Elementary Principals' Perceptions of Conflicts with Teachers in Elementary Schools: A Phenomenological Study

Daryl C. Roselle
Nova Southeastern University, landofpromise3573@gmail.com

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Elementary School Principals’ Perceptions of Conflict with Teachers in Elementary Schools: A Phenomenological Study

by

Daryl C. Roselle

A Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
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Nova Southeastern University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by Daryl C. Roselle under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

Date of Defense
September 20, 2017

Jason J. Campbell, Ph.D.
Chair

Robin Cooper, Ph.D.

Judith McKay, J.D., Ph.D.

Date of Final Approval
4/11/18

Jason J. Campbell, Ph.D.
Chair
Acknowledgements

“Jesus said, I am the true vine, and the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ are His branches; for without Jesus Christ, then the sons and daughters of Him can do absolutely nothing.” (St. John 15:5)

This dissertation work is dedicated to my immediate family, extended family members, many in the household of faith, several deceased, and countless friends. I acknowledge a few:

To my wife of 25 years, Kimberly, thanks for walking past my dissertation work station and encouraging me with words of endurance and perseverance from Galatians 6:9.

To my mom of 49 years, Mable, thank you for reading my entire dissertation prior to my oral defense and showing me the power in honoring your parents, according to Exodus 20:12.

To my children Jeremiah, Josiah, and Jireh, thank you for expressing your gratitude for every inch of progress I made towards dissertation completion based on I Thessalonians 5:18.

To my only brother Terrence, thank you for providing financial assistance when needed to meet family and school needs, according to Ecclesiastes 10:19.

To my favorite Aunt Delores and Uncle William, thank you for reminding me to walk in humility throughout this entire process, as a requirement of God, according to Micah 6:8.
To my entire extended Roselle family, thank you for cheering me on at Family Gathering 2017 during the Trophy Ceremony at St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Pungoteague, Virginia, letting me know the value of believing Philippians 4: 13.

To Mother Delores Lois Witherspoon “Spoon,” who passed Friday, May 13, 2016, thank you for your motherly “Wit of Wisdom” which you gave, continuously depositing spiritual nuggets for everyday survival; you truly lived by Job 12:12.

To the members of my Church of our Lord Jesus Christ (C.O.O.L.J.C.) family, thank you for teaching, reminding, and showing that Jesus is the way, based on John 14:6.
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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences and perceptions of principals in elementary schools regarding conflicts with teachers. In addition, this dissertation focused on four social science theories to analyze the findings of this study including: systems, social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, and functionalism. Through this five chapter dissertation, the researcher examined the lived experiences and elementary principals’ perceptions and 1) explored the root causes of conflicts among teachers and principals, 2) determined the challenges these principals face with teachers, 3) gathered reasons why the phenomenon has been overlooked, 4) examined the power of negative emotions within the conflict process among principals and teachers, and 5) analyzed conflict resolution approaches used by principals when addressing teacher conflicts. From the study, five major themes were identified. In addition, three objectives governed this study. The first objective was to provide an understanding of the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers from a principal’s perspective. The second objective was to explore perceptions of principals about the impacts of conflicts between principals and teachers on students. The third objective was to gain knowledge that will contribute to more effective ways to address conflicts between principals and teachers. This study concluded with providing both theoretical and methodological implications for future research studies along with recommendations for principals on ways to manage conflict with teachers.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Principals’ emotional intelligence plays an intricate part in how teachers respond and perform in the classroom with students. Principal and teacher interactions make it essential to study the emotional intelligences of a principal when addressing a teacher and/or handling a conflict. School stakeholders, such as principals, teachers, superintendents, and community leaders, lack understanding in how significant principals’ emotional intelligence is and how it impacts the outcome of student performance. This study took a step-by-step approach to the phenomenon concerning emotional intelligence with principals in schools and its effect on teachers and students.

This first chapter provides an introduction to the qualitative study. The first chapter has been divided into five sections. The first section explains the significance of the study. The second section discusses the purpose of the study. The third section outlines the statement of the problem. The fourth section highlights the research objectives, theoretical perspectives, and the research questions. The fifth section shares the goals and the summary of the study.

Based on the perceptions of principals, gathering personal statements, hearing scenarios, and documenting quotes are all essential in investigating the phenomenon concerning how principals’ emotional intelligence impacts both teacher performance and student academic progress. In essence, the study was developed to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of elementary school principals as they deal with conflict among teachers. To retrieve information from participants, the Principal Investigator (PI) sought to develop research questions deductively.
This deductive approach allowed the Principal Investigator to start the discussion from a generalized approach with elementary school principal participants pertaining to conflict between teachers. Thereafter, the PI asked more specific and concrete questions to explore the lived experience of elementary school principals. Data collection and analysis were completed with the intent that emerging themes developed. These themes were the perceived truths needed to assist principals with managing conflicts with teachers more effectively.

**Significance of the Study**

This study was designed to uncover new discoveries related to the phenomenon regarding principal and teacher conflicts in elementary schools. This study added scholarly information to the existing knowledge of research and literature in the field of public education and conflict resolution. Furthermore, this study is designed to provide quality information from an elementary school principal’s perceptive concerning conflicts with teachers and building level administration, who serve as principals.

One of the single variables that influence principal perception is emotions. Bar-On (2006) revealed how emotions persuade relationships in an interpersonal way. Emotions impact the effectiveness of organizations’ influence on people’s behavior. One goal of this study was to obtain data from five elementary school principals, who have the lived the experience of dealing with teachers. In other words, this study sought to understand the lived experience linked with the principals’ emotional intelligence as they interact with their teachers and how principals’ emotional intelligence affected teacher outcomes.
Through the study, the PI sought evidence to see if a principal’s interactions with teachers impacted teacher performance. The primary goal was to examine the lived experiences of five elementary school principals. The second goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of principals as related to how teacher performance changes daily based on the principal’s emotional intelligence in a conflicting situation. The third goal of this study was designed to provide a qualified contribution to elementary school principals in relation to how they handle conflicts between teacher and principal. After interviewing five principals, the findings will benefit at least ten sub-groups: superintendents, principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, cafeteria and custodial workers, parents, community school stakeholders, and students.

Researchers may use the results from this qualitative study to further understand conflict between principals and teachers, which hinders student academic achievement indirectly. A review of the literature involving teacher and principal conflicts shows that this phenomenon has been omitted or has not been given ample attention.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the principals’ perceptions in relation to emotional intelligence when addressing principal to teacher conflicts. This study attempted to look at, if any, unhealthy emotional dispositions of principals that lead to a downward spiral effect in best teacher practices in elementary schools in Virginia. Bar-On’s (2000) work talks about emotional intelligence and how it is defined as an assortment of capabilities, competencies, and non-cognitive skills that individuals may use to flourish in environmental pressures.
A second purpose of this study was to explore the principal’s emotional intelligence concerning his or her perceptions relating to teachers in the school. Due to the workload placed upon principals daily, principals’ emotions fluctuate minute by minute of the day. At times a principal may express healthy emotions (happiness) and other times a principal may express unhealthy emotions (bitterness), which cause strife among teachers and principals.

