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Study To Investigate Self-Reported Teacher Absenteeism And Desire To Leave Teaching As They Relate To Teacher-Reported Teaching Satisfaction, Job-Related Stress, Symptoms Of Depression, Irrational Beliefs, And Self-Efficacy

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STUDY TO INVESTIGATE SELF-REPORTED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND DESIRE TO LEAVE TEACHING AS THEY RELATE TO TEACHER-REPORTED TEACHING SATISFACTION, JOB-RELATED STRESS, SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION, IRRATIONAL BELIEFS, AND SELF-EFFICACY

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in satisfaction of the Dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

STUDY TO INVESTIGATE SELF-REPORTED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND DESIRE TO LEAVE TEACHING AS THEY RELATE TO TEACHER-REPORTED TEACHING SATISFACTION, JOB-RELATED STRESS, SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION, IRRATIONAL BELIEFS, AND SELF-EFFICACY

by

GEORGINA RUTH GREEN

Advisor: Georgiana Shick Tryon, Ph.D.

This study aimed to examine teacher-reported absenteeism and intention to leave the profession by investigating the relationships between teachers’ demographic characteristics, self-rated teaching-related stress, job satisfaction, symptoms of depression, irrational beliefs, and self-efficacy. According to Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory of employee absenteeism, employees are absent from or leave their jobs because of personal factors that influence or are associated with their ability to attend work, and motivational factors that relate to job satisfaction. Teacher characteristics such as age, gender, number of children, ethnicity, education level, and years of teaching experience frequently relate to absenteeism and attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008, Bobbitt, Leich, Whitener, & Lynch, 1994; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Barkanic, & Mailsin, 1998; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Hafner & Owings, 1991; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988), and are included in this dissertation. A sample of 252 NYS teachers completed an online survey. Correlations existed between variables whereby lower job satisfaction contributed to teachers desire to take a sick day due to perceived teaching related stress. Depression and irrational beliefs were associated with less teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction and greater intention to leave the teaching profession. In this study, it seems that a
fairly high percentage of participants met suggested cut off score for symptoms of depression (approximately 40% of teachers). Regression analyses showed that as depression increased, the desire to take a day off work due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress also tended to increase. Irrational beliefs were also a significant predictor, of self-perceived, teaching-related stress, suggesting that as irrational beliefs increased, the desire to take a day off work due to stress also tended to increase. No significant relationships existed between self-efficacy, depression, irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction and participants’ years of experience and level of education. This study supports the existing research as well as Steers and Rhodes’ theory of absentee behavior and job-satisfaction (Ahlgren & Gadnib, 2011; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996).
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

When employees are frequently absent or leave their jobs, this causes a burden on the companies for which they work. According to the American Institute of Stress (2004), worker absenteeism, turnover, and attrition costs United States industry as a whole up to $300 billion annually. These financial losses are incurred because of the combined cost of loss of productivity in all areas of industry due to illness, accidents, and the cost of medical insurance.

Employee absence can take one of three forms: turnover, in which an employee takes a different position in the same field but at a different company; attrition, in which an employee leaves the field altogether; or absenteeism, in which an employee remains employed by the company but is frequently absent, often through the use of sick or personal days (Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2008; Johns, 2007). In the field of education, it is particularly salient to find solutions to turnover, attrition, and absenteeism (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008), as the burden of addressing teachers’ missed work and high turnover impairs school districts’ abilities to provide quality instruction and, ultimately, these issues are reflected in student performance (Norton, 1994). Even as school budgets are being cut, school districts spend a significant percentage of their resources to remedy these issues (American Association of School Administrators, 2010). The cost of paying for substitute teachers may be up to $2 billion per year (Norton, 1998).

According to The District Management Council (2004), using statistics from data obtained by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000), the total cost of teacher absenteeism annually is estimated to be $25.2 billion. This figure is derived from estimating the combined annual cost to school districts of not only paying for substitute salaries but also recruiting, administrative tasks, and absent teacher salaries (Jacobs &
Kritsonis 2007). The problem of teacher absenteeism is an increasing concern, and in one statewide study (Norton, 1994), 71% of school administrators stated that absenteeism is one of the leading problems they face in terms of financial costs and the logistical aspect of finding replacement teachers.

In terms of the effects of attrition, according to NCES (1997), almost 10% of teachers leave the profession before they complete their first year of teaching, and 20% of public school teachers leave teaching within the first three years. With nearly 30% of teachers leaving within the first five years and with higher attrition rates in more disadvantaged schools, teachers choose to leave their jobs at higher rates than do other professionals (NCES, 1998). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggested that teacher shortages exist because of teachers who leave the profession, rather than because too few individuals enter the teaching profession.

Several studies have explored the impact of teacher absenteeism on student learning. A study that focused on fourth grade reading scores established that teacher absenteeism has a negative impact on students (Miller, Murane, & Willet, 2007). Other earlier studies have supported this finding (e.g., O'Brien, Meszaros, & Pulliam, 1985; Summers & Raivets, 1982).

In the past there has been little research that examines teacher absenteeism, turnover (moving to another school), and attrition (leaving the profession). Recently, the National Center for Education Statistics conducted a nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS; data are collected every 4 years) and Teacher Follow-up Survey (Ingersoll, 2002). The purpose of the Teacher Follow-up Survey has been to determine how many teachers remained at the same school, moved to another school, or left the profession in the year following the administration of the SASS. The results of the most recent Teacher Follow-up Survey (Keigher, 2010), indicated that, of the 3,380,300 public school teachers who taught during the 2007–2008
school year, 84.5% remained at the same school (stayers), 7.6% moved to a different school (movers), and 8.0% left the profession (leavers) the following year. Among the 487,300 private school teachers who taught during the 2007–2008 school year, 79.2% were stayers, 4.9% were movers, and 15.9% were leavers. It is important to study factors associated with teacher absences and attrition (i.e., leaving the profession) so that educators can determine possible interventions to keep teachers in the classroom.

Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) widely cited theory of employee absenteeism states that employees are absent from or leave their jobs because of personal factors that influence or are associated with their ability to attend work, and motivational factors that relate to job satisfaction. Their theory of absenteeism posits that employee demographic factors can interfere with their ability or motivation to attend work. In the past, studies of teacher absenteeism and attrition have largely focused on teachers’ personal characteristics, such as experience and age (e.g., Bobbitt, Leich, Whitener, & Lynch, 1994; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Barkanic, & Mailsin, 1998; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Hafner & Owings, 1991; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988). Recently, meta-analysis of demographic characteristics related to teacher attrition (i.e., leaving the profession) by Borman and Dowling (2008) found that teachers who are younger, female, married, and White are significantly more likely to leave teaching than are teachers who are older, male, unmarried, and non-White. The authors speculated that child care duties might lead to young women leaving teaching, but they did not provide an explanation of ethnicity differences. According to a study from the National Education Association, half of all new U.S. teachers are likely to quit their jobs within the first five years due to poor working conditions and low salaries (Boe et al., 1997; Lambert, 2006). Studies of teacher absenteeism indicate that teachers with more absenteeism work longer hours,
are younger and less educated, and are less likely to also hold an administrative position (Pitts, 2010; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005).

Steers and Rhodes’ (1978, Rhodes and Steers, 1990) theory considers job satisfaction to be a major factor in employee absenteeism. Unfortunately, the most recent annual survey of American teachers (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013) indicates that teacher job satisfaction is at its lowest level in the last 25 years. Surveyed teachers indicated that their dissatisfaction related to less time to collaborate with other teachers, larger budget decreases in their schools, fewer professional development opportunities, and lessened opportunities to influence school decisions than did satisfied teachers. However, with the exception of this dissertation, which examined the relationship between teacher satisfaction and self-reported use of sick days, the association between teachers’ job satisfaction and absenteeism has received little study (e.g., Scott & Wimbush, 1991).

Another factor that may relate to teachers’ ability and motivation to attend work is their sense of job-related stress. Selye (1936) defines stress as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it” (p. 32). High levels of employee stress can have a substantial impact on organizations, and the consequences can include poor work performance; low job satisfaction; high levels of turnover; and high levels of lateness, absenteeism, and poor relationships among employees (Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997). Occupational stress has also been linked to health problems such as heart disease and chronic back pain (Bigos et al., 1991; Theorell & Karasek, 1996) and emotional distress such as symptoms of depression (Shaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009).

Schonfeld (1990b, 1996) found that the ongoing stressors of teachers’ jobs (e.g., unmotivated students, noise, overcrowded classrooms) had a greater effect on teachers’ job
satisfaction, motivation, and psychological distress (i.e., depressive and psychophysiological symptoms) than did episodic stressors (i.e., confrontations with unruly students) or being the victim of a crime. Mahan et al. (2010), however, found that both ongoing and episodic stressors were positively associated with symptoms of both anxiety and depression in secondary school teachers. The few studies that exist have found a positive relationship between teachers’ sense of job-related stress and absenteeism (Gaziel, 2004; Van Dick & Wagner, 2001).

Teachers’ sense of stress is often based on their interpretation of events as stressful. Commonly use teacher stress questionnaires leave the definition of stress to the participants (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995). Dryden and Ellis (2001) believed that occupational stress could be explained by people’s tendency to interpret events according to rigidly held irrational beliefs. Zingle and Anderson (1990) found that teachers’ stress scores were significantly related to their scores on a measure of irrational beliefs about teaching. It may be that the teachers’ irrational beliefs in general relate not only to their sense of stress but to teachers’ motivation to attend work.

Depressive symptoms could also relate to teacher absenteeism and motivation to continue in the profession. A series of studies by Schonfeld (1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000, 2001) showed that teachers’ job satisfaction and motivation to continue in the profession were negatively related to depressive and psychophysiological symptoms. Others (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Ferguson, Frost, & Hall, 2012) have obtained similar results, but as yet, there have been no studies that examined teachers’ depressive symptoms and absenteeism.

Finally, the belief that one is able to do one’s job (i.e., self-efficacy) is a personal factor that may be associated with teachers’ motivation and ability to attend work according to Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) model of employee absence. Thus far, only one
study (Imants & van Zoelen, 1995) has studied the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and absenteeism.

This dissertation aims to expand the body of research on teacher-reported absenteeism and intention to leave the profession by investigating their relationships to teacher demographic characteristics, teacher self-rated stress, job satisfaction, symptoms of depression, irrational beliefs, and teacher self-efficacy. Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory of occupational absenteeism would forecast that these teacher variables would predict teachers’ intention to leave teaching and their absenteeism. Although some studies (Bradley, Green, & Leeves, 2007; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Nguni, Sleegers, & Denessen, 2006; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Scott & Wimbush, 1991) have investigated some of these teacher variables as they relate to each other, no study has examined them in relationship to absentee behavior. The results may inform school psychologists on how to best support teachers in relation to improving teacher adjustment and retention.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the problems of teacher absenteeism and attrition, including a presentation of Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory of occupational absenteeism and a discussion of research on variables that relate to teacher absenteeism and attrition. The chapter begins with a definition of terms and a discussion of teacher absenteeism and its relationship to student performance. The chapter also examines school district policies and administrative perceptions of teacher absenteeism as well incentive programs to prevent and reduce absenteeism. The chapter then presents Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory and explores possible correlates of teacher absenteeism, including teacher demographics, teacher-rated job stress, depressive symptoms, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher irrational beliefs about teaching. This chapter ends with a description of the rationale for the study and the hypotheses to be tested.

Teacher Absence from the Classroom

Johns (2007) defines absenteeism as “an habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation” (p. 4). On average in the U.S., 5%–6% of school teachers are absent on any given school day, and teachers’ absence rate is approximately three times higher than that of managerial and professional employees (Miller, 2008; Podgursky, 2003). It is suggested that some reasons for teacher absence may be the contraction of illness from children whom they teach (Miller, 2008). Also, teachers tend to be women, and female employees tend to be absent more often than male employees in general (Ballou, 1996; Podgursky, 2003). Although one may presume that teachers who are absent from work are in fact ill, Imants and van Zoelen (1995) reported that, “…in one of the big Dutch cities teacher absenteeism on strictly medical grounds is
less than 20% of the total amount of teacher sickness absence” (p. 78). Thus, the reasons for teacher absence appear to go beyond sickness.

The terms teacher turnover and teacher attrition both refer to teachers leaving their current jobs. Further, teacher turnover describes the behavior of a teacher who leaves one position in a particular school for a position in another school or school district or who changes positions within the education system (e.g., becomes a coach or an administrator), and teacher attrition describes the behavior of a teacher who leaves the profession altogether (Miller, 2008). Although turnover and attrition have separate definitions, it is often difficult to differentiate between them and, for this reason, the distinction between turnover and attrition is not always clear in the literature (Miller, 2008). Part of the attrition-turnover confusion stems from the fact that teachers who leave teaching for a period of time may re-enter the profession in the future. It is also not clear if attrition rates in a particular school district accurately reflect attrition, because the percentage of teachers who leave the jurisdiction of one school district and transfer to another is often unrecorded by their previous employers (Miller, 2008). For example, teachers who leave the New York City (NYC) Department of Education (DOE) school system may be included in the DOE teacher attrition rates, but the percentage of these teachers who have transferred to school districts outside of the DOE is not known. For the purposes of this review of the literature, the terms turnover and attrition will be treated as synonymous to accommodate the discrepancies in the literature between how the phenomena are reported and to emphasize the fact that the causes and consequences of these behaviors appear to be similar (Rhodes & Steers, 1990).

