principals) from charter schools with at least 100 students enrolled, (b) approximately 130 elementary (K-5) teachers, (c) and 12 teachers assigned to teach third or fourth grade students.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to do the following: read and sign the Interview Participant Informed Consent Form and participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher. The completion of the consent form and the scheduled interview should not exceed 45 minutes.

Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects on your employment. Should you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed forms and return in the self-addressed and stamped envelope to the researcher within five days receipt of said documents. Should you decline this invitation, please write at the top of the consent form "I do not wish to participate" and return as indicated above.

There are no known potential psychological, physical, and/or social risks or harm linked to this research. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our understanding of charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment. The results of the study may also provide vital information of teacher empowerment and the overall operations of schools to charter school instructional leaders and other stakeholders.

As a research participant, information you provide will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Any published results of the research will refer to group averages only and the names of the charter schools or the participants will not be used in the study. Data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Your signed consent form will be kept separately from the data in a locked file. Research data and

your signed consent form will be destroyed after five years of the study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Helen Holt, at (305) 829-3307, my supervisor, Dr. Carmen McCrink, at (305) 899-3702, or the IRB point of contact, Ms. Nildy Polanco, at (305) 899-3020. If you are satisfied with the information provided and are willing to participate in this research, please signify your consent by signing this consent form.

Voluntary Consent

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature and purposes of this study by Helen Holt and that I have read and understand the information presented above, and that I have received a copy of this form for my records. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this experiment.

_____     _____

*Signature of Participant*          *Date*

_____     _____          _____          _____

*Researcher*          *Date*          *Witness*          *Date*

(Witness signature is required only if research involves pregnant women, children, other vulnerable populations, or if more than minimal risk is present.)

Appendix J

Follow Up Letter

Date, 2004

Dear Potential Research Participant,

On (insert date), you were mailed a packet of information requesting your participation in a research study conducted by Helen Holt, a graduate student at the Adrian Dominican School of Education at Barry University. As of the above date, the researcher has not received your response as to whether or not you will consent to participate. Please consider participating, as it will add to the body of existing literature regarding charter schoolteachers' perceptions of empowerment.

Should you decide to participate, please complete the surveys and return to the researcher in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided. Should you decline the invitation to participate, write "do not wish to participate" at the top of the surveys and return them to the researcher as indicated above.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me at 305 829-3307 or 305 995-7478.

Sincerely,

Helen Holt
Graduate Student
Adrian Dominican School of Education
Barry University

Appendix K

Thank You Letter

Date, 2004

Dear Potential Interview Participant:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in a research study conducted by Helen Holt, a graduate student at the Adrian Dominican School of Education. As you know, the researcher was seeking the participation of 12 charter schoolteachers to interview to determine their realities and levels of empowerment at their work locations. The researcher has received the consent of 12 teacher participants for the aforementioned interviews; therefore, the population sample for this component of the study has been finalized.

Again, thank you for your support. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (305) 829-3307 or (305) 995-7478 or my supervisor, Dr. Carmen McCrink, at (305) 899-3702.

Sincerely,

Helen Holt
Doctoral Student
Adrian Dominican School of Education
Barry University