Thirdly, this study evaluated conflict resolution models for their effectiveness. If as a result of the study, none of the models show effectiveness, then the PI may propose a new and improved model that may more effectively address conflicts between a principal and a teacher. This newly proposed model was created based on the principals’ data concerning principal and teacher conflicts. The model identified specific emotions from a list of unhealthy emotions that are connected to many conflicting situations. This new model, if implemented, will train principals in emotional intelligence in relation to school conflicts among principals and teachers, and monitor emotions in practical elementary settings. As a result of an elementary school principal’s implementation of an effective model, the hope is the following changes may occur in elementary schools in Virginia:

1. Decrease the number of principal and teacher conflicts as a result of misinterpreting the principal’s perspectives concerning conflicting issues among teachers.

2. Increase student achievement, as principal perspectives will no longer affect teacher performance.

3. Increase building morale due to a new and improved model that addresses a principal’s perspective when addressing teacher conflicts with principals.
Through the literature review and examination of scholarly studies, the Principal Investigator hopes to discover the significance of emotional intelligence for principals in aspects of the conflict resolution process. From evaluating conflict resolution models and through implementation of a positive emotional intelligence resolution model for principals, the researcher hopes to fix the perceived problem that stems from elementary school principals in Virginia who have conflicts with teachers.

Conflict analysts must endorse models and/or create an emotionally-driven conflict resolution model that highlights every negative emotion, like anger, from the principal’s behavior in the conflict process. Deciphering each emotion, as a principal, is detrimental in determining the précised resolution for the conflict in principal to teacher conflicts. Identifying the specific principal’s emotion in the conflict with teachers provides a better probability of reaching resolution with teachers in the elementary school setting.

Since this study lends itself to a phenomenological approach, field data is needed to understand how a principal’s negative emotional intelligence translates into poor teacher performance. A principal’s perspectives when addressing teacher conflicts potentially may hinder student achievement. An effective emotional intelligence model that assists principals is crucial. In essence, teachers will be helped indirectly. Prior theoretical frameworks designed to address principals’ leadership excludes the importance of principals’ emotional intelligence and its impact on conflict resolution with teachers. Previous conflict resolution models were inadequate and could not possibly list the causes of why principals could not regulate their emotions or explain how to overcome the challenges from non-regulated emotions.
Historically, previous researchers only looked at generalized conflict styles and its resolution methods; however, researchers did not test a conflict resolution method with emphasis on faith-based principles. Neither did researchers judge the outcome in conflict resolution between principal and teacher. The qualitative approach for this study was guided by five major research questions. The questions are:

1. How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?
2. What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?
3. What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?
4. What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?
5. What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

Statement of the Problem

Research has shown negative emotional behavior, such as revenge, impacts outcomes. In elementary schools it appears that a principal’s negative emotions indirectly affect student achievement. By excluding emotional intelligence from analyzing academic performance, school principals have naturally placed an emphasis on student performance only, as opposed to looking at principals’ perceptions towards teachers when dealing with conflicts. According to Woods (2010), the spotlight should not be on the student, but on the employee’s experience in the workplace. For many years, school
principals have placed heavy emphasis on the students, but researchers should consider placing responsibility on the principal when analyzing student achievement.

When looking at the principal’s actions when dealing with teachers, it is obvious that principals express many emotions. Some of the principal’s emotions are positive (trust) and at times their emotions are negative (disgust). Teachers with hidden and isolated emotions change the perspectives of principals. Since principals’ perspectives are linked to teacher performance, then identifying and addressing emotions from both parties must be examined. Ignoring emotions cause problems among teachers and principals. Regardless of the state of emotions, whether healthy or unhealthy, principals must examine each emotion and act in a positive manner to avoid conflicts with teachers.

To summarize, emotions affect teacher performance.

In elementary schools in Virginia, a reoccurring phenomenon happens when a principal allows his or her negative emotions to interfere when addressing teacher conflicts. In essence, a problem occurs when the principal cannot regulate his or her emotions among teachers. There has been very little responsive action for principals in terms of educating and training principals in conflict resolution with a specialized concentration on emotional intelligence. According to Adilogullari (2011), it was determined that emotional intelligence was a pioneering ideology because it was not classified as intelligence until the 1940s. Yet, it was not until the 1980s that emotional intelligence began to gain momentum in the area of correlating emotions to workplace performance.

The connection between principals’ emotionality and teacher performance, when addressing teacher conflicts, possibly has been overlooked. Yet, emotions lie as the
nucleus of teacher drive and obligation. Emotions are correlated to both physical and mental well-being. Thus, the key variable in workplace effectiveness is the emotionality state of the individual (Woods, 2010, p. 892). The perceptions of principals towards teacher performance change drastically when the emotional variable is overlooked in resolution. Studies have addressed principal performance and conflict resolution separate from connecting the two entities to student performance. Research does not address principal performance affecting teacher performance and student achievement, especially when emotional intelligence is a key variable.

Repeatedly research claims in Chapter 2 have not depicted linkage between student achievement and principals’ emotional intelligence. In addition, researchers fail to give insight about how the mindsets of principals play an intricate part in how teachers relate to students instructionally. Furthermore, the research is very limited in terms of how the emotional intelligence variable used with a principal effectively changes outcomes with teachers when in the conflict resolution process.

The insignificant amount of knowledge regarding this phenomenon has directly affected student achievement because of teacher performance with students in the classroom. With ongoing stagnant and/or declining student performance in elementary schools in Virginia, researchers must closely examine relationships between principal and teacher to see if principal perspectives among teachers solidify emotional intelligence as playing a key factor in student achievement indirectly. The effects will grossly alarm educators and the community at large.
Background of the Problem

According to the Fall Membership Reports for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE, 2017), about 1,288,481 children are served in Virginia public schools. In the assessed elementary grades, there are an estimated 99,022 third graders, 99,258 fourth graders, and 97,165 fifth graders (VDOE, 2017). The Department of Education in Virginia does not look at academic performance collectively. Instead, the educational reporting agency looks at academic performance based on individual sub-groups. The 12 sub-groups in Virginia are named as: American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, White, Two or More Races, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantage, Limited English, and Migrants (VDOE, 2017).