Impact of teacher absence. Replacing teachers, whether they are absent for a day, leave the profession entirely, or simply leave for a new teaching job, is similarly expensive and time
consuming for the schools and administrators. Indeed, a study by Norton (1999) found that some principals reported spending up to 50% of their time devoted to personnel matters. Principals ranked selecting and recruiting staff and staff development as some of their most time consuming personnel-related activities (Norton, 1999). Imants and van Zoelin (1995) found that teachers in the Netherlands often have to teach the classes of their absent teachers.

The federal government developed the SASS (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006; NCES, 2006) in part to investigate turnover and attrition statistics on a national level. Specifically, the government wanted to gain clearer pictures of what happens to teachers when they transfer from one school district to another, why teachers leave the profession, and how likely they are to re-enter the profession. There is much that is still unknown and there are also issues with the way in which teacher turnover and attrition rates are reported (Miller, 2008). Further research will hopefully provide school districts with information they can use to reduce the number teachers who leave to take positions elsewhere and to understand the characteristics of teachers who choose to leave the field of teaching altogether.

Miller et al. (2007) measured teacher productivity in terms of student achievement using a sample of 285 elementary school teachers of 8,631 fourth-grade students in 75 schools in a large urban area. They found that teacher absence reduced students’ mathematics achievement substantially. This effect was greater when teacher absences were unexpected, because of the difficulty of finding reliable substitute teachers in a short period of time.

Nicholson et al. (2006) also found that student productivity decreases when it is difficult to find replacement staff. Reduced instructional intensity when a regular teacher is absent is one mechanism by which student achievement may be affected by teacher absences and, surprisingly, some states do not require substitute teachers to hold a bachelor’s degree (Varlas, 2001).
Moreover, under the No Child Left Behind Act, substitute teachers are exempted from teacher quality requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Disruption in routines and discontinuity of instruction are also thought to have negative effects on student achievement (Rundall, 1986). It is difficult for substitute teachers to provide differentiated instruction to students whom they do not know well because they lack knowledge of individual students’ skill levels. Even if they deliver a well-planned lesson, they may not use the same instructional strategies to which students have become accustomed. Overall, teacher absences may inhibit school districts’ attempts to implement consistent instructional strategies school wide.

Additionally, missed time scheduled for teacher team planning could undermine the purpose of planning times (Rundall, 1986). If teachers are not present at common planning times, those teachers who are absent may miss valuable collaboration to improve instruction, and because planning time is so scarce, even low rates of teacher absence could undermine its purpose. This implies that teachers’ absences may not only impact negatively on the students with whom they work directly, but also on the students taught by the teachers’ colleagues (Miller et al., 2007).

Previous research has identified the relationship between teacher absences and student achievement (Miller et al., 2007; Nicholson et al., 2006). However, these studies do not provide causal links between rates of teacher absenteeism and student achievement because they do not account for teachers’ level of skill and effort in teaching. If a high rate of teacher absenteeism is coupled with a lack of teaching skill or effort, it is difficult to estimate the impact of absenteeism alone on student achievement. It has also been theorized that teacher absences relate to student
absenteeism because teacher absences tend to be higher in schools with higher rates of student absences (Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, & Ehrenberg, 1991).

**Current ways to address teacher absenteeism.** Existing research on teacher absenteeism leaves many questions unanswered, and more research in this area is warranted. Indeed, although there have been studies to address the issue of teacher absenteeism, as well as a variety of programs meant to reduce teacher absence (Freeman & Brant, 1987; Jacob, 2010), there is no clear consensus on which method definitively produces the best results. Many of the programs that district administrators introduce as a means to reduce the use of high numbers of sick days and rates of absenteeism are incentive-based. One particular school district created an incentive whereby teachers could be paid approximately $50 a day for unused sick days if they took seven or less (Jacob, 2010). This policy reduced the average number of sick days used from approximately seven to five. However, the teachers’ union in this school district viewed this plan as creating an unhealthy and competitive climate, and the incentive plan was dropped by the district following pressure from the teachers’ union (Jacob, 2010). Other plans that consist of competitive incentives with monetary rewards for perfect attendance have been proposed (Freeman & Brant, 1987). Although monetary incentives may result in a minor reduction in absenteeism and an increase in budgetary savings, in the long-term, they do not address the issue of attrition and job satisfaction, and there are no longitudinal studies to date that address the validity or effectiveness of such incentive programs.

Other studies have concluded that incentive programs have no effect on teacher attendance (Madden et al., 1991). One study in which 60% of the school districts within New York State participated provides support for the provision of adequate sick leave, rather than a reduction in leave, as some administrative policies suggest, as the most effective means of
reducing absenteeism (Ehrenberg et al., 1991). Several empirical studies (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Ehrenberg et al., 1991; Norton, 1998) point to provisions that school districts and administrators can make to improve teacher absenteeism. Some provisions include providing guidelines and monitoring absenteeism, organizational supports and stress reduction training, and incentives and ‘buying back’ days to name a few (Ehrenberg et al., 1991; Norton, 1998; Pitkoff, 1993). The option to ‘buy back’ sick days lowers the annual usage of sick leave, and schools that designate a specific number of days for professional leave, conferences, and visitation have a lower usage of the actual days provided (Pitkoff, 1993). The only policy that appears to have a meaningful impact on absenteeism is to provide teachers with the option to accrue unused sick days and use them as needed, or receive remuneration for them at retirement (Ehrenberg et al., 1991).

Gaziel (2004) comments that there are problems with research on absences, because many studies do not differentiate between two types of absences: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary absences may include vacation or self-administered/uncertified sick days, whereas involuntary absences would include certified sickness leave with a doctor’s note, or attendance at a funeral, for example, and are uncontrollable. There is a variety of evidence to suggest that teachers use sick days at their own discretion, as rates of absence tend to be associated with the availability of leave provisions (Ehrenberg et al., 1991).

**Teacher Characteristics and Beliefs Related to Absenteeism and Attrition**

Studies of teacher absenteeism and attrition have examined various teacher characteristics in the hope of identifying those that might be associated with these behaviors. Identification of factors related to absenteeism and attrition could be used to inform policy decisions. Steers and Rhodes (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) developed a theory of employee absenteeism that serves
as a basis for much of today’s research on teacher absenteeism and attrition (e.g., Bradley, Green, & Leeves, 2007; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Nguni, Sleegers, & Denessen, 2006; Perrachione, Rosser, & Petersen, 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Scott & Wimbush, 1991). The model posits that employees are absent from or leave their jobs because of personal factors that influence or are associated with their ability to attend work and motivational factors that relate to job satisfaction.

**Demographics and professional qualifications.** Steers and Rhodes’ (1978, Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory suggests that teacher demographic characteristics are personal factors that relate to both absenteeism and attrition. Borman and Dowling (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 34 quantitative studies of teacher attrition. In general, they found that teachers who are younger, female, married, and White are significantly more likely to leave teaching than are teachers who are older, male, unmarried, and non-White. The results suggested that one reason that younger married women leave teaching is to have a child (i.e., those who reported having a new baby were almost seven times more likely to leave teaching than teachers who did not have a new baby). A literature review by Wayne (2000) also supports this conclusion.

Borman and Dowling (2008) noted that the relationship between teacher age and attrition “should be interpreted with considerable caution” (p. 397). Their data, and the work of others (Boe et al. 1997; Kirby & Grissmer, 1991), suggest a U-shaped distribution of teacher age and attrition. Younger teachers with the least experience are more likely to leave or express intent to leave the profession than are older teachers (Boe et al., 1997; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006), but the likelihood of a teacher leaving decreases substantially after he or she has been in the classroom for 4 to 5 years and then increases again markedly after 25 to 30 years in the
profession as teachers retire (Borman & Dowling, 2008). This relationship holds true for both general and special education teachers (Boe et al., 1997).

According to a study from the National Education Association, half of all new U.S. teachers are likely to quit their jobs within the first five years due to poor working conditions and low salaries (Boe et al., 1997; Lambert, 2006). Many other teachers transfer to other schools or seek different positions within education. Between 1987 and 1989, 173,000 teachers transferred from one public school to another (Boe et al., 1997) and, according to the NYC DOE statistics, approximately 50% of teachers leave their initial assignment in the first five years of their career (NCES, 1998). Because of the costs and efforts associated with hiring new teachers, in purely fiscal terms, it would be beneficial for schools to improve retention rates of new teachers.

Results of Boe et al.’s (1997) study demonstrate that teacher transfer and attrition have many commonalities with regard to teacher age and personal circumstances. High levels of mobility (both transfer and attrition) were most common for teachers who were under 40 years of age with no dependent children. Attrition and transfer were also more likely among teachers who had recently earned their degrees, who were not fully certified (Boe et al., 1997; Borman & Dowling, 2008), who were relatively inexperienced, and who sometimes had part-time positions and low salaries (Boe et al., 1997). These factors that characterize newer and younger teachers are also hallmarks of those who may be more willing to accept jobs in hard to staff urban schools (Amerin-Beardlesy, 2012). Results of Borman and Dowling’s (2008) meta-analysis indicated that attrition was more than twice as likely for teachers who held a science or math undergraduate degree than for teachers with undergraduate degrees in other academic areas. Elementary school teachers had a slightly higher likelihood of attrition than did secondary school teachers.
Steers and Rhodes’ (1978, Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory predicts that personal characteristics associated with teacher absenteeism are similar to those associated with teacher attrition. Research results tend to support this prediction. Pitts (2010) conducted a study of teacher absenteeism using three-year attendance data on over 1,700 teachers in 33 Virginia schools. She found that women, younger teachers, teachers with fewer years of teaching experience, and teachers in specialty schools had the highest numbers of absences. Pitts suggested that women might have more absences due to family issues, particularly child-related issues; older teachers might have fewer absences because they can purchase service credit on retirement using unused sick days; for the same reason, teachers with more years of service might want to accrue sick days for use at retirement; and teachers in specialty schools where pupils are transported from their regular schools for special education may feel less connection to their jobs.

Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005) studied teacher absence behavior over two years using a sample of 51,916 elementary and middle school teachers. They found that teachers who tended to be absent frequently worked longer hours, were younger and less educated, and were less likely to also hold an administrative position. In contrast to findings from previous studies, Kallio (2006) found that only one (i.e., number of children) of 11 teacher and school climate variables predicted teacher absences for 280 teachers in one school district during one school year.

To summarize, the inclusion of teacher demographic factors is important for any study of teacher absenteeism. Teacher characteristics such as age, gender, number of children, ethnicity, education level, and years of teaching experience frequently relate to absenteeism and attrition and are included as variables in this dissertation.
Job satisfaction. Steers and Rhodes’ (1978, Rhodes & Steers, 1990) model lists job satisfaction as a major factor in employee absenteeism. Abraham (2012) defines job satisfaction as “the extent to which employees like their work” (p. 27). Based on how employees perceive their work, they may develop either a positive or negative attitude toward their work environment (Ellickson, 2002). In general, job satisfaction improves employee engagement, which has been defined as “the degree to which workers feel job satisfaction and an emotional connection to the success of their business, resulting in improved productivity, innovation, and retention” (Abraham, 2012, p. 28).

The most recent annual MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013), conducted in late 2012, indicates a 23% drop in teacher satisfaction since 2008 when 62% of 1000 teachers surveyed said they were very satisfied with teaching as a career. Just 39% of teachers surveyed were very satisfied with teaching in 2012, the lowest level of teacher satisfaction in the past 25 years of the MetLife survey.

In one of the first studies of teacher job satisfaction, Engelking (1986) surveyed 442 teachers in the Northwestern U.S. She found that teachers placed a high value on the recognition of their efforts and achievements. Examples of recognition that they cited included verbal or written praise from parents, students, peers, and administrators; awards for performance from the administration or public; scholarships or grants for further education; newspaper articles recognizing an achievement; and gifts or tokens of appreciation. Teachers also gained high levels of job satisfaction from devising a new curriculum or program and having it accepted by peers and administration, observing other teachers’ success in student advancement, implementing a program or project themselves with positive results, and sharing ideas and methods with peers and observing their success in the classroom.
Teacher dissatisfaction occurred primarily as a result of poor relationships with students who were perceived as unwilling to accept teachers’ ideas and direction (Engelking, 1986). Dissatisfaction also stemmed from disappointment with students’ work quality; poor relationships with supervisors, peers, and/or parents; disagreement with school board policies; and lack of recognition for achievement (Engelking, 1986). Collie, Shapka, and Perry (2012) found that teacher job satisfaction was positively linked to input into decision making and adequate school resources. Their results are echoed in the results of the recent *MetLife* survey (Markow et al., 2013) that found that dissatisfied teachers reported less time to collaborate with other teachers, larger budget decreases in their schools, fewer professional development opportunities, and lessened opportunities to influence school decisions than did satisfied teachers.

The Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education conducted a comprehensive literature review of factors specifically affecting special education teacher retention and attrition rates (Billingsley, 2003), and attained findings that largely coincided with Engelking’s (1986) study. Variables that related to attrition for special education teachers included teacher characteristics and personal factors, teacher qualification, work environment factors, and affective reactions to work. Work environment factors associated with lower turnover rates included positive school climate and adequate support systems, particularly principal support. Problematic school factors, especially poor work climate and lack of administrative support were associated with low levels of job satisfaction and low levels of commitment.

Negative reactions to working conditions can lead to teacher withdrawal and eventually attrition (Certo & Fox, 2002). Cha (2008) analyzed data from the 1999-2000 SASS and follow-up data from the 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS). The TSF determined how many
teachers left the profession in the year following the administration of the SASS. Cha’s sample included 1,563 full-time public school teachers, 1,341 of whom were still full-time teachers a year later, and 222 of whom left teaching altogether within the year. Teachers who stayed in their jobs reported significantly more job satisfaction in the SASS survey than did those who later left teaching. Poor working conditions, but not teacher salaries or preparation, entered into teacher attrition such that teachers who rated school working conditions positively were more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to leave teaching. Indeed, of all teachers who leave their positions, half report that they left due to low job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2002).

Research by Scott and Wimbush (1991) indicates that dissatisfied teachers who stay in their jobs may have frequent absences. They used a questionnaire to examine 265 junior and senior high school teachers’ demographic information and teacher-rated job involvement, role conflict, and general job satisfaction as well as satisfaction with pay, peers, promotions, and supervisors. They also collected information about participants’ absence frequencies and total days absence from school district personnel records. Teachers’ distance from work was positively related to absence frequency, and job satisfaction was negatively related to total days absent. Women were both more frequently absent than men and were also absent for more days than men. Scott and Wimbush concluded that although “…only some of Rhodes and Steers’ motivation-to-attend variables (i.e., job involvement and job satisfaction) and ability-to-attend variables (i.e., gender and distance from home to work) had an impact on the absenteeism of teachers” (p. 524), “Rhodes and Steers’ model provides a common basis on which to examine the unique aspects of a teacher’s work environment and individual characteristics that may foster absenteeism” (p. 527). This dissertation study asked teachers about their job satisfaction and
issues associated with satisfaction as they related to teachers’ self-reported use of sick days and intent to leave the teaching profession or transfer to another school.

**Teacher self-reported stress.** Steers and Rhodes’ (1978, Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory of employee absenteeism and turnover posits that employees who experience high levels of stress will be less satisfied with their jobs, less likely to attend work, and more likely to leave their jobs. Selye (1936) popularized the concept of stress, and defined it as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it” (p. 32). The ICD-10 (World Health Organization, 2014), defines work-related stress as “the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities, and which challenge their ability to cope” (retrieved from http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/stressatwp/en/). Selye’s suggestion that prolonged stress can cause physical and mental disorders is widely recognized (Goldstein & Kopin, 2007).

Kyriacou (2001) indicated that most researchers describe teacher stress “as the experience by a teacher of negative and unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (p. 28). Collie et al. (2012) stated that research consistently identifies two types of teacher stress: stress related to student behavior and stress related to workload.

Teacher stress is generally assessed by self-report items that do not provide teachers with any specific definition of stress. Thus, teachers respond according to their own sense, or perception, of stress. Sometimes investigators assess stress with a single question. For example, the *MetLife Teacher Survey* asked, “In your job as a teacher, how often do you feel under great stress?” (Markow et al., 2013, p. 46). Teachers responded by indicating *Almost every day,*
Several days a week, Once or twice a week, Less often than once a week, or Never. Other investigators sum teacher responses to several items. For instance, the Teacher Stress Inventory (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995) has nine items. Teachers respond to such items as “How great a source of stress is maintaining class discipline?” on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from no stress (0) to extreme stress (4).

Studies have generally found that higher levels of teachers’ sense of stress are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Ahlgren & Gadnib, 2011; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996). Schonfeld (1990b, 1996) found that the ongoing stressors of teachers’ jobs (i.e., unmotivated students, noise, overcrowded classrooms) had a greater effect on teachers’ job satisfaction, motivation, and psychological distress (i.e., depressive and psychophysiological symptoms) than did episodic stressors (i.e., confrontations with unruly students) or being the victim of a crime.

In general, research shows that stress has a negative relationship with health (Shirom, Oliver, & Stein, 2009; Shirom, Westman, Shamai, & Carel, 1997; Toker, Shirom, Shapira, Berliner, & Melamed, 2005). Teachers who are experiencing higher levels of perceived stress are at risk for developing health problems and sleep disturbances (Burke & Greenglass, 1996; Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990; Shirom et al., 2009). Lack of sleep may also in turn affect job performance and health (Jehangir, Kareem, Kahn, Jan, & Soherwardi, 2011).

It seems fair to assume then that high levels of teacher perceived stress would likely affect teacher attrition and absenteeism rates. What little research there is on the subject tends to support this assumption. Bowers and McIver (2000) interviewed 369 former teachers from England who had recently retired because of ill health. Over 60% said that their work as
teachers had made their illnesses worse. Among the work-related stressors they cited were high workloads and bullying by administrators.

Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, and Telschow (1990) found that self-reported job stress related positively to self-reported illnesses among 291 teachers in a large urban area in the United States. Teacher-perceived support from principals moderated this effect, resulting in fewer self-reported, stress-related illnesses. Dworkin et al. did not, however, ask participants whether the reported illnesses resulted in teacher absenteeism. In a study of 201 German school teachers, Van Dick and Wagner (2001) found that teacher-reported workload and bullying stress were associated with greater self-reported absenteeism. Gaziel (2004) found that teacher-reported stress associated with principals’ restrictive behaviors and lower teacher commitment to their schools were related to greater absenteeism in a sample of 200 Israeli elementary school teachers. This dissertation survey asked teachers to indicate the absentee behavior that they attributed to stress in their work.

Although there are few studies of stress and absenteeism in education, there are many such studies in industry. Darr and Johns (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of the results of 153 studies of work stress, health, and absenteeism in industry. They found that the relationship between work stress and absenteeism that was moderated by physical and psychological symptoms. This result is in accord with Steers and Rhodes’ (1978) theory of employee absenteeism that states that personal factors may be associated with employees’ ability to attend work.

Irrational beliefs. As indicated above, most measures of stress rely on teachers’ beliefs about what is stressful. Dryden and Ellis (2001) developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to challenge people’s rigid or irrational beliefs. They believed that occupational stress
could be explained in terms of REBT, and “that most social situations are not stressful in their
own right but rather vary greatly in stressfulness depending upon the interpretations made of

Zingle and Anderson (1990) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between
teachers’ irrational beliefs and teacher stress in 122 Canadian teachers. Teacher stress scores on
the Teacher Occupational Stress Factor Questionnaire (TOSFQ; Clark, 1980) correlated
significantly and positively with their irrational beliefs scores as measured by the Adult Irrational
between teacher attitudes and teacher perceived stress and developed the Teacher Irrational
Belief Scale (TIBS). Thus, this dissertation included a measure to determine if teachers’
irrational beliefs about teaching related to their sense of teaching stress and their self-reported
absences. Irrational beliefs have also been shown to be linked to depression (Bridges & Harnish,
2010).

**Depressive symptoms.** Depression is another personal variable that could affect teacher
absenteeism. Diagnostic criteria for depression from the ICD-10 (World Health Organization,
2008) include the following symptoms: persistent sadness or low mood, loss of interests or
pleasure, and fatigue or low energy. One or more of these symptoms must be present for the
majority of the time, for most days, for two weeks. Associated symptoms may also include
disturbed sleep, poor concentration or indecisiveness, low self-confidence, poor or increased
appetite, suicidal thoughts or acts, agitation or slowing of movements, guilt or self-blame.
Increasingly, it is recognized that depressive symptoms below the *Diagnostic and Statistical
Manual of Mental Disorders—4th edition, Text Revision* (American Psychiatric Association,
2000) and ICD-10 (World Health Organization, 2008) threshold criteria can be distressing and
disabling if persistent. Even if individuals do not meet threshold for a diagnosis of clinical depression, sub-threshold symptoms produce high levels of distress that also constitute serious mental health problems.

A great deal of research on stress and absenteeism has focused on the phenomenon of burnout (Bigos et al., 1991; Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997; Schaufeli, Bakker, & van Rhenen, 2009; Theorell & Karasek, 1996). However, according to Schonfeld (1991), burnout measures contain the same questions as depression scales. Schonfeld is critical of burnout measures, because they can lead to attribution errors. In his study of 67 veteran teachers, perceived health, job satisfaction, and motivation to continue in the profession correlated similarly with a depression measure as they did with measures of burnout. Thus, burnout may not be a distinct construct. As a result, though much of the literature does discuss burnout, this dissertation used a measure of depression instead of a measure of burnout.

Using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977) to assess depression and the psychophysiological (PP) symptoms scale that he created to measure physical symptoms, Schonfeld (1990a, 1990b) found that veteran teachers’ motivation to continue teaching was negatively related to ongoing job-related stress, job satisfaction, and CES-D and PP scores, which he combined into a measure of nonspecific psychological distress. Similarly, Abel and Sewell (1999) found that time pressures, poor work conditions, and pupil misbehavior predicted depressive symptoms in a sample of 97 Georgia secondary teachers. More recently, Ferguson, Frost, and Hall (2012) found that teachers’ workload and chronic student misbehavior (i.e., ongoing stressors) predicted their symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as their job satisfaction.
Schonfeld (1996, 2000, 2001) studied samples of new teachers longitudinally (from pre-employment until the end of their first year of teaching) using the both the CES-D and PP measures as well as measures of job stressors, job satisfaction, and motivation to continue teaching. Depressive symptoms post-employment were negatively related to job satisfaction and motivation. Support from colleagues and supervisors moderated these effects. Although Schonfield’s studies did not examine attrition or absenteeism, they did examine job satisfaction, which is related to both of these behaviors. His studies also examined motivation to continue teaching. Thus, results of Shonfield’s studies show that teachers’ depressive symptoms are related to job satisfaction and motivation that may influence teachers’ use of sick days or exit from the profession. Interestingly, Schaufeli, Bakker, and van Rhenen (2009) found that burnout (i.e., depression) predicted both employee illness (i.e., absence from work) and illness duration (i.e., absence duration). This dissertation assessed depressive symptoms, self-reported absences, and motivation to leave teaching.

**Teacher self-efficacy.** The belief that one is able to do one’s job is a personal factor that may be associated with teachers’ motivation and ability to attend work according to Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) model of employee absence. Bandura’s (1982) theory of self-efficacy indicates that if an environment is too difficult to control, as it might be for teachers who experience workload and student stressors, then an individual cannot develop a sense of domain-specific self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is at the core of Bandura’s social-cognitive theory, and a low sense of self-efficacy is associated with both depression and anxiety (Bandura, 1997). Teacher self-efficacy has been described as teachers’ “…confidence in their own ability to handle things in their classrooms” (Sparks, 1988, p. 112). Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) used follow-up data from the
National Educational Longitudinal Study that included a large, national sample of 9,987 teachers. They found that faculty communication and the lack of obstacles to teaching were the best predictors of teachers’ self-efficacy. Klassen and Chiu (2010) assessed teacher efficacy in a sample of 1,430 Canadian teachers. They found that beginning teachers and teachers who were late in their careers showed less teacher efficacy than did teachers who were at mid-career. Interestingly, teachers who indicated greater workload stress also indicated greater classroom management self-efficacy. The authors speculated that “…it may be that teachers who perceive greater stress responsibility for student achievement and heavy workloads exert more effort during lesson planning and are better prepared to manage student behaviors during class” (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 248).

Studies of Italian teachers by Caprara, Barbaranelli, and colleagues found that teachers’ self-efficacy related positively to student academic achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006), teachers’ job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogní, & Steca, 2003), and teachers’ affective commitment to their jobs (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogní, Petitta, & Rubinacci, 2003). Teachers were more likely to take risks, make improvements in teaching styles and student outcomes, and experience satisfaction when they had more confidence in their skills and a strong belief in their teaching efficacy (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogní, Petitta et al., 2003). In contrast, feelings of low efficacy at work can result in withdrawal from one’s job, which can in turn lead to reduced accomplishment at work (Maslach, Shafeli & Leiter, 2001). As Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogní, Petitta et al. stated, “Generally, people do not undertake tasks that they feel are beyond their abilities” (p. 16).