The data show that there are a growing number of academic failures in each sub-group according to the three year trend (VDOE, 2017). According to the State Report Card (VDOE, 2017), there were 18% Females, 23% Males, 23% Blacks, 29% Hispanics, 14% whites, 9% Asians, 23% American Indians, 15% Native Hawaiians, 17% Two Races, 53% Students with Disadvantages, 34% Economically Disadvantage, and 39% Limited English who did not pass the end of the year academic assessment. This data was solely based on the overall performance of all elementary schools in Virginia. However, the data show a decline or stagnancy in academic student performance among urban schools. The randomly selected urban school division data showed the following percentages based on the State Report Card (VDOE, 2017) proportionately with the same sub-groups: Females (F) 37%, Males (M) 43%, Blacks (B) 44%, Hispanics (H) 41%, White (W)11%, Asian (A) 32%, American Indian (AI) 17%, Native American (NA) 23%, Two Races (2+) 22%, Students with Disadvantages (SWD) 66%, Economically
Disadvantage (ED) 46%, and Limited English (LE) 59% (VDOE, 2017). Below are detailed tables that show assessment scores for all students in Virginia in grades 3-5 in the subjects of reading, math, science, and history.

Along with participant data, the PI reviewed data from the Virginia Department of Education District-wide Report Card (2017). The primary purpose of including student academic data is to show how student achievement is not improving. A justifiable reason for the lack of student progress is a probable factor relating to teacher performance. These data were generated based on a three year span, according to the VDOE Report Card. The first year data was collected for school year 2013-2014. The second year data was collected from school year 2014-2015. The third year data was collected from school year 2015-2016. Data for the 2016-2017 has not been collected per the Virginia Department of Education District-wide Report Card. The data included elementary school data for grades 3, 4, and 5. The PI collected reading and mathematics data for grades 3 and 4 and grades 3, 4, and 5 in reading (R), mathematics (M), science (S), and history (H). Assessments are not given for science and history in grades 3, 4, and 5. Table 1 below shows data for each of the 11 reporting categories for state assessments in the core disciplines. Obviously an underlying reason is linked to poor student academic achievement for Grade 3. Table 2 shows Grade 4. Table 3 shows Grade 5. Teacher performance in the classroom with students was considered.
### Table 1

**Percentage of Students Failing End of Year Assessments by Sub-groups in 3-Years for Grade Three**

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*Note. VDOE, 2017*

### Table 2

**Percentage of Students Failing End of Year Assessments by Sub-groups in 3-Years for Grade Four**

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*Note. VDOE, 2017*
Table 3

*Percentage of Students Failing End of Year Assessments by Sub-groups in 3-Years for Grade Five*

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*Note. VDOE, 2017*

The PI sought discipline data for the entire school division per the electronic resources on the Virginia Department of Education Report Card (VDOE, 2017). The website did not release data per elementary and secondary schools individually. All data were collapsed to show disciplinary infractions division-wide for students in grades K-12. The tables in Chapter 1 show the disciplinary infractions division for the state of Virginia.

**Research Objective, Theoretical Perspective, and Research Questions**

This next section outlines the objective of the qualitative research, the theoretical viewpoints of the study, and the research questions that govern this phenomenological study. The information in this section provides documentation for conducting the study. This section also gives a step-by-step structure for the study.

**Research objective.** This study has a three-fold research objective. The first objective is to provide an understanding of the lived experiences of conflicts among
principals and teachers from a principal’s perspective. The second objective is to explore perceptions of principals about the impacts of conflicts between principals and teachers on students. The third objective is to gain knowledge that will contribute to more effectively addressing conflicts between principals and teachers.

The qualitative research methodology was selected for this study. The PI selected the qualitative approach, as opposed to a quantitative or mixed method approach, for the mere fact that the PI wanted to hear statements and scenarios from the participants of their lived experiences. The PI studied the work of qualitative researchers and found that Creswell (2007) established a set of guidelines that justifies qualitative research as ideal for gathering data because research that is obtained from participants who “hang out” where the problem occurs will have more beneficial data to change the phenomenon. Creswell (2007) even extends his reason for qualitative research to include: a) ability to examine documents, observe behavior, and talk to participants, b) triangulation data instead of looking at one source to create an understanding of the phenomenon, c) an inductive approach to tackling the issue, d) understanding the meaning that participants hold concerning the problem, e) researcher flexibility because the research idea may shift during a phase based on the responses from the participants, f) ability to review the problem from a social lens, g) the researcher ability to have precision of speech to determine accurately what is seen, heard, and felt from the participants, and h) consideration of all possible factors pertaining to the problem.

The study itself approaches the issue from the qualitative research perspective; however, the phenomenological approach appeared to be more suited for the study since it pertained to understanding the phenomenon from the lived experience of the
participants. There are other qualitative approaches such as case studies, ethnographical, grounded theory, and narrative research, but the phenomenological approach worked best for looking at the lived experiences of principals. The phenomenology approach was the most popular based on social and health science studies (Borgatta & Borgatta, 1992; Swingewood, 1991), and educational studies (Tesch, 1998; van Manen, 1990). Additional reasons justifying the phenomenological approach will be later explained in the methodology section in Chapter 3.

The Principal Investigator sought this type of phenomenological study in order to have a complete analysis of the lived experiences of principals in a conflicting situation with teachers. The PI sought five participants from three cities in Virginia based on a theoretical reason cited by researchers Polkinghorne (1989) and Smith (2008) for choosing only five participants for the study. First, Creswell (2007) establishes a quantity guideline pertaining to qualitative research. Creswell cited Polkinghorne (1989) to explain that researchers need only to talk to between five and 25 individuals to gather data. Second, Smith (2008) agreed with Polkinghorne’s view of the participant count being small. The researchers believed a small participant population lends itself for sufficient, in-depth interactions with the researcher (Smith, 2008). These researchers shared how smaller size participant groups grant more specific examination of a phenomenon received from the participants’ differences and similarities (Smith, 2008).

Moustakas (1994) emphasizes the notion that the participants are providing the researcher with personal information about their own experiences. Due to the lived experiences being told confidentially, it is in the best interest of the researcher to keep the participant group small in order to uphold integrity and the commitment of keeping the
shared experiences in confidence. It is the hope of the researcher that the information obtained from five participants will be just as valuable in nature as data from up to 25 participants. The goal is to build a personal, one-on-one relationship with fewer participants rather than having to establish rapport with a large number of participants. The PI thinks having a large number may cause the personal rapport with the PI to diminish. It seems when the rapport with the participants dwindles, the integrity behind the responses from the surveys may decrease as well.

The PI recruited participants through a protocol with certain criteria. The specific criteria for participant selection will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Based on the recruitment of principals, the participants were selected from cities in Virginia. The PI sought principals from urban and rural elementary school districts for principal diversity. The recruitment criteria suggest that each participant has been a principal for over ten years and have experienced at least ten principal to teacher conflicts in the last 12 months.

This study collected and analyzed data using the information from the five participants. The analysis of the data was conducted based on the theoretical frameworks that govern the world of conflict resolution. The theories from the field ranged from the early 1900s to the present. The historical range will add validity to the belief system associated with principals’ perspectives in regards to emotional intelligence. The PI triangulated data to verify the credibility of the participant statements based on the current research today.

**Theoretical perspective.** This study was conducted using a qualitative methodology. Of the many research approaches, the PI selected a phenomenological
study within the qualitative methodology. The experiences in this study were solely based on the lived experiences of principals from their perspectives. Yet, the principal’s perspective was highly considered to gain a more precise explanation of the phenomenon.