Hultell and Gustavsson (2011) studied teacher self-efficacy in a sample of 1,589 beginning teachers in Sweden. They found that teacher self-efficacy related negatively to
depression and positively to work engagement. In their sample of 356 German school teachers, Van Dick and Wagner (2001) found that both social support and teacher self-efficacy moderated the effects of workload and bullying by colleagues and principals on teachers’ physical symptoms and self-reported absenteeism. Imants and van Zoelen (1995) found that higher numbers of teacher absences were associated with lower teacher self-efficacy. Collie et al. (2012) found that teachers’ perceptions of students’ behavior and motivation significantly predicted their sense of stress and teaching efficacy in a sample of 664 elementary and secondary teachers in Ontario and British Columbia, Canada. Teacher self-efficacy was also directly related to job satisfaction, which has been associated with teacher attrition (Cha, 2008; Ingersoll, 2002). This dissertation assessed teacher self-efficacy as it related to teacher self-reported sick day use, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher desire to leave the profession.

Pilot Study

The pilot study for this dissertation examined the relationships among (a) teacher cognition (i.e., beliefs teachers have about their role as a teacher) as measured by the Teacher Irrational Belief Scale (TIBS; Bernard, 1990), (b) Teacher Stress as measured by the Index of Teaching Stress (ITS; Greene, Abidin & Kmet, 1997), and (c) Teacher Self-efficacy as measured by the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale-Short Form (TSES; Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Previous research in the area of teacher stress focused on the links between burnout and irrational beliefs (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006, Bernard, 1988, Forman, 1990). I hypothesized that irrational beliefs as measured by the TIBS would be associated with lower feelings of self-efficacy as measured by the TSES and higher levels of stress as measured by the ITS. I also investigated correlations between subscales across questionnaires. I hypothesized that
there would be strong relationships between subscales across questionnaires linking irrational beliefs, self-efficacy beliefs, and feelings of stress and relating to specific dimensions on the questionnaires such as teaching strategies and issues relating to school organization, for example.

**Participants.** Thirty-two junior high school teachers participated in the pilot study, drawn from an opportunistic sample. Using the Power formula outlined in Cohen (1992), I determined that a minimum of 28 teachers were required to determine significance at the $p < .05$ level.

**Procedure.** I approached the principal of a school in NYC and asked him to sign an NYC DOE consent form to allow the study to be conducted in the school. I provided the principal with a letter explaining the purpose of the study. After obtaining the principal’s permission, I left packets containing questionnaires along with an informed consent form (which included a de in teachers mailboxes with a request for them to be returned to an assigned mailbox. I included a description of the research study with the informed consent form. This provided information about the study and the extent of participation involved, such as the length of time needed to complete the questionnaires, assurance of confidentiality, and access to the results of the study if desired. A total of 32 teachers provided data for the pilot study.

**Results.** Intercorrelations among scores on the ITS and TIBS were high and positive, indicating that higher levels of irrational beliefs were associated with higher levels of teacher-perceived stress $r (31) = 0.54 \ p < .01$. The TSES scores were negatively correlated with the ITS scores, indicating that higher levels of self-esteem were associated with lower levels of perceived stress $r (31) = -0.37 \ p < .05$.

Subscale intercorrelations were as follows: Lower levels of perceived self-efficacy for a teacher’s ability in classroom management techniques were associated with higher levels of
teacher-perceived stress associated with students who displayed difficult/problem behavior, \( r(31) = -.36, p < .05 \). Higher levels of irrational beliefs in the form of self-downing attitudes and authoritarian attitudes towards students were associated with higher levels of perceived stress when dealing with students with behavior problems, \( r(31) = .40, p < .05; r(31) = .52, p < .01 \), respectively. More years in the profession and more years of education were associated with lower levels of perceived stress in relation to coping with perceived barriers such as difficulty working with parents, lack of support, loss of job satisfaction, and disruption to the teaching process when working with children with behavioral problems \( r(31) = -.36, p < .05 \).

**Discussion and directions for future research.** The results of the pilot study supported those of previous studies that found that teachers’ irrational beliefs were related to perceived job stress, burnout, and depression symptoms (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006; Zingle & Anderson, 1990). In the pilot study, authoritarian attitudes were associated with higher levels of perceived stress when dealing with students with behavioral difficulties. A significant correlation existed between irrational beliefs in the form of self-downing attitudes and perceived stress related to dealing with students with behavior problems. Higher levels of self-esteem were associated with lower levels of perceived stress. Lower levels of self-efficacy in a teachers ability in classroom management techniques was associated with higher levels of teacher-perceived stress, in relation to students who display difficult/problem behavior.

Implications for improvements in teacher training would be to help teachers differentiate between authoritative and authoritarian attitudes towards discipline and behavioral expectations of children, especially those with behavioral problems (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006; Zingle & Anderson, 1990). Teacher training courses may help teachers to be better equipped if they cover techniques in behavior management for dealing with students with
ADHD/Oppositional behavior (Schaubman, Stetson, & Plog, 2011). Other areas of improvements in teacher training may include working with parents and communicating with administration as a means of reducing work related stress. Results from the pilot study showed that it appears that with experience and time in the profession, stress caused by certain perceived barriers decreases when working with children with behavior problems. Teachers could therefore be coached to recognize that gaining experience reduces stress.

An alternative to managing stress would be to address the irrational beliefs of the individual, so that the situation does not evoke stress (Zingle & Anderson, 1990). This could be done, for example, by modifying expectations of self and others, and teaching individuals to accept factors which cannot be changed. The link between stress and irrational thoughts should be further examined—that is, is stress a result of irrational thoughts or is irrational thinking a result of stress? (Zingle & Anderson, 1990). Future research may further investigate possible relationships using other measures of self-efficacy and irrational beliefs. It may still be valuable, however, to further investigate the link between teacher stress, teacher self-efficacy, and irrational beliefs, in the hope that it will provide additional information about how to link teacher beliefs to student outcome measures, such as student grades or statewide tests scores.

**Rationale and Hypothesis**

It is clear from the literature review that teacher absenteeism and turnover are both a financial burden to school districts and impact student achievement (American Association of School Administrators, 2010; Norton, 1998, 1994; O’Brien, Meszaros, & Pulliam, 1985; Summers & Raivets, 1982). Although several studies document the high turnover rate of new teachers (NCES, 1997; NCES, 1998; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003), and the various factors that may cause this by reducing the level job-satisfaction teachers’ experience (Schonfeld, 1990b, 1996),
no one study has incorporated all of the variables used in the current study. The current study looks at the link between teacher self-efficacy, irrational beliefs about teaching, depressive symptoms, and the likelihood of teachers to be dissatisfied and want to quit or change jobs and use sick days.

Hypotheses

Employee absenteeism in general is linked to job satisfaction and personal characteristics (Steers & Rhodes, 1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990). However, relatively few studies exist that address the relationships between absenteeism and symptoms of depression or teacher self-efficacy. Only one study has linked irrational beliefs to absenteeism (Bermejo-Toro, & Prieto-Ursula, 2006). Two studies have found a positive relationship between teachers’ sense of job-related stress and absenteeism (Gaziel, 2004; Van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Additionally, Ferguson, Frost, and Hall (2012) found that teachers’ ongoing perceived stressors predicted symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as their job satisfaction. Only one study (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995) has found a link between teachers’ self-efficacy and their absenteeism. Therefore, additional research is needed in order to further investigate the factors that contribute both to teachers experiencing symptoms of depression and to absenteeism and attrition. This dissertation assessed teacher self-efficacy as it related to teacher self-reported sick day use, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher desire to leave the profession. Therefore, I hypothesized:

H01: Lower levels of job satisfaction will be related to higher number of sick days taken in the last year.

H02: Higher levels of irrational beliefs will be associated with increased absenteeism linked to teacher-perceived teaching-related stress.

H03: Teachers’ irrational beliefs will be associated with teachers’ depression.
H04: Lower teacher self-efficacy will be associated with higher self-reported absenteeism.

H05: Depressive symptoms will be associated with absenteeism.

H06: Depressive symptoms will be associated with perceived stress-related absenteeism.

H07: It is expected that depression and irrational beliefs will be significantly negatively related to teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teachers’ intent to leave the profession.

H08: Depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction will be significant predictors of a) desire to take a day off due to teacher-perceived, teaching-related stress and b) intent to leave the teaching profession.

H09: Teacher self-efficacy, depression, irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction will be related to years of teaching experience and/or level of education.
CHAPTER III

Method

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study to address the hypotheses concerned with factors that relate to desire to leave the teaching profession and teacher absenteeism. This chapter describes the study’s participants and the instruments and procedures used to measure participants’ self-reported beliefs, feelings, opinions, and intentions in regard to their jobs as teachers. Additionally, this chapter presents the design and methods of data analysis for the study.

Participants

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center, I solicited participants from several diverse public school settings both in urban and suburban settings in New York State (NYS) via word of mouth and web forums (see Procedure section below). Only NYS public school teacher were included in the study because of the differing policies of allocation and use of sick days between states and between public and private schools. Only those who identified themselves as NYS public school teachers and who completed the entire study questionnaire were included in the study. Three hundred ninety-nine individuals responded to the solicitation, but 65 (16.30%) were not NYS public school teachers. Of the remaining 334 NYS teacher potential participants, 82 (24.55% of potential participants) did not complete the questionnaire. Thus, the final sample included 252 NYS teachers (75.45% of responding potential participants).

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the 252 study participants. The majority of the teachers who participated was Caucasian and female. Over half the respondents were
elementary school teachers, age 36 or older, had worked as a teacher for over 10 years, had been in same school for over 10 years, and had a master’s degree plus some additional credits.

Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages of Participant Demographics*

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Table 1 (continued)

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<td>64.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years worked in profession</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>47.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group currently teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>60.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years at current school</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>34.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous schools worked at</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>61.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>30.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 252.*

The demographic makeup of the sample for the current study closely resembles the actual demographic characteristics of teachers employed within New York State, according to the most recent data available National Center for Education Statistics website with data from the Schools
and Staffing Survey 2011-12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Data show that within schools across New York State, 81% of teachers are Caucasian (White, non-Hispanic), 76% are female, 54% are aged 30-49, and 59% have taught for 10 years or more. In terms of level of education, 46% have a master’s degree, with 8% achieving higher than master’s degree. Forty-eight percent of NYS teachers work in elementary schools.

Table 2 presents the results of chi-square analyses between the demographics of 252 NYS teachers who completed the survey and were included in the study and the 82 NYS teachers who did not complete the survey and were not included in the sample. Results show significance group differences for ethnicity ($\chi^2(4) = 9.71, p = .046$) and education ($\chi^2(3) = 21.21, p < .001$). Fewer Hispanic teachers and fewer teachers with only a Bachelor’s degree than expected completed the survey and were included in the sample.
Table 2

Chi-Square Statistics for Demographic Differences between New York State Teachers Who Were and Who Were Not Included in the Study and Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>21.21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Taught</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years at Current School</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Previous Schools Taught At</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 252$ for included teachers. $N = 82$ for non-included teachers.

The following information lists the pattern of responses for the 82 possible participants, who did not complete the entire survey. Twenty-seven people (32.92% of survey non-completers) did not complete the demographic section of the questionnaire. A further 25 (30.48%) individuals did not complete the CES-D. Thirteen (15.85%) failed to complete the TSES. The final 17 (20.73%) did not complete the TIBS. The web-based questionnaire had a forced response option so people could not skip questions and still complete the questionnaire. The forced response option may have accounted for most of the non-completion, because when
an individual did not answer any single question, he or she was not able to continue the survey.
The length of the questionnaire may have also been a factor affecting the completion rate.

**Instruments**

The study questionnaire contained several parts that are discussed below and presented in Appendices B through H.

**Demographic questionnaire.** The initial part of the study questionnaire (see Appendix C) asked for teacher demographic information, which includes age, gender, and ethnicity as well as whether or not the respondent has children under the age of 5. Items in Appendix C also ask for teachers’ educational level, current position, years in the profession, age groups taught, years working at current school, the number of previous schools taught at, and type of current school.

**Teacher job satisfaction and intention to leave.** Appendix D contains five items concerning teachers’ job satisfaction and intent to leave the profession. The first item asks teachers to indicate their global level of satisfaction with their job on a 4-point scale that ranges from 1) Very Dissatisfied to 4) Very Satisfied. This item comes from a study by Mertler (2001) that asked 1,000 teachers to rate their overall level of job satisfaction. The item used to measure teacher satisfaction in the current study is also similar to single items used to assess teachers’ job satisfaction in other studies (Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000).

In addition to asking teachers to rate their global job satisfaction, the dissertation questionnaire also had teachers rate the extent to which they a) had considered leaving teaching, b) would again choose teaching as a career, c) believed they would leave the teaching profession, and d) would consider transferring to another school, on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1) Very Little to 5) Very Much (see Appendix D). These four questions were gleaned from a combination of questions used to assess intention to leave by both the Mertler (2001) and Weisberg (1994)
studies. Responses to these four items were combined to yield a total score to assess an overall desire to leave. A total score was calculated in order to make comparisons between the other questionnaire total scores and various demographic variables.