Phenomenology is explained by Patton (1990) as participatory research. The participants are active in the research in order to obtain a very clear understanding of the phenomenon. Hearing from people who have lived the experience provides researchers with at least six advantages that a researcher would not receive, if a quantitative type of research were conducted. Phenomenological studies enable the researcher to: a) clearly understand the phenomenon in a proportionate context, b) witness first hand experiences that encourage participatory openness, c) observe activities and surmise meanings, d) bypass participatory deception and sense what the participants may be unwilling to share, e) add validity to the participants story, and f) gather one-on-one data from the source (Patton, 1990).

**Research questions.** According to Creswell (2007), research questions convert information into a particular form. People have very extensive, complicated, and complex lives. Their experiences may be overwhelming. In order to have focus on one dimension of a problem, research questions frame the researcher’s thoughts along with the participants’ responses. Creswell reports that there are at least four different types of research questions. This study includes each type of research question because each type of question pulls out information that another question avoids. The first type of research question found in this study is the exploratory question. This question is designed to investigate the overall generalization of the phenomenon. The second type of research question is the explanatory. This type of question watches for patterns in the participants’
lived experiences. The third type of research question in this study is the descriptive. This particular question actually describes the lived experience and issue of the problem. The last type of research question is the emancipatory. This type of question means action given to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

To aid in a concrete study, the following five research questions were designed to retrieve information pertaining to the lived experience of elementary school principals in the tri-cities in Virginia. The research questions were congruent with interview questions that had been developed by sections. These questions were asked by the participants. There are five sections to the interview protocol, so there are five research questions to this study. The research question provided the overarching theme to the subsequent interview questions for each section of the interview protocol. See Appendix B for the full interview protocol. Each question approached the phenomenon from the principal’s perspective. The ultimate goal of each research question was to resurrect information from the participants that brought surprising data to consider, as factors for the phenomenon. The findings identified the factors that influenced poor teacher performance and indirectly hindered the stability of increased student achievement for all children.

**Research Question 1**: How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?

The first question was an exploratory based question. The question focused on if the participants perceived reasons for engaging in conflicts with teachers due to the principal’s performance concerning a conflicting situation with a teacher. According to Hallinger (1992), a principal determines the positive learning environment, which
impacts overall organizational effectiveness. If principals do not set the tone for a positive atmosphere and stay in control of their emotions and have emotional intelligence at all times with teachers, then very little improvement in teacher performance will be seen in elementary schools.

**Research Question 2:** What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?

The second question was exploratory directed, and its focal point is on the behaviors from principals among teachers because the principal was not in control of his or her emotions. Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2015) point out a profound theory that shows how a school leader who works in a leadership role is responsible for teacher job satisfaction. A teacher must feel a level of happiness in order to perform her or his job with ongoing success. Principals must seek to find the root cause of teachers’ poor performances. When there is failure to depict the teacher’s reason for his or her poor performance, then minimal improvement will be witnessed on the part of the teacher in the classroom with students in elementary schools. Teacher performance is affected, but it stems from the principal’s inability to modulate his or her emotions during conflicting situations.

**Research Question 3:** What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?

Research question three was explanatory in nature. This question allowed the participants to explain the issue with principals addressing teacher conflicts. The issue of principals who are not trained mind-readers causes principals’ perspectives to be challenged. As a result, principals had actions of teachers explained to them. Woods
(2010) shared that human beings are very ineffective in identifying and determining an emotion to express self. Building leaders, who are principals, are not so much responsible for detecting a certain emotion from a teacher when in conflict because the principal’s focus is for the overall operations in lieu of the school’s success. Principals are given the task to keep the buildings safe and increase student achievement for all students. Due to the higher amount of responsibility given to the principal, not much time is given to counsel and have prolonged sessions to determine teacher happiness from job performance. Principals may not be able to detect and identify the primary reason for teacher poor job performance for various reasons. Some principals perceive teachers as not always expressing their true feelings because of hurt and embarrassment. If principals continue not to know the main reason for a teacher’s poor job performance, and if principals continue to suspect teacher retaliation due to a decision the principal makes, then academic achievement is grossly affected indirectly.

**Research Question 4:** What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?

This research question was descriptive in tone. It allowed the principals to actually describe their emotions and how their emotions affected the culture of elementary schools. Of course, practical experience showed that a principal could not effectively operate a school, while their emotional intelligence was not regulated. Despite the number of complex issues that principals handle in urban and rural education school settings, the principal must focus on emotional intelligence that is inclusive of positive emotions, as opposed to leading people governed by negative emotions.
Chapin’s (2015) research speaks about emotional intelligence. It states that a person’s emotional intelligence determines how they can handle their emotions, as well as the emotions of group members. The principal’s role is not only to manage his or her emotions, but the principal must control the emotions of others as well. Principals are charged to make immediate decisions for the best overall effect of all school stakeholders, including teachers. As a result, the principal may not regulate their emotional intelligence, and teachers may sense the non-regulation of principals’ emotions. To this resolve, a teacher may engage in teacher retaliation to the point of decreasing the amount of time used to prepare quality lessons for students. When the principal fails to handle his or her emotions when directed to the teacher and allows negative emotions to overtake him or her, then teacher job performance is affected when students are involved. Ultimately, student achievement is hindered indirectly.

**Research Question 5:** What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

This last research question required world action. This research question was emancipatory in context. The researcher desired action after the research data had been collected and analyzed. This research question started the initial phase to bring about change to make and bring effective contribution to both the field of education and conflict resolution. In order to break the cycle in schools with principals and teachers who are in conflict, evaluating conflict resolution models and/or developing a model to train principals in emotional intelligence was crucial.

Weiss and Beal (2005) developed the Affective Events Theory (AET) model. This model addresses attitudes in the workplace. The research shows how the features of the
workplace determine individual attitude and emotions of employees. The research later explains how attitudes and emotions are simply consequences of what occurred during the working shift (Weiss & Beal, 2005). The absence of an effective model not only to train principals how to handle their emotions with teachers in conflicting situations at work, but an effective model addressing emotional intelligence is key in transforming conflict into peace.

The first role of a needed model to address principals’ lack of training in emotional intelligence was to identify specifically the negative emotion which principals experience. Failure to identify the appropriate emotion made finding a proportionate resolution to the negative emotion impossible for the principal. The second role of the model was to provide practical training on how to successfully control principals’ emotional intelligence when teachers expressed revengeful emotions from a principal’s actions. An effective model to address the emotionality state of a principal and to train principals in an emotional centered approach to conflict was highly needed so that teacher performance would not suffer.