Items similar to these were used in other studies of teacher job satisfaction and intention to leave. Job satisfaction has been linked to both teacher depression and attrition (Cha, 2008; Collie et al., 2012; Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000, Mertler, 2001; Weisberg, 1994).

**Self-perceived teacher stress and sick day usage.** To assess teacher absenteeism, I asked 9 questions about participants’ allotment and use of sick days (see Appendix E). These items included two questions about participants’ absence due to self-perceived teaching-related stress.

To date no studies have used a questionnaire which directly asks questions about teachers’ feelings of stress and the desire or need to take a sick day due to symptoms of stress. The current study is therefore essentially measuring the use of what has become known in the workplace as a ‘mental health day’. These questions were created to assess if teachers themselves identify that their absenteeism is linked to stress.

**Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977).** I measured symptoms of depression using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977; see Appendix F). The CES-D is a short, 20-question, structured self-report measure designed to measure depressive symptoms in the general population. The scale was originally constructed by the National Institute for Mental Health’s Center for Epidemiologic Studies and is comprised of questions assessing symptoms of depression that have been previously validated in longer depression scales (Radloff, 1977). This scale was
selected for use in the current study because it is the scale used in several studies by Schonfeld to investigate symptoms of depression and psychological distress in teachers, and the results of the current study are compared to this existing research (Schonfeld 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000, 2001). The original CES-D rather than the updated CESD-R was also selected because it was felt that the items on the original scale may be more acceptable to teachers, as the revised scale asks questions about self-harming which may not have been as applicable to teachers in comparison to other populations the survey may be used with.

The CES-D was designed to measure current levels of depression in the general population with an emphasis on the affective component of depressed mood. The scale was also designed for use in study of the relationship between depression and other variables across population subgroups (Radloff, 1977). According to Radloff (1977), the survey was tested in both psychiatric settings and within the general population and yielded high internal consistency and adequate test-retest reliability. Although it is not designed as clinical scale to diagnose depression it is based on symptoms seen in clinical cases (Radoff, 1977).

In terms of internal consistency, some of the 20 symptoms of depression may be experienced by a healthy population, with both positive and negative affect coexisting with a low negative correlation. In contrast, depressed patients are characterized by an absence of positive affect and the presence of negative affect, and positive and negative affect would be more highly correlated (Klein, 1974). The results of reliability testing supported these findings, and inter-item and inter-scale correlations were higher in the patient sample than in the general population. Validity was measured by establishing correlations with other self-report measures, clinical ratings of depression, and other variables that support its construct validity. For research purposes, a total score is recommended as an estimate of the level of depressive symptoms. The
scale is suitable for use across ethnic, socioeconomic, and age groups as means of identifying those at high-risk for depression (Radloff, 1977).

The temporal stability of the CES-D was measured in relation to chronic physical disorders and the scale was relatively stable across time when correlating symptoms of depression with chronic pain (Sheehan, Fifield, Reisine, & Tennen, 1995). Radoff (1977) described a four-factor model that underlies the 20 items on the scale including the four components of depressed affect, positive affect, retarded activity, and interpersonal relationships. Several studies have confirmed this four-factor structure (Callahan & Wolinsky, 1994; Joseph & Lews, 1995). A reexamination of the factor structure was conducted (Edwards, Cheavens, Heiy & Cukrowicz, 2010), and it determined that a four-factor model was still appropriate; however, if five positively worded items were omitted, a one-factor model could be argued to account for a unidimensional model of depressive symptoms. Edwards et al. (2010) concluded, however, that, if all 20 items are used, a more complex psychometric model would be required. Questions 4, 8, 12, and 16 of the CES-D are reversed. For the current study the entire scale total score was used.

**Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale-Short Form (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).** I measured teacher self-efficacy using the Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale-Short Form (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The TSES items were designed to assess teachers’ self-perceptions of their competence in using various teaching tasks and strategies.

The TSES yields a total efficacy score as well as three subscale scores (efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management). Participants respond on 9-point Likert format with 0 representing *nothing*, 3 representing *very little*, 5 representing *some influence*, 7 representing *quite a bit*, and 9 representing *a great deal*. 
There is both a long (24-item) and short (12-item) version of the scale available of which the latter was used in this dissertation. To ensure compatibility with the response format of other instruments in the survey (see Appendix G), the 9-point Likert scale used in the original version of the TSES short-form was shortened to a 5-point Likert scale for the purposes of this study, in order to correspond to the formatting of other scales used in the research questionnaire (see Appendix B for entire version of research questionnaire). Scores on the original form range from zero to 108 with higher numbers representing greater teacher sense of self-efficacy. Total scores from the adapted 5-point Likert scale were converted to yield the same total score as the original scoring system. The 5-point Likert scale responses were assigned the following values for each of the 5 points of the adapted TSES to ensure the total scores corresponded to the original 9 point scoring system: 1 = 1, 2 = 3, 3 = 5, 5 = 7, 5 = 9. Although several other measures of teacher self-efficacy exist, this was the only questionnaire that has a short form, and was therefore selected for this study to keep the length of the entire teacher questionnaire as brief as possible.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reported coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates of reliability for the TSES total score of .94 for the long form and .90 for the short form. Additionally, in a study of 183 teachers (Roberts & Henson, 2001), the three factors/subscales accounted for a total of 54% of the variance on the long form and 65% of the variance on the short form (Roberts & Henson, 2001). Statistically significant correlations ranging from 0.52 to 0.61 were found between the TSES and other measures of teacher efficacy. These reliability and validity data suggest that the TSES is a psychometrically sound instrument that adequately assesses teacher efficacy.

**Teacher Irrational Belief Scale (TIBS; Bernard, 1988).** This dissertation used the TIBS to measure irrational beliefs about teachers’ unrealistic expectations about teaching. I
selected the TIBS (Bernard, 1988) because it is the only questionnaire designed to specifically measure irrational beliefs in teachers and has been shown to correlate strongly with measures of depression (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursua, 2006). For the purposes of this study, the full TIBS questionnaire was used (see Appendix H).

The TIBS measures teacher cognitions (i.e., beliefs teachers have about their role as a teacher) and consists of a total of 22 items. The scale, which is based on Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) theory, measures teachers’ tendencies to endorse irrational beliefs such as absolutizing, low frustration tolerance, awfulizing, self-downing or self-deprecation, and unrealistic expectations. Teachers indicate the extent to which they agree with an irrational belief on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = disagree totally to 5 = agree totally). TIBS items were developed to measure four irrational beliefs concerning four areas of teaching. The four subscales of the TIBS measure Self downing, Low frustration tolerance, Attitudes towards school organization and Authoritarian attitudes towards pupils. Self downing is measured by items 1-8 with a high score on this subscale linked to setting high standards for oneself, with an exaggerated need for approval. Low frustration tolerance is measured by items 9-12, with those scoring highly often feeling that teaching should be easy and require little effort on their part. Items on the attitudes towards school organization subscale (items 13-17) relate to teachers’ need to be involve in the running of the school and the belief that their needs should be listened to. Authoritarian Attitudes Toward Students is measured by questions 18-22, and a high score on this subscales indicates a teachers’ rigid ideas about toward discipline problems with students. It indicates intolerance for misbehavior and the belief that it should be severely punished.

In the current study, a total irrational beliefs score was used to look at the relationships between teacher irrational beliefs, depression, and absenteeism. Total TIBS scores can range
from 22 to 110 with higher scores indicating more stress caused by irrational beliefs (Bernard, 1988).

Bernard (1988) originally developed the measure based on Ellis and Bernard’s (1985) hypothesis that irrational beliefs lead to emotional distress. On the TIBS, the four sub-scales described above correspond to Ellis’s original categories of irrational beliefs as follows: Self-downing corresponds to self-oriented demandingness, Authoritarian attitudes towards student and attitudes towards school organization are related to Ellis’s other-related demandingness, and Low frustration tolerance measures Elli’s construct of world-related demandingness. The following 3 statement are paraphrased examples of the irrational beliefs that represent each of Elliss’ original categories of irrational beliefs as described above: “I must do well and gain approval or I am a bad person” = self-oriented demandingness, “I should be treated fairly and other should be severely punished for their inconsiderateness if they do not treat me fairly” = other-related demandingness, “In life I should get everything I want comfortable with quickly, and nothing I don’t want” = world-related demandingness. Internal consistency was adequate for the global score, with an internal consistency index of $\alpha = .85$ for the TIBS global score (Bernard, 1988).

Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursua (2006) found a significant positive correlation between teacher irrational beliefs and absenteeism. Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursua also investigated the relationship between teachers’ irrational beliefs and teacher distress. They found that Low Frustration Tolerance and Authoritarian Attitudes Toward Students had the strongest correlations with measures of teacher distress.
Procedure

After receiving permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, I posted the questionnaire on Survey Monkey (see Appendix B for the full questionnaire). I recruited participants via three methods: using word of mouth, whereby colleagues passed on links to questionnaire to other teachers; postings on online internet forums that are regularly accessed by teachers, such as chat forums, for example; and emailing teachers directly by obtaining publicly available email addresses available online on school districts’ websites and forwarding a link to the internet based survey via Survey Monkey (see Appendix A for the recruitment script).

Because of the on-line nature of the questionnaire, participants were able to complete it in a variety of locations including their homes or workplaces. New York State general and special education teachers working all levels from Kindergarten to 12th grade were recruited to participate. Because this study had exempt status from the IRB, informed consent was not required and the responses remained anonymous. Therefore, the locations and type of the schools where teacher worked (e.g., urban versus suburban) were unknown to the investigator.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to present demographic information and information about study variables. Demographic differences between NYS teachers who completed and did not complete the survey were examined with chi-square analyses. Correlations and regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses.
CHAPTER IV

Results

The primary aim of this study was to examine NYS teachers’ irrational beliefs about teaching, self-efficacy, symptoms of depression, and job satisfaction as they relate to teacher-perceived teaching-related absenteeism and the desire to leave teaching. The relationship of demographic variables such as age, years of teaching experience, and level education to the above variables were also explored. This chapter provides descriptive statistics and results of hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Statistics

Sick day allotment and use. Table 3 provides information about participants’ allotment and use of paid sick days. Readers will note that most participants had five or more days allotted per year, but had used less than five days during the previous school year. Thus, most participants had accrued unused sick days, and almost a third of the sample had accrued more than 100 sick days. However, just over a quarter of the sample indicated that they had used a significant proportion of their sick days for extended maternity or medical leave.
Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages of Sick Day Allotment and Use*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sick days and personal days allotted per year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 days</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 days</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>52.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>40.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick days used during previous school year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 days</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>63.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 days</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrue unused sick days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>88.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick days accrued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 days or less</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 30 days</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a significant portion of sick days due to maternity leave or prolonged medical leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>73.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 252.

*Self-described stress-related absence.* Table 4 presents participants’ responses to items concerning their self-perceived stress related to their teaching jobs. Although over 80% of participants reported that they felt stressed enough to want to take a day off, a plurality of responders did not take time off because of self-perceived stress from teaching, and responders who did take time off for self-perceived, job-related stress took off no more than two days.
However, 10 participants took medical leaves due to the stress that they perceived to be due to their teaching jobs.

Table 4

*Absence Related to Self-Perceived Work Stress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt stressed enough from work to want to take a day off</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>80.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate number of time used a sick day due to stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>46.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical leave due to stress related working as a teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>96.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 252.*

**Study instruments.** Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for the instruments used in the study. The CES-D scale assessed teachers’ depressive symptoms, with higher scores indicating greater symptoms. The cut-off score for clinically significant symptoms of depression is 16 (Radoff, 1977). Table 5 shows that participants’ average score of 14.96 was below the cut-off; however, examination of individual scores showed that 103 participants (40.87% of the current sample) had scores of 16 or higher and are thus considered to have a clinical depression. The current samples’ CES-D average score is similar to that obtained in a study by Schonfeld (2000) that used a sample of novice New York City teachers in high stress workplaces.
Table 5

*Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Reliabilities of Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Item</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Possible Range</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CES-D</td>
<td>14.96</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>0.00 – 52.00</td>
<td>0.00 – 60.00</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSES</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>42.00 – 108.00</td>
<td>12.00 – 108.00</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIBS</td>
<td>67.70</td>
<td>14.51</td>
<td>22.00 – 102.00</td>
<td>22.00 – 110.00</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to Leave</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>5.00 – 20.00</td>
<td>5.00 – 20.00</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $N = 252$. CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale; TIBS = Teacher Irrational Beliefs Scale; TSES = Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale-Short Form.*

The TSES assessed participants’ self-perceptions of their competence in performing various teaching tasks. A sample of over 1000 elementary middle and HS teacher participants in a validation study (Heneman, Kimball, & Milanowski, 2006) had a mean TSES score 7.14 ($SD = 0.93$). Table 5 shows that participants in the current study obtained a somewhat lower TSES score suggesting that current participants expressed less teaching efficacy on average than did the validation sample.