Goals

People express emotions. Principals express negative and/or positive emotions based on the lived experiences of the day. These emotions must be placed in categories in terms of negative or positive. Some principals respond positively towards teachers, but at other times principals respond negatively towards teachers. Kemper and Collins (2010) share how emotional intervention of micro-transactions makes up the various emotional categories principals develop.
Emotional intelligence from the principal determines how the teacher responds to the principal. The principal’s performance may at times be determined by how accepting the teacher is to the principal’s decisions concerning an issue. When a principal responds negatively towards a teacher, the teacher’s reactive response may impact his or her performance in the classroom with students. Through this study, the PI attempts to close the gap among principal and teacher cohesion in the conflict resolution process.

This study approaches the principal and teacher phenomenon from a three-fold goal. The first goal of the study was to gain insight from the everyday lived experiences of principals and to collect data in relationship to principals’ interactions with teachers. The sole emphasis of the study was based on the principals’ perception of the phenomenon. The second goal of this study was to look at how a principal’s interactions with a teacher determine how a teacher performs instructionally with students. The third goal of this study was to add knowledge to the educational sector and conflict resolution world so principals may successfully handle teacher complaints by having healthy accessibility to their emotional intelligence in all situations with teacher and principal.

Summary

This chapter outlined the qualitative methodology for the phenomenological approach, and the significance of the study was established. A problem statement was formulated, and the purpose was given. Research objectives were explained. The theoretical perspective was shared along with the five research questions. Each research question was based on the lived experience and perspectives of five principals. Research question one was designed to address the origin of conflict between principal and teacher. The second research question addresses conflict itself and the negative emotional
variable. The third research question was created to explore conflict with principals and teachers and how that conflict grows and may eventually affect other stakeholders. The fourth research question talked about conflict between principals and teachers and the outcomes. The fifth research question suggested discussing possible conflict resolution outcomes for principal and teacher when conflicts occur.

The focus of this study was to simply explore perceptions of elementary school principals who work in elementary schools in Virginia and how they deal with conflicts among teachers. Hopefully, through this study, a theoretical framework was established to understand the impact that effective conflict resolution had on teacher performance as it related to principal perspectives. Ultimately, the hope of this study was to de-root the false cause of decreasing student achievement in elementary schools, which is the student himself or herself. The PI sought to place the sole problem on the emotional intelligence aspects of the school principal.

It is further hoped that this study provided ongoing contributions to assist principals in overcoming the lack of emotional intelligence in elementary schools pertaining to teachers. This study was designed to evaluate previous conflict resolution models and/or to create a new model for principals who seek to overcome principal and teacher conflicts. Through the collection and analysis of data, the PI provided valuable information to rid the problem for principals, teachers, and community leaders.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The field of education currently faces challenges with student academic performance. The ongoing low and stagnant performance of academic achievement has found an academic crisis in many elementary schools in Virginia. Educators have implemented both educational and instructional strategies to improve student achievement for all. Yet, with the ongoing implementation of new and improved instructional strategies and educational techniques, there still appears to be an undiscovered reason for the overall decline and stagnancy of academic achievement in many public elementary schools in Virginia.

In this chapter, the Principal Investigator (PI) highlights the ideology of principal emotional intelligence and how it plays a significant role in determining quality instruction within public elementary schools. In the context of emotional intelligence and examining how student academic achievement is linked to teacher performance, a more concrete look at the lived experiences of the principal must be studied extensively. Secondly, placing accountability strands upon principals must be considered when examining the problem as well. Thirdly, an effort to change the instructional paradigm to include the tri-fold accountabilities for principal, teacher, and student is paramount. Consequently, examining principal perspectives provides insight into teacher performance and student achievement.

Background of the Problem

In order to find the root causes of poor academic student performance, this study focused on the major influence of student achievement, according to educational protocol. The teacher is responsible for guiding instruction with students. Therefore, the
teacher contributes greatly to what fosters quality instruction through teacher performance. Looking solely at student academic achievement is wasteful. Educators must study the phenomenon along with correlating teacher performance into the equation with the emotional intelligence of the principal.

Emotional intelligence from the principal perspective must be examined when looking at conflicts among teachers and principals. The initial fact remains today and has been proven for many decades that identifying emotional intelligence, as a needed principal trait, determines how a principal handles conflicts in schools. Schmidt (2010) studied emotions and its effects on leadership in schools. Leadership in schools and emotional intelligence are inseparable when examining student achievement.

An extensive review of emotional intelligence shows a correlation between leadership styles and teacher job performance, according to Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2015). Without question, it is assumed principals are guided by their emotional intelligence when dealing with issues from teachers. A principal, who selects not to monitor emotional intelligence, sets the precedence for conflicts spreading in a vast number of ways in elementary schools. The leadership role of principal includes a very high regard to emotional intelligence, if conflict between principal and teacher are to remain minimal.

The following studies extended the work of Taliadorou and Pashiardis to include not only recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence, but also being skilled in emotional intelligence. Skill is proportionately important to recognition of emotional intelligence. To know that emotional intelligence exists is one ideology, but application of the ideology’s context is much more powerful.
Current thinking by researchers Dagiene, Juškeviciene, Carneiro, Child, and Cullen (2015) explain how emotional intelligence is viewed as a holistic approach to dealing with the world around you. Without a perspective of emotionality in principals, there is not a way to educationally examine student achievement.

Trained practical researcher Chapin (2015) found out a third fact which shows how emotional intelligence includes identifying and controlling emotions. Monitoring or controlling emotions seemingly has become one of the difficult tasks of serving as an elementary school principal. To ask a principal not to express emotions is to ask a principal not to act normal. However, to ask a principal to act and respond within an emotional healthy guideline is what researchers have deemed appropriate in conflict resolution in public education.

Chapin’s findings indicate that emotional intelligence counts when dealing with people. The role of emotional intelligence is significant when dealing with people of varying leadership positions, including the principal. However, those who make assumptions are apt to believe that emotional intelligence has determinant factors based on years of service for the principal, gender of the principal, or perhaps age of the principal. Yet, the only researchers that pinpoint years of service as accounting for a healthier emotional intelligence stance are Sparkman, Maulding, and Roberts (2012). Their new evidence shows that over time a person’s emotional intelligence becomes increasingly healthier. An emotionally intelligent principal, whether male or female, seemingly improves emotionally if the principal has had many years of service in the profession. On the other hand, other researchers noted that gender does not determine how effectively a person responds in the area of emotional intelligence (Memduhoglu,
2015) neither does age play a part in emotional intelligence, according to Öztürk and Deniz (2008).

Emotional intelligence is the leading indicator determining that principals in schools have a great impact upon the stakeholders in the school. To affirm that the theory of emotional intelligence significantly has lasting results on resolution, Drysdale and Gurr (2011) studied student outcomes associated with leadership and emotional intelligence. The results showed in all research approaches, quantitatively, qualitatively, and by mixed methods, a principal’s state affects student achievement because the principal is the key stakeholder in a healthy school climate.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) skilled emotional intelligence researchers, showed building level principals determine the effectiveness of school academic outcomes. When a principal is able to approach teachers with a healthy set of emotions, the resolution in the process has a more lasting and positive effect on the teacher.

The theme associated with emotional intelligence and its importance in public elementary schools has been not to minimize its value. Emotional intelligence researchers cited previously show a pattern of three major factors to consider. The first factor is simply identifying the need to give credence to emotional intelligence in school leadership. The second factor involves having skill in emotional intelligence while leading schools. The third factor is the ability to control emotions, despite any situation the principal encounters. These three factors bridge the gap that keeps students from obtaining academic achievement that improves. Even though these three factors have been overlooked in considering reasons for students’ inability to pass assessments,
teachers who neglect duties, as a retaliation symbol towards principals, keep the problem ongoing.

**Historically Examining the Problem**

Historically the perspectives involving emotional intelligence relating to conflict resolution and school level leadership have been difficult phenomena to understand through many time eras. At one point in history, studying the intellectual dimension of emotions was not as important as understanding the damages associated with ignoring emotional intelligence in the workplace by leaders. While understanding the impact negative emotions have on outcomes relating to a vast number of school situations, learning the philosophical viewpoint on negative emotions is a key in conflict resolution in schools with teachers and principals.

According to Linder (2006), the focus was on studying behaviorism and cognitivism in the past, as opposed to learning more about emotions as in previous years in schools. However, both of these fields of study were too narrow and did not have the enthusiasm by many people for an extensive study. The focus in the 1940s was on human relations and resource movements. Ultimately, it was determined later on after the 1940s that successful organizations came by way of eminent interpersonal relationships (Linder, 2006).

The early work of Blake, Mouton, and Blansfield (1962) recognized six distinct categories of conflict behavior, while approaching persons’ negative emotions. The former researchers based their groupings upon singular conflict behavioral apparatuses: assertiveness and cooperation (Ruble & Thomas, 1976) and not on emotional intelligence. Years later these two distinct types combined and became five conflict
styles. The model back then still, however, included: competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising. Both models approach conflict from a disciplinary perspective. However, both models excluded the direct correlation of negative emotions into the conflicting process. Nicotera and Dorsey (2006) indicate that this five-fold model sets the mutual vocabulary for conflict styles during this era.

Hargreaves’ (1998) work focused on how in years past researchers did not really consider educators’ emotions. The emotional intelligence expressed negatively and shown by a principal did not mean much in the school at one time. Research does not show documented cases, whereby principals ignored teachers’ responses when principals showed negative emotions in the conflict resolution process in the past. Over the years research does not adequately show how the correlation between principal’s emotional intelligence and teacher performance play an intricate part in student achievement.

Hargreaves (1998) spoke candidly about how emotional intelligence was not given much attention, which is not found often in literature. Neither does literature show how researchers have not taken principals’ behavior into an account when addressing teacher performance. As student achievement is not meeting benchmarks in the state of Virginia, it is critical to stretch educators’ thinking to possibly consider the overlooked phenomenon of emotional intelligence of principals and link it to poor teacher performance. The result of this phenomenon is decreased student achievement for all.

Previous cited emotional intelligence researchers, over decades, have attempted to address the issue of principal and teacher conflicts apart from emotional intelligence and student achievement. The aspect of principal emotional intelligence was not considered in student achievement. Neither was the principal’s emotional intelligence upon teachers
linked to the performance of students. Despite efforts to identify, train, and monitor a school principal in emotional intelligence, a tool to measure emotional intelligence was still obsolete.

Through the work of Bar-On (2000), emotional intelligence was found to be a prerequisite for success, but a way to evaluate emotional intelligence success was still seen as somewhat impossible. Even in early in the 1900s, emotional intelligence was somewhat a foreign commodity. According to Cherniss and Adler (2000), it was not reported that modulating emotions was important to school leaders as intelligence.

Principals knew their actions had authority to direct human beings’ behaviors (Memduhoglu, 2015). Yet, principal emotional intelligence was not documented, as linked to teacher performance and student achievement. This recent evidence was grounds to begin a principal investigation into how a principal’s emotional intelligence has the power to influence teachers to either have excellent or very poor job performance.

In addition, with the vast number of negative emotions developed in the principal during the day, the principal has a difficult task of regulating his or her emotional intelligence. Therefore, to ask a principal to name his or her negative emotion and to regulate his or her emotion when dealing with conflicting teachers is complex. Furthermore, the principal’s inability to handle his or her emotions makes even simple conflict resolution difficult.

Principal identification of specified negative emotions is highly needed when assessing emotional intelligence. Citing the specified negative emotion in a conflict is critical. It becomes critical because principals must learn how to normalize their negative emotions with teachers. If training programs and certifications for principals do not
enforce emotional intelligence in terms of self-regulation and regulation of others emotionally, the result of principals and teachers not working in harmony will be that student achievement suffers.

For many decades consistently, many public school divisions in Virginia have met the benchmark and shown progress in elementary schools, but a larger percentage of public elementary schools have not improved academically. Historically, high performing schools in the state balance out the low performing schools in the state. The high performing schools’ data helped lower performing schools. State educational agencies were able to confirm elementary schools have not made significant and substantial academic gains for the past three years.

According to the Virginia Department of Education District-wide Report Card (VDOE, 2016) the data from urban and urban elementary schools in Virginia show they still suffer academically. Per the ongoing data, urban elementary schools in Virginia have had declining rates and/or stagnant rates based on student academic successes for long periods of time. The trend of data results does not show consistent progress for any sub-groups.

Along with participant data, the PI reviewed data from the Virginia Department of Education District-wide Report Card (VDOE, 2016) to validate the assertions. The electronic version of this data was found on the Virginia Department of Education website at www.doe.virginia.gov. These data were generated based on a three year span. The first year data was collected for school year 2013-2014. The second year data was collected from school year 2014-2015. The third year data was collected from school year 2015-2016. Data for the 2016-2017 has not been collected per the website. The data
included elementary school data for grades 3, 4, and 5. The PI collected reading and mathematics data for grades 3 and 4 and grades 3, 4, and 5 in reading, mathematics, science, and history. Assessments are not given for science and history in Grades 3, 4, and 5. Table 4 below shows data for each of the 11 reporting categories for state assessments in the core disciplines.

Table 4

*Percentage of Students Failing End of Year Assessments by Sub-groups in 3-Years for Grade Three*

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*Note.* VDOE, 2017
Table 5

Percentage of Students Failing End of Year Assessments by Sub-groups in 3-Years for Grade Four

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Note. VDOE, 2017

Moreover, the PI cited discipline data for the entire school division per the electronic version at www.doe.virginia.gov. The discipline data show the number of infractions that occurred on the campus of public elementary schools. The website did not
release data per elementary and secondary schools individually. The data were combined. All data were collapsed to show disciplinary infractions division-wide for students in grades K-12. Yet, through the discipline data, educators indirectly pinpoint the amount of lost instructional time due to negative behavioral infractions, which leads to a perceived variance of emotional intelligence among teachers and principals.

**Power of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace**

Within this literature review, the PI started the study by looking closely at the power of emotions when researching emotional intelligence. The emotional state of principals in context with teacher performance is detrimental when looking at the challenges associated with factors contributing to poor student achievement for all.