The TIBS assessed teachers’ irrational beliefs about their role as teachers. The scale has no norms, but teachers in the current sample obtained comparable scores to a sample of 71 secondary education teachers in a study by Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursua (2006).

The investigator constructed the Intention to Leave scale, which asked participants about their desire to leave and choice of the teaching profession, for this study. Table 5 shows that participants achieved an average score at approximately the midpoint of possible scores on this
scale. Examination of responses to individual scale items shows that 112 participants (44.44% of the sample of 278) either agreed or strongly agreed that they have considered leaving teaching, and 61 participants (24.21%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are thinking about leaving teaching in the near future and 62 (24.60%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are considering transferring to a new school in the near future. However, 148 teachers (58.73%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would choose teaching if they chose their career again.

Participants’ responses to the Job Satisfaction question yielded an average score above the midpoint of possible scores (see Table 5). Sixty-four participants (25.40%) indicated that they were very satisfied with teaching. This percentage is lower than the 39% of very satisfied teachers from the most recent annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* (Markow et al., 2013).

Three of the four scales (CES-D, TSES, and TIBS) showed excellent reliability (≥.90) with alphas that ranged from .90 to .92, but the Intention to Leave scale had lower reliability (≥.60). An alpha level .70 means that the scale has questionable reliability and that participants may not have answered this group of questions consistently (George & Mallery, 2010).

**Relationship of Demographics to Research Scales**

Table 6 presents the results of Spearman and point-biserial correlations between the ordinal (age, education, years of experience, grade taught, years at school, and number of schools worked in) and dichotomous (gender and children under 5) demographic variables. Spearman correlations were conducted for the ordinal variables, while point-biserial correlations were conducted for the dichotomous variables. Table 6 shows that gender was significantly related to teacher self-efficacy (TSES) indicating that male participants had lower teacher self-efficacy than did female participants. Teachers’ years of experience correlated negatively with
depressive symptoms (CES-D) indicating that less experienced were more depressed ($r = -.13$), and teachers’ age correlated negatively with irrational beliefs (TIBS), indicating that younger teachers had more irrational beliefs about teaching ($r = -15$). However, because only 3 of the 32 comparisons were significant, they may have been chance findings. Also, although significant, the correlations represent small effect sizes.

Table 6

*Spearman and Point-Biserial Correlations between Ordinal and Dichotomous Demographics and Research Scales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>CES-D</th>
<th>TSES</th>
<th>TIBS</th>
<th>Intention to Leave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade taught</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years at school</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools worked in</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N = 252. CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale; TIBS = Teacher Irrational Beliefs Scale; TSES = Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale-Short Form.

<sup>a</sup>Point-biserial correlations.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$
Correlations and Hypothesis Testing

Table 7 presents the correlations between participants’ scores on the scales to assess depression, teacher self-efficacy, teacher irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction and items that assess participants’ use of sick days and self-perceived teaching-related stress sick day use. These correlations were used to test the first six hypotheses.
Table 7

*Correlations between Participants’ Sick Day Usage and Job Satisfaction, Depression, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Irrational Beliefs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Sick days used in the past year&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Felt stressed enough to use sick day&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Used a sick day due to self-perceived job stress&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Depression (CES-D)</td>
<td>-.51**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Self-efficacy (TSES)</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Irrational beliefs (TIBS)</td>
<td>-.48**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-.48**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Intention to Leave Teaching</td>
<td>-.59**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \(N = 252\).

<sup>a</sup>Point biserial correlations conducted. Otherwise, Pearson correlations conducted.

\* \(p < .05\) \** \(p < .001\)
Hypothesis 1 indicated that lower levels of job satisfaction would be related to higher number of sick days taken in the last year. In Table 7, the significant, negative point-biserial correlation between Job Satisfaction and number of sick days taken, \( r_{pb} = -.33, p < .001 \), supports this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 stated that higher levels of irrational beliefs would be associated with increased absenteeism linked to stress. The significant, positive correlation between TIBS scores and feeling stressed enough from teaching to take a day off, \( r_{pb} = .40, p < .001 \), and the significant, positive correlation between TIBS scores and number of sick days used due to teaching stress, \( r_{pb} = .29, p < .001 \), support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 stated that teachers’ irrational beliefs would be associated with teachers’ depression. In Table 7, the significant, positive correlation between TIBS scores and CED-S scores, \( r = .54, p < .001 \), supports this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 stated that lower teacher self-efficacy would be associated with higher self-reported absenteeism. Table 7 shows that teacher self-efficacy (TSES) scores were significantly, negatively correlated with sick days use in the past year, \( r_{pb} = -.14, p = .05 \), as well as the use of sick days due to self-perceived teaching-related stress, \( r_{pb} = -.23, p < .001 \). These correlations provide support for hypothesis four.

Hypothesis 5 stated that teachers’ depression symptoms would be associated with absenteeism, and Hypothesis 6 stated depressive symptoms would be associated with perceived stress-related absenteeism. The significant, positive correlations between CED-S (depression) scores and sick days used in the past year, \( r_{pb} = .32, p < .001 \), as well desire to use a sick day due to self-perceived teaching-related stress, \( r_{pb} = .42, p < .001 \), and using a sick day due to self-perceived teaching-related stress, \( r_{pb} = .34, p < .001 \), support Hypothesis 5 and 6. Thus, in the
current sample, higher depression symptoms were associated with more absence, greater desire to take a day off due to job stress, and more absenteeism due to self-perceived teaching-related stress.

Hypothesis 7 stated that depression and irrational beliefs will be significantly negatively related to the teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction, and positively related to teachers’ intent to leave the profession. This hypothesis is supported by the significant correlations in Table 7 between CES-D depression scores and TSES (self-efficacy) scores, $r = -.38, p < .001$; Job Satisfaction, $r_{pb} = -.51, p < .001$, and intent to leave the teaching profession, $r = .54, p < .001$. Table 7 also shows correlations in the predicted directions between TIBS (irrational beliefs) scores and TSES (self-efficacy) scores, $r = -.48, p < .001$; Job Satisfaction, $r = -.48, p < .001$; and intent to leave the teaching profession, $r = .46, p < .001$. Thus, in this sample, both depression and irrational beliefs were associated with less teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction and greater intention to leave the teaching profession.

**Regression results.** Hypothesis 8 stated that depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction would be significant predictors of a) teachers’ desire to take a day off due to teacher-perceived teaching-related stress and b) intent to leave the teaching profession. To examine hypothesis 8a, a binary logistic regression as conducted to assess if depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction predicted participants’ desire to take a day off due to self-perceived teaching-related stress. A binary logistic regression is the appropriate analysis to conduct when the goal is to assess if several independent variables predict a dichotomous dependent variable (Pallant, 2010). The results of the binary regression model were significant, $\chi^2(4) = 86.88, p < .001$, suggesting that depression, irrational beliefs, teacher
self-efficacy, and job satisfaction accounted for (Nagelkerke $R^2$) 47% of the variance in the likelihood of teachers’ desire to take a day off due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress.

The individual predictors were examined further (see Table 8). Depression was a significant predictor, $B = 4.22, p < .001$, suggesting that as depression increased, the desire to take a day off work due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress also tended to increase. Irrational beliefs was also a significant predictor, $B = 1.15, p = .003$, of self-perceived, teaching-related stress, suggesting that as irrational beliefs increased, the desire to take a day off work due to stress also tended to increase. Self-efficacy was a significant predictor, $B = 0.45, p = .028$, suggesting that as self-efficacy increased, the desire to take a day off work due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress also increased. Job satisfaction, however, was not a significant predictor of desire to take a day off work due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress, $B = -0.48, p = .068$.

Readers will note that Hypothesis 4 (above), which predicted a significant, negative relationship between teacher self-efficacy and desire to take a day off due to self-perceived, teaching-related stress, received correlational support, $r_{pb} = -.13, p < .05$. However, when other variables (CED-S, TIBS, and Job Satisfaction) were controlled using regression analysis, teacher self-efficacy had a significant positive relationship with desire to take a day off due to self-perceived stress. Table 8 presents the results of the regression analysis.
Table 8

*Binary Logistic Regression with Depression, Irrational Beliefs, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction as Predictors of Desire to Take a Day Off Due to Self-Perceived Teaching Stress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI for OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression (CED-S)</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>20.84</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>68.13</td>
<td>[11.12, 417.38]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational beliefs (TIBS)</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>[1.47, 6.81]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (TSES)</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>[1.05, 2.33]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>[0.36, 1.08]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 252.*

To test Hypothesis 8b, a multiple linear regression was conducted to assess how well depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction predicted participants’ intention to leave the teaching profession. A multiple linear regression is the appropriate analysis to conduct when the goal is to assess if a set of predictor variables predicts a single continuous variable (Pallant, 2010). The results for the regression model showed significance, $F(4, 247) = 47.88, p < .001, R^2 = .44$, suggesting that collectively depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction accounted for ($R^2$) 44% of the variance in participants’ intention to leave the profession.

The individual predictors were examined further. Depression was a significant predictor, $B = 1.94, p < .001$, suggesting that as depression increased, intention to leave also increased. Job satisfaction also was a significant predictor, $B = -1.59, p < .001$, suggesting that as job satisfaction decreased, intention to leave increased. No other predictors were significant. Table 9 presents results of the multiple linear regression.
Table 9

*Multiple Linear Regression with Depression, Irrational Beliefs, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction Predicts Intent to Leave the Teaching Profession*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression (CES-D)</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational beliefs (TIBS)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (TSES)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>-6.69</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $N = 278.*

**Experience and education.** Hypothesis 9 stated that teacher self-efficacy, depression, irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction would be related to years of teaching experience and/or level of education. To assess Hypothesis 9, eight Spearman correlations were conducted to assess if there was a relationship between self-efficacy, depression, irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction with participants’ years of experience and level of education. Results of the correlations only showed significance for depression with years of experience, $r_s = -.13$, $p = .043$, suggesting that as the number of years of experience increased, depression tended to decrease. Table 10 provides little support for Hypothesis 9.
Table 10

*Spearman Correlations between Self-Efficacy, Depression, Irrational Beliefs, and Job Satisfaction with Years of Experience and Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (TSES)</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression (CES-D)</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational beliefs (TIBS)</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $N = 278.$

* $p < .05$

**Summary of Results**

Table 11 presents a summary of the results of hypothesis testing. Eight of the nine hypotheses received support.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HO1 Lower levels of job satisfaction will be related to higher number of sick days taken in the last year.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO2 High levels of irrational beliefs will be associated with increased absenteeism linked to teacher-perceived teaching-related stress.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO3 Teachers’ irrational beliefs will be associated with teachers’ depression.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO4 Lower teacher self-efficacy will be associated with higher self-reported absenteeism.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO5 Depression symptoms will be associated with absenteeism and perceived stress-related absenteeism.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO6 Depressive symptoms will be associated with perceived stress-related absenteeism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO7 It is expected that the depression and irrational beliefs will be significantly negatively related to teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and teachers’ intent to leave the profession.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HO8 Depression, irrational beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction will be significant predictors of a) desire to take a day off due to teacher-perceived, teaching-related stress and b) intent to leave the teaching profession.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HO9</td>
<td>It is expected that teacher self-efficacy, depression, irrational beliefs, and job satisfaction will be related to years of teaching experience and/or level of education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings resulting from the statistical analyses in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to add to the research literature on teacher-reported absenteeism and intention to leave the profession by investigating the relationships between teachers’ demographic characteristics, self-rated teaching-related stress, job satisfaction, symptoms of depression, irrational beliefs, and self-efficacy. There is limited research linking teacher’s symptoms of depression to absenteeism (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006), and although there are studies that have investigated the relationships between some of the teacher variables mentioned above, no one study has incorporated all of the variables used in the current study.

Teacher absenteeism. According to Steers and Rhodes’ (1978; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) theory of employee absenteeism, employees are absent from or leave their jobs because of personal factors that influence or are associated with their ability to attend work, and motivational factors that relate to job satisfaction. The few studies that exist have found a positive relationship between teachers’ sense of job-related stress and absenteeism (Gaziel, 2004; Van Dick & Wagner, 2001).

In this study there was a negative relationship between job satisfaction and greater number of sick days taken. There was also a relationship between job satisfaction and desire to
take sick days due to perceived work-related stress, whereby lower job satisfaction contributed to teachers desire to take a sick day due to perceived teaching related stress.

Given that job stress is linked to self-reported illness (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990), it is not surprising that approximately 80% of teachers in this study stated that they have wanted to take a sick day due stress that they attribute to their work, and that approximately 40% have done so. This finding supports existing research in other fields of work that found a relationship between self-reported job stress and absenteeism, which has been found to be moderated by physical and psychological symptoms (Darr & Johns, 2008). This study therefore supports the existing research as well as Steers and Rhodes’ (1978) theory of absentee behavior. The fact that teachers endorsed that they have wanted to or have in fact used sick days due to stress also supports existing research that states that teachers are often absent for reasons other than documented medical illness (Imants & Zoelen, 1995). In fact, there is a variety of evidence to suggest that teachers use sick days at their own discretion. For example, rates of absence tend to be associated with the availability of leave provisions (Ehrenberg et al., 1991). Steers and Rhodes’ theory of absenteeism (1978, Rhodes & Steers, 1990) predicts that teacher personal characteristics that predict absenteeism also predict attrition.

**Intention to Leave.** Borman and Dowling (2008) found that teachers who are younger, female, married, and White are significantly more likely to leave teaching than are teachers who are older, male, unmarried, and non-White. In the this study, the sample of teachers was fairly homogenous and consisted mainly of female white teachers between the ages of 30 and 49 who had been teaching for over 10 years. Therefore, it was not possible to make the comparisons related to age, gender, and ethnicity and intent to leave in this study, to compare to the existing research on teacher attrition and those demographic variables or teacher characteristics.
Approximately 45% of the sample either agreed or strongly agreed that they have considered leaving teaching, and approximately 25% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they are thinking about leaving teaching in the near future. A further 25% agreed or strongly agreed that they are considering transferring to a new school in the near future. However, almost 60% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they would choose teaching if they chose their career again. In the Mertler (2001) study, 37% of teachers reported that they would not chose to become teachers again if given the chance, which is a figure similar to the 30% of teachers in the current study who answered that they would not chose to become teacher again. Compared to Weisberg’s (1994) original study looking at intent to leave, the current mean score for the question relating to the desire to leave the field of teaching was higher for this study than for Weisberg’s original sample of teachers.

**Job Satisfaction.** This sample’s level of job satisfaction responses to the Job Satisfaction (approximately 25% indicated that they were very satisfied with teaching), is lower than the 39% of very satisfied teachers from the most recent annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* (Markow et al., 2013).

Teacher’s job satisfaction is closely linked to teacher absenteeism (Scott & Wimbush, 1991) and attrition, with half of all teachers who leave their positions reporting that they left due to low job satisfaction (Boe et al., 1997; Ingersoll, 2002; Lambert, 2006). Dissatisfied teachers who stay in their job may also have frequent absences (Scott & Wishbaum, 1991). In this study, lower levels of job satisfaction contributed to desire to take a sick day due to perceived teaching related stress. This finding supports exiting research that higher levels of stress are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Ahlgren & Gadnib, 2011; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996). So, as well as increased
absenteeism in general, job satisfaction is a predictor of absenteeism and also a predictor of using sick days due to perceived job stress.

Studies have generally found that higher levels of teachers’ sense of stress are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Ahlgren & Gadnib, 2011; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Markow et al., 2013; Schonfeld, 1990a, 1990b, 1996).

**Self-efficacy.** Teacher self-efficacy is important because several studies have shown that teachers’ self-efficacy related positively to student academic achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006), teachers’ job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003), and teachers’ affective commitment to their jobs (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, Petitta, & Rubinacci, 2003). The one study (Imants & van Zoelen, 1995) that has investigated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and absenteeism found that higher numbers of teacher absences were associated with lower teacher self-efficacy.

The results of this study support this existing research and, additionally, self-efficacy was also found to predict the use of sick days due to perceived job related stress; however, the relationship, when job satisfaction, irrational beliefs, and depression were controlled, was positive rather than in the predicted negative direction. Thus, the desire to take a day off due to teacher-perceived, teaching-related stress was higher when teacher self-efficacy was high. This finding is similar to the finding of Classen and Chiu (2010) who found that teachers who indicated greater workload stress also indicated greater classroom management self-efficacy.

Participants in this study obtained a somewhat lower TSES score than the sample from the original validation study for the TSES (Heneman, Kimball, & Milanowski, 2006), suggesting that current participants expressed less teaching efficacy on average than did the validation
sample. These slightly lower levels of self-efficacy may account for lower levels of job satisfaction in this study in comparison to previous research.

One of the research hypotheses that was not supported was that self-efficacy would be associated with level of education and years of teaching experience. It is possible that no significant difference were found due to the homogeneity of the sample in this study. The teachers in this sample had similar scores for teaching-self-efficacy, regardless of age or level of education.

**Depression.** According to Schonfeld (1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000, 2001), depressive symptoms could also relate to teacher absenteeism and motivation to continue in the profession. In Schonfeld’s (1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000, 2001) studies, depressive symptoms in teachers have been linked to satisfaction and motivation. Other studies have shown similar results (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Ferguson, Frost, & Hall, 2012), but, as yet, there have been no studies that examined teachers’ depressive symptoms and absenteeism.

In this study, it seems that a fairly high percentage of participants met suggested cut off score for symptoms of depression (approximately 40% of teachers). Symptoms of depression were between 15-19% for the original validation study of the CES-D from the general population. (Radoff, 1977). Depressive symptoms are double that for the teachers in this study. The results of this study show a higher percentage of teachers who meet the cut-off score for symptoms considered to be at risk for developing clinical depression. In a study by Schonfeld (1990b), 32% of the sample had score at or above the 16 point cut off score on the CES-D.

In this study, higher depression scores were associated with higher scores on a measure of intention to leave. Job satisfaction also was a significant predictor, suggesting that, as job satisfaction decreased, intention to leave increased. This finding is interesting because there is a
direct relationship between depression and low job satisfaction, as an indicator of a teacher wanting to quit. In this study teachers’ years of experience correlated negatively with depressive symptoms (CES-D) indicating that less experienced teachers were more depressed.

**Irrational beliefs.** Zingle and Anderson (1990) found that teachers’ stress scores were significantly related to their scores on a measure or irrational beliefs about teaching. It may be that the teachers’ irrational beliefs in general relate not only to their sense of stress but also to teachers’ motivation to attend work. There is little research linking teacher irrational beliefs to absenteeism. This study showed that irrational beliefs were related to absenteeism. In this study, a higher level of irrational beliefs was associated with greater use of sick days, wanting to take a sick day due to perceived work-related stress, and self-reporting that one had used a sick day due to perceived work related stress. Higher irrational beliefs scores were also associated with higher scores on intention to leave.

In this study, teachers’ age correlated negatively with irrational beliefs (TIBS), indicating that younger teachers had more irrational beliefs about teaching. This may support the notion that newer teachers have unrealistic expectations about teaching (Louis, 1980). Irrational beliefs were also linked to higher scores for symptoms of depression. This supports existing research about the link between teachers irrational beliefs and teacher distress (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006).

**Implications for education/ school psychologists.** The performance of students is affected negatively by teacher turnover and teacher absence (Norton, 1994), and teacher absence and turnover is costly to schools (The District Management Council, 2004). So, it is important to know factors associated with teacher absence and turnover to inform policies and procedures to keep teachers in the classroom.
It has been reported that as teachers experience more stress and lower job dissatisfaction, in turn the quality of their teaching decreases (Moriarty, Edmonds, Blatchford, & Martin, 2001). If the quality of teaching goes down, this is likely to impact negatively upon student learning. This highlights the importance of addressing not only the practical problems, such as a decrease in student achievement, but also any reported psychological discomfort that may be associated with teaching, as a failure to do so does not fully meet the needs of the teacher or the students. If teacher reported teaching-related stress is not addressed, teachers are likely to become increasingly dissatisfied with their jobs and frustrated by their students. Additionally, colleagues of teachers who report high levels of irrational beliefs have been shown to view them as less professionally capable than those who reported low levels of irrational beliefs (Endes, 1996).

Although many teacher training programs now incorporate stress management techniques to help teacher reduce job related stress, there may be several different reasons that teachers do not or are unable to apply the knowledge and techniques they have learned during their teacher training. Performing as a consultant, it is the role of the school psychologist to assist teachers and attempt to reduce the impact of teacher stress on students. There may be several ways in which school psychologists can support teachers in relation to improving teacher adjustment and retention.

School psychologists are trained to provide supportive services to all members of the school community, including both students and adults. Although teacher stress management is not a traditional area of service delivery, school psychologists can be instrumental in implementing stress reduction programming for teachers. School psychologists can also be involved in identifying and determining the need for teacher stress-reduction programs, as they are well-trained in conducting needs assessments and have access to resources for surveys.
developed for those purposes. The school psychologist can develop, administer, and analyze a needs assessment that focuses on teacher stress.

There are several effective stress reduction programs that could be incorporated into workshops for teacher. These include interventions such as stress awareness, physiological training, environment adjustment, and cognitive coping strategies (Brown & Uehara, 1999). Documented positive outcomes for stress management intervention programs include improved peer support, reduced levels of somatic complaints, decreased work pressure and role ambiguity, enhanced feelings of personal accomplishment, and improved job satisfaction (Brown & Uehara, 1999). According to Kipps-Vaughan (2013) “Stress management should not be offered because teachers are stressed and need help, but because teaching is one of the most stressful occupations and there are helpful techniques and strategies available.” (p. 16).

It is important to study factors associated with teacher absences and attrition (i.e., leaving the profession) so that administrators can determine possible interventions to keep teachers in the classroom. Teachers should be able to seek support from the school psychologist about teaching related issues, even if these are not directly related to one specific student. The ability to do so could lead to increased engagement and decreased stress. Although teacher mentoring systems exist for new teachers in some schools, school psychologists could be instrumental in helping newer teachers connect with veteran teachers who have expressed an interest in mentoring.

**Limitations of this study.** The study has several limitations. First, although the sample size was fairly large, it is also fairly homogenous consisting of mainly White, female teacher between the ages of who have a high level of education and at least 10 years of teaching experience. There were fewer newer teachers, males, and ethnically diverse teachers. This may be a result of the online and work of mouth recruitment method. Although it is not possible to
extrapolate the results of this study to make generalizations about all teachers, the sample for this study was quite similar demographically to teachers working within New York State.

A large percentage of responders did not complete the study questionnaire. Had they done so, their answers might have affected results. The reason for their lack of questionnaire completion is not known. It is possible that the forced response survey option or the length of the survey was impacted the response rate. It is also possible that some teachers found the personal nature of some of the items to be intrusive. The questionnaire was not piloted; so the investigator did not receive feedback about possible factors that would affect completion.

Several of the questions asked teachers to remember what they had done in the past. Retrospective memory is notoriously inaccurate (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Rogler, Malgady, & Tryon, 1992). A better and more accurate way to measure teacher absences would be to use official school human resources records of teacher absences. However, the only way to determine the use of self-administered ‘mental health days’ is to directly ask teachers about this.

In addition, teacher intention to act may not lead to subsequent behavior. Thus, teachers may want and even intend to leave the profession, but may not end up actually doing so for various reasons. Thus, it would be desirable to use data from surveys such as the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (Ingersoll, 2002) to obtain this information.

The study did not access school climate variables that others have found (Billingsley, 2003; Cha, 2008; Collie et al., 2012; Engelking, 1986) to relate to teacher absenteeism and attrition.

The reliability of the Intention to Leave scale was low. Results that included this scale should be interpreted with caution. The recruitment script to participants may have telegraphed what I was looking for such, that participants who felt really stressed and depressed were more
likely to complete the questionnaire. The results of this study may have been different if certain demographic variables were continuous rather than categorical. This study was correlational in nature, and therefore conclusions about causality are not warranted.

**Directions for Future Research.** The scope of this study should also be extended to different states and regions within the US. If a more heterogeneous sample is recruited, it would be possible to investigate the differences between new and veteran teachers, male and female teachers, and different ethnicities. Future research could also link possible health problems to higher scores of irrational beliefs, stress, and absenteeism.

Future research should aim to study the relationship between student achievement and teacher related variables of job satisfaction, depressive symptoms, irrational beliefs and absenteeism. This would help to highlight the needs and importance of addressing these issues both on a school level and within teacher education. Future research could also expand on the study of Spanish teachers (Bermejo-Toro & Prieto-Ursula, 2006) to determine what types of irrational beliefs may cause increases absenteeism due to stress.

Future research could also include an objective and specific measures of teacher stress. Collie et al. (2012) stated that research consistently identifies two types of teacher stress: stress related to student behavior and stress related to workload. A measure of stress similar to ones used in previous research in teacher depression, such as measures of stress used by Schonfeld (1990b), could look at specific types of stressors associated with absenteeism and symptoms of depression.

An expanded measure of job satisfaction could also be included to identify more specific problematic school factors, especially poor work climate and lack of administrative support that
have been associated with low levels of job satisfaction and low levels of commitment (Billingley 2003).

Future research could also use nested data looking at the achievement and performance of specific teachers students in relation to some of the factors measured in the study, and look at regression analysis for that data in order to link teacher characteristics to student achievement. Future research could also try to address the phenomenon that there is more teacher absence reported in school districts that serve students from lower SES backgrounds (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006). It could be speculated that these schools may pose more challenging working conditions due to the issues affecting students from low SES backgrounds. Qualitative information could be gathered in regard to what aspects of working with low SES populations teachers find the most stressful.