However, the ideology of emotions and how each emotion plays a significant part in any conflict resolution process seems minimal and overlooked often. Yet, linking emotional intelligence to principal perspectives is crucial when evaluating teacher performance. Therefore, research confirms power bases are the determining resources used to influence power upon people (Lewicki, Litterer, Minton, & Saunders, 1994).

Emotional intelligence is powerful in conflict resolution. Overlooking the power of emotional intelligence from a principal’s perceptions has been a pervasive problem in education throughout the years. In order to witness change among teachers, principals must examine their perceptions as to emotional intelligence. This study plans to address this phenomenon with eye-opening literature, principal experiences, research findings, and credible evidence through triangulation.

Recent research shows how emotions, as a consideration in the conflict process, are sometimes largely ignored when examining the effects of educational reform and
leadership (Schmidt, 2010). Each emotion is viewed as an intricate piece in the conflicting process. Each emotion is crucial in determining appropriate resolution. Emotions, whether positive or negative, are a part to the conflict resolution process. Emotions, unhealthy or healthy, cannot be excluded when seeking resolution. Likewise, emotions are important and cannot be disregarded in resolution among teachers and principals.

A main indicator of decreased student academic achievement possibly may be how negative emotions shape the conflict process into a more detrimental and new direction. Researchers Wood, Evans, and Spandagou (2014) concluded that negative emotions are classified as unconstructive, and these types of emotions influence resolution. Negative emotions such as anger, stressed, frustrated, overlooked, jealousy, and guilt take the conflict resolution process in an unfavorable direction. Negative emotions in the conflict resolution process breech favorable outcomes. It also leads parties to take the resolution in an unfavorable direction, leading conflicting parties into becoming at odds with one another, as opposed to working for peace. The negative aspect of emotional intelligence builds an unhappy medium on both parties. Negative emotions acting in the lived experiences of a principal cannot bring about a cordial relationship with a teacher.

Lazarus’ (1991) work talked about the power and harm associated with negative emotions in any type of experience. An historical review of not only Lazarus’ work but also the work of pioneers in emotional intelligence, found that each researcher concurred with the power associated with negative emotions in resolution. The pioneer of emotions,

According to Lazarus (1991), the study of emotional intelligence showed that there must be a stopping point to what extent emotions can flow. Without boundaries for emotions, people allow their emotions to harm self and others. Despite limited research on workplace emotions (Woods, 2010, p. 843), there are significant practical experiences that show how principals release some type of emotion when dealing with disgruntled teachers. Lewicki (2006) describes such emotions as positive or negative in nature in any workplace environment. Working human beings release themselves emotionally of what is bothersome internally. It is even presumed that principals in the workplace fail to communicate their pain, wounds, and disappointments with a healthy emotional intelligence. Instead, principals tend to address work-related and teacher-driven issues with unhealthy emotional outbursts.

Principals, if any agree, release certain emotions as foreknowledge to determine the type of resolution to use with a teacher. Yet, there are downfalls when a principal fails in emotional intelligence when mentally dealing with teachers. Often, principals allow their negative emotions to overtake the resolution process with teachers. For example, in school settings when a principal perceives a teacher is upset over his or her decision concerning an issue, the teacher may select to excel in emotional intelligence. This creates a better disposition for the principal by allowing the principal to exceed in emotional intelligence too.

The perfect scenario cannot always happen because people are human, and the temptation to ignore more emotional intelligence as a principal is high. Researcher
Crosby (1982) talked about back lashing. Principals who do not exceed in emotional intelligence with teachers set the stage for disgruntled and angry teachers. As principals overreact and under-react emotionally with teachers, teachers begin back lashing towards the principal. A principal who endures teacher back lash over a period of time may possibly encounter teacher job performance declining. As a result of poor teacher performance, student achievement is affected.

**Principals’ Responsibilities and Emotional Intelligence**

A number of factors might rise with a principal when evaluating his or her emotional intelligence. One challenge is the responsibilities that principals have in reference to overall school operations, in addition to monitoring their emotional intelligence. Over the years, elementary school principals’ responsibilities change. It appears that in previous years the principal was known as the major decision maker in schools. Decision-making was seemingly the principal’s only responsibility.

Today, principals are viewed as the “Principal-Teacher” (Matthews & Crow, 2003, p. 18). Principals are required not only to lead schools, but also to serve in a capacity where they put themselves in the place of the teacher. Principals, at times, are required to serve as classroom substitutes (defined as holding classrooms for long or short periods of time), as tutors for students who are failing state benchmarks, as counselors for staff, and as community activists when needed. For some apparent reason, according to the principals’ perspectives, many teachers feel that principals have forgotten the life of a teacher because of the harsh way some principals handle conflicts with teachers. The absence of emotional intelligence sensitivity by principals make teachers feel that principals do not remember the pressure teachers face daily. By the
principal responsibilities increasing, it appears that managing their emotional intelligence becomes a less important commonality, as an elementary school principal.

According to Starratt (1990), principals’ responsibilities extend to handling a vast number of crisis situations repeatedly. These crisis situations may cause the principal to overreact and not handle teacher conflicts with a healthy emotional disposition. The perceptions of principals are that teachers feel they are handling school concerns without regulating their emotions.

Due to the number of demanding, attention-seeking matters, principals may be “emotionally stuck” in the last situation and are not allowing his or her emotions to catch-up and to re-channel to handle the pressing teacher issue on hand. For example, if the principal is called to a teacher’s classroom to intercept a fight from becoming violent, the principal may be leaving the classroom fight with mixed emotions. The principal may be experiencing levels of anger and frustration. In this situation the principal may have had to leave his or her instructional duties as a principal in order to handle a classroom fight which may shift the principal into a different frame of mind as principal.

From a principal’s perspective, the teacher may lack understanding concerning the emotional inconsistencies of the principal that intercepted the classroom fight between students. The teacher possibly may feel the principal is able to approach any new situation in a positive and healthy emotional manner, regardless of any type of happening that may occur next in the school day after the fight. However, the principal may be stuck emotionally in the crisis concerning the fight in the classroom and not able to emotionally leave the last state of his or her emotions.
Another challenge of a school principal is the unforeseen of a school day. Principals cannot determine a school day because so often a school day never repeats itself verbatim from the previous day. A principal may deal with a student fight at 9:00 a.m., a false alarm at 10:00 a.m., a medical emergency at 11:00 a.m., and a community leader visit at 12:00 p.m.

The second part of the day may possibly include a teacher assault at 1:00 p.m., a found weapon on the campus at 2:00 p.m., and a school malfunction at 3:00 p.m. The life of a principal is not detail-lived. There are many unforeseen and unexpected challenges that a principal brings positive resolution to in one six-hour day. These unforeseen situations during the day make monitoring emotional intelligence somewhat difficult to do from a principal’s perspective.