A more reliable Intention to Leave scale should be constructed and validated using actual teacher behavior.

**Conclusion.** This dissertation assessed depressive symptoms, self-efficacy, irrational beliefs, self-reported absences, and motivation to leave teaching. Teachers were also asked about their job satisfaction and issues associated with satisfaction as they related to teachers’ self-reported use of sick days and intent to leave the teaching profession or transfer to another school. Teachers were asked to indicate the absentee behavior that they attributed to stress in their work. Teacher turnover, attrition, and absenteeism cost school districts large amounts of money and affect student achievement (O'Brien et al., 1985; Summers & Raivets, 1982; The District Management Council, 2004). Teacher job satisfaction, according to research described in the literature review, is at a 25 year low (Markow et al., 2013). It is possible that symptoms of depression can arise within unhealthy teaching environments, even though the teachers enter
their positions at school in good physical and mental health (Schonfeld, 2000) School districts and administrators should therefore examine and respond to factors that impact upon teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In doing so, they can attempt to reduce factors that have a detrimental impact on teacher motivation, and seek to increase factors that have a positive effect on motivation (Ferris & Winkler, 1986).

Teachers with low job satisfaction are more apt to quit, transfer to a different school, or call in sick. Many administrators approach rates of high absenteeism with the assumption that excessive use of sick days is an abuse of the availability of sick days, and not as a symptom of job-related stress, depression, and job satisfaction. Schools should provide organizational supports including training for new staff on stress-reduction, as a possible means of increasing morale and improving attendance. Previous studies indicate various training programs providing teacher with techniques that appear promising in reducing teacher stress (Schaubman, Stetson, & Plog, 2011; Anderson, Levinson, Barker, & Kiewra, 1999; Bertoch, Nielson, Curley, & Borg, 1989).

It becomes clear from the literature reviewed that issues related to teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction need to be addressed in policymaking, not simply with regard to reducing teacher absenteeism, but also to understand how these absences relate to larger issues of teachers’ job satisfaction and mental health. If administrators provide more supportive environments, and recognize absenteeism as a possible symptom of stress, and improve pre-service and/or mentoring coaching programs, rather than instituting incentive and consequence based programs, teachers will be less likely to be absent, leave, or quit. The intention to leave, use of sick days, symptoms of depression, self-efficacy, and irrational beliefs, highlight the fact that school districts and administrators should implement school-based wellness programs and
adopt practices such as mentoring and leadership strategies, for example, that improve job
satisfaction and reduce teacher stress. Further research will hopefully provide school districts
with information they can use to reduce absenteeism and teacher turnover, and therefore reduce
the impact this has on student achievement.
Appendix A

Appendix A: Email/Recruitment Script

Dear Teacher,

My name is Ruth Green, and I am a graduate student in the Educational Psychology Ph.D. program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). I am conducting a study to investigate the relationship between teachers' thoughts and feelings about teaching, teacher stress, intention to leave or transfer, and use of sick days. I would like you to complete a brief questionnaire that measures these areas. Participation will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

The benefits of your participation will be that information concerning teachers' stress and job satisfaction will be added to the field of educational psychology. If a link can be found between intention to leave, use of sick days, symptoms of stress, and thoughts and feelings about teaching, then this will highlight the fact that school districts and administrators should implement school-based wellness programs and adopt practices such as mentoring and leadership strategies for example, that improve job satisfaction and reduce teacher stress. Although there have been studies that investigated the aforementioned factors individually, no one study has looked holistically at possible links between teacher satisfaction, intention to leave, depressive symptoms, self-efficacy, irrational beliefs, and absenteeism. Your participation will therefore add valuable input to this body of research.

Please click on the link below to complete the questionnaire. Your response will remain anonymous.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Appendix B

Research Questionnaire

1. Age
   - 21-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-35
   - 36 or older

2. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

3. Ethnicity
   - African American
   - Asian
   - Hispanic
   - Caucasian
   - Other

4. Do you have any children under the age of 5?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Which of the following best describes your current educational level?
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Bachelor's degree plus some graduate credits
   - Master's degree
   - Master's degree plus some additional graduate credits
6. What is your current position?
- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Substitute Teacher
- Other

7. How many years have you worked in this profession?
- 0-2
- 3-4
- 5-10
- More than 10

8. What age group do you currently teach?
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

9. How many years have you been at your current school?
- 0-2
- 3-4
- 5-10
- More than 10

10. How many previous schools have you worked at?
- 0-1
- 2-3
- 4-6
- More than 5

11. Which best describes the type of school you work in?
- Public School within New York State
- Public School outside of New York State
- Private School within New York State
- Private School outside of New York State
**12. What is your level of agreement with each of the following statements?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have considered leaving teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think if I were choosing my career again, I would choose teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think in the near future I will leave teaching</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am considering transferring to a different school in the near future</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**13. How satisfied are you with your job?**

- [ ] Very Dissatisfied
- [ ] Somewhat Dissatisfied
- [ ] Somewhat Satisfied
- [ ] Very Satisfied
14. Approximately how many sick days did you use during the previous school year?
- Less than 5 days
- 5-10 days
- More than 10 days

15. How many sick days and personal days combined are you allotted per year by your school district?
- Less than 10 days
- 10 days
- More than 10 days

16. Are you able to accrue unused sick days?
- Yes
- No
17. How many sick days have you accrued?
- 10 days or less
- 11 to 30 days
- 31 to 60 days
- More than 50 days

18. Have you used a significant portion of accrued sick days for maternity leave or a prolonged medical leave because of an illness?
- Yes
- No

19. Have you had medical leave due to stress related to working as a teacher?
- Yes
- No

20. Have you ever felt so stressed in relation to your work as a teacher that you wanted to take a day off work?
- Yes
- No

21. Have you ever used a sick day due to symptoms of stress related to your work as a teacher?
- Yes
- No

22. If so, approximately how many times in the last year have you used a sick day due to symptoms of stress related to your work as a teacher?
- Never
- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- 6-10 times
- More than 10 times
*23. Below is a list of ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate by checking one of the boxes below for each item, how often you have felt this way during the last week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)</th>
<th>Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)</th>
<th>Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)</th>
<th>Most or all of the time (5-7 days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt I was just as good as other people.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt depressed.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that everything I did was an effort.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hopeful about the future.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought my life had been a failure.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt fearful.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sleep was restless.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was happy.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I talked less than usual.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I felt lonely.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>People were unfriendly.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I enjoyed life.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had crying spells.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I felt sad.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that people dislike me.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not get 'going'.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns from (1) 'None at all' to (5) 'A Great Deal'.

Respond by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent can you craft questions for your students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
25. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Circle 1 for ‘strongly disagree’ (SD); Circle 2 for ‘disagree’ (D); Circle 3 for ‘not sure’ (NS); Circle 4 for ‘agree’ (A); Circle 5 for ‘strongly agree’ (SA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1) SD</th>
<th>2) D</th>
<th>3) NS</th>
<th>4) A</th>
<th>5) SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think I’m really inadequate when I don’t get the approval or respect for what I do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The prospect of teaching a class I don’t have good control over is more than I can take.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I’m a failure when I haven’t ‘got through’ to a student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I really should be able to solve all my students’ problems perfectly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I should be able to succeed at all the important things I do at school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To make mistakes or perform poorly as a teacher is for me one of the worst things in the world.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel totally hopeless when I don’t get all my work done on time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can’t stand being criticized or thought badly of when I haven’t finished something or done it properly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it too hard to balance my home and work demands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I shouldn’t have to work so hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools are really lousy places because they give teachers too much work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It’s really bad to have to put in so many hours both inside and outside of the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>One of the things I find totally bad is the lack of communication between teachers and central administration.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Teacher Demographics

1. Age
   - Age 21-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-35
   - 36 or older

2. What is your gender?
   - What is your gender? Female
   - Male

3. Ethnicity
   - Ethnicity African American
   - Asian
   - Hispanic
   - Caucasian
   - Other

4. Do you have any children under the age of 5?
   - Do you have any children under the age of 5? Yes
   - No

5. Which of the following best describes your current educational level?
   - Which of the following best describes your current educational level? Bachelors degree
   - Bachelors degree plus some graduate credits
   - Masters degree
   - Masters degree plus some additional graduate credits

6. What is your current position?
   - What is your current position? General Education Teacher
   - Special Education Teacher
   - Substitute Teacher
   - Other
7. How Many years have you worked in this profession?
☐ How Many years have you worked in this profession? 0-2
☐ 3-4
☐ 5-10
☐ More than 10

8. What age group do you currently teach?
☐ What age group do you currently teach? Elementary School
☐ Middle School
☐ High School

9. How many years have you been at your current school?
☐ How many years have you been at your current school? 0-2
☐ 3-4
☐ 5-10
☐ More than 10

10. How many previous schools have you worked at?
☐ How many previous schools have you worked at? 0-1
☐ 2-3
☐ 4-5
☐ More than 5

11. Which best describes the type of school you work in?
☐ Which best describes the type of school you work in? Public School within New York State
☐ Public School outside of New York State
☐ Private School within New York State
☐ Private School outside of New York State
Appendix D

Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction Survey and Intention to Leave the Profession

Item

How satisfied are you with your job

Response Format

Very Dissatisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Very Satisfies

Instructions

What is your level of agreement with each of the following statements?

Response Format

Strongly Disagree
Somewhat Disagree
Neutral
Somewhat Agree
Strongly Agree

Items

I have considered leaving teaching.
I think if I were choosing my career again, I would choose teaching.
I think in the near future I will leave teaching.
I am considering transferring to a different school in the near future.
Appendix E

Self-Reported Use of Sick Days

Approximately how many sick days did you use during the previous school year? _______

How many sick days and personal days combined are you allotted per year by your school district?

less than 10              10         more than 10

Are you able to accrue unused sick days?  Yes/ No

If so, how many sick days do you have in your bank? ______

Do you have the option to be reimbursed for unused sick days? Yes/No

Have you used a significant portion of accrued sick days for maternity leave or due to a prolonged medical leave because of an illness?  Yes/ No

Have you had medical leave due to a stress related illness? Yes/ No

Have you ever felt so stressed that you wanted to take a day off work? Yes/ No

Have you ever used a sick day because you felt stressed? Yes/ No

If so, approximately how many times in the last year have you used a sick day due to feeling stressed?

1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5  5-6  6-7  7-8  8-9  9-10  more than 10 days
Appendix F

Depression Questionnaire (CES-D)

Instructions

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate by checking one of the boxes below for each item, how often you have felt this way during the past week.

Response Format

Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)
Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)
Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)
Most or all of the time (5-7 days)

Items

1. I was bothered by things that usually don’t bother me
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.
3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.
4. I felt I was just as good as other people.
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.
6. I felt depressed.
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort.
8. I felt hopeful about the future.
9. I thought my life had been a failure.
10. I felt fearful.
11. My sleep was restless.
12. I was happy.
13. I talked less than usual.
15. People were unfriendly.
16. I enjoyed life.
17. I had crying spells.
18. I felt sad.
19. I felt that people dislike me.
20. I could not get “going.”
Appendix G

Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale-Short Form (TSES)

Instructions

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

Response Format

Nothing
Very little
Some Influence
Quote a bit
A great deal

Items

1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?
3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?
4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?
12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
Appendix H

Teacher Irrational Belief Scale

Instructions

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Response Format

strongly disagree (SD)
disagree (D)
not sure (NS)
agree (A)
strongly agree (SA)

Items

1. I think I’m really inadequate when I don’t get the approval or respect for what I do.
2. The prospect of teaching a class I don’t have good control over is more than I can take.
3. I think I’m a failure when I haven’t ‘got through’ to a student.
4. I really should be able to solve all my students’ Problems perfectly.
5. I should be able to succeed at all the important things I do at school.
6. To make mistakes or perform poorly as a teacher is for me one of the worst things in the world.
7. I feel totally hopeless when I don’t get all my work done on time.
8. I can’t stand being criticized or thought badly of when I haven’t finished something or done it properly.
9. I find it too hard to balance my home and work demands.
10. I shouldn’t’ have to work so hard.
11. Schools are really lousy places because they give teachers too much work.
12. It’s really bad to have to put in so many hours both inside and outside the classroom.
13. One of the things I find totally bad is the lack of communication between teachers and central administration.
14. Teachers should be consulted about decisions.
15. Schools really should attend more to teachers’ problems and it is totally unfair when they don’t.
16. Without good teacher- administrator communication and support, schools are the very worst places to work.
17. I can’t stand it when I am not consulted about a decision which affects my teaching.
18. As a teacher, I should have the power to be able to make my students do what I want.
19. Students should always be respectful, considerate and behave well.
20. Students who constantly mis-behave are horrible and should be severely punished.
21. I can’t stand it when students misbehave.
22. It’s really awful to have to teach in class where there are so many problems.
References