A third challenge from a school principal’s perspective is the stress level he or she encounters and accumulates, while in the elementary school. The unpredictable school days of a principal have lasting effects on the leader in terms of stress and staff performance. Allison (1997) share how job related stress on the principal has an effect on not only the staff, but on the students as well. The increase in the principal’s stress is partially from enlarging the workload of school leaders, according to National Association of Elementary School Principals (2017a). With the demanding workloads on a principal, the emotional intelligence states of a principal changes from situation to situation, especially in the elementary school settings.

According to the study conducted by Wong and Hing (2005), students in primary grades are much more difficult to manage than secondary students, and students in elementary school are needier than students in secondary schools. The principal who
leads an elementary school feels that emotional intelligence plays an intricate part in supervising elementary students and teachers of elementary children. Research shows how boys and girls in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade are harder to supervise, less willing to reason, less self-disciplined, and less emotionally established, according to Wong and Hing (2005).

Emotional intelligence is a challenging responsibility and duty of the school principal. In sum, if the principal does not have control over his or her emotionality states, then others will be affected by the principal’s emotions, whether positive or negative because a principal’s leadership grossly affects student outcomes, according to Leithwood and Doris (2006) extends their report and shares that a principal cultivates the learning atmosphere to ensure school academic success. The principal’s interpersonal actions with teachers determine how student achievement soars. Moreover, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) found that a school leader’s relationship with staff members determines student success.

Emotional intelligence along with principal responsibilities is interconnected. Somehow principals develop and sustain healthy relationships with teachers to build a successful school climate. Hallinger and Heck (1998) found that student achievement is linked to school leaders providing ample attention to details involving the daily operations of the school. The principal must have regulated emotional stamina in the schools to produce student achievement for all.

**Research Questions for the Study through Literature Review**

The next section of the literature review addressed the scholarly findings directed by the five research questions developed by the Principal Investigator. The PI looked at
the complexity of the phenomenon piece by piece, the optimal benefits by examining the phenomenon, needed contributions to change the phenomenon, and an overview of the literature review findings. Each of these focuses enabled the PI to answer the five research questions.

**RQ1:** How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?

The phenomenon of principals and teachers in conflict posed a complex issue in order to reach resolution. Conflict resolution is complex because it involves many different pieces. Yet, Coser (1956) investigated social conflicts in terms of how so many conflicts happen between family members, spouses, employees, and common groups. It was determined these social conflicts occur simply from a mishap over values and claims to limited status, control, and resources. Later, Deutsch’s (1973, p. 17) study yielded a belief that concurred with Coser, namely that conflict resolution must lead to the social construct of problem solving solutions. Even though conflict intensifies based on the conflict being handled, the primary reason for all conflicts is summed up by the work of Ury (1993) who shares how conflict only happens when a party makes a demand, fails to negotiate, and the other part rejects the demand.

The primary factors for all conflicts seem very simple, but the resolution requires a person to have some level of conflict resolution experience and educational background because handling any type of conflict is complex in nature. Ury (1993) speaks about the root causes of conflict as an imbalance from the parties in terms of interests, rights, and power. In order to find the root cause of each principal to teacher conflict, the researcher must look at each party’s interest, rights, and power to determine if any of the three have
been violated. If the principal violated any of the three, then the principal must work to correct the issue. Failure to correct the issue concerning interests, rights, and power will lead to teachers retaliating against the principal. As a result over time, excellent teacher performance decreases which, in turn, ultimately affects student achievement.

As principals, they must be trained in the ability to handle simple and complex school conflicts among teachers. Principals identify the root causes of why the lack of principal and teacher rapport is cited in elementary schools. Then, training must be inclusive of emotionality on the parts of principal and teacher, because a principal cannot address a teacher’s interest, rights, and power without the principal’s emotional intelligence not being test.

The first challenge to overcoming the original root causes of conflict starts with working on reconciling interests (Ury, 1993). This simply means reestablishing the association with each other (Wilmont & Hocker, 2007, p. 302.) In the complexity of a principal’s role, their negative emotion is highly regulated when dealing with parties and reconciliation. Many principals do not see the need to reconcile with teachers due to the hierarchy of the school system. But, regardless of the hierarchy, maintaining student achievement is paramount; therefore, a principal must not only be expected to reconcile with their teachers, they must also be trained in reconciliation because emotional intelligence includes reconciliation of parties.

The second challenge from root causes of conflict in the context of complexity is taking a more precise examination of how people give ample attention to emotionality. According to Ben-Ze’ev (2000), emotions are the least understood features of human experience. The mere understanding of emotions is very complex because there are
hundreds of emotions. Despite there being many emotions, there are some familiar emotions that people in the workplace overuse.

According to Ekman (1992), all emotions can be narrowed down to six basic emotions. The six basic emotions are: afraid, angry, disgusted, happy, sad, and surprised. Even though the many terms that describe emotions in humans are quite lengthy, each emotion has the power to specifically describe the strong feeling of the person. The emotions jolly, joyous, merry, and jovial may be synonymous with the word happy. Yet, each emotion has a different descriptive slant. For example, jolly is defined as cheerful, whereas, joyous is defined as being full of happiness. As the definitions of each emotion slightly differ, it is very critical in using the exact emotional feeling that a person is sensing when addressing conflicting issues. A wrongly used emotional term to describe a person may result in a wrongly considered resolution for the case. Ekman (1992) narrows the wide list of emotions to the basic six emotions, as foundational, and it is critical for an investigator to build upon that foundation in creating explicit and appropriate resolutions models. Regardless of the emotion, whether the emotion is one of the most used or ancient, Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) warn that extreme reactions to conflict stem from lack of emotional intelligence. Researchers must take the needed time to identify all negative emotions from a principal, and provide trainings for principals in how to regulate negative emotions when confronted with teachers.

**RQ2:** What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?

Ben-Ze’ev (2000) reported that it is easier to express emotions than to describe emotions. Principals easily show unhealthy emotions, such as: hatred, bitterness, and
malice. Yet, asking a principal to describe his or her emotions poses a problem. People who are seeking resolution must take the needed time to allow people to express their feelings in as many words and ways as possible. Expressing emotional states is powerful in resolution.

Folger, Poole, and Stutman’s (2009) work speaks about how emotions invigorate responses to conflict. Every emotion from a conflict is not an act of pessimism, but possibly an idea of creativity development. Many humans have a negative attitude toward emotions so people forgot how good ideas spring out of dealing with emotions. As emotions become a part of the conflicting process, a new set of innovative and productive ideas may evolve. Withheld emotions in situations prevent a scholarly idea from reaching its full potential. Emotions have several responses besides working unfavorably for party members.

The effects of emotions have dual parts. There is a good and bad part to any emotional situation. Folger et al. (2009) argue that finding out if the emotion is good or bad must be a top priority for the conflicting process. Secondly, deciding whether the emotion serves as a good trait or bad characteristic in the situation makes the determination of how the other party responds. Gottman (1994) recommends even considering emotional flooding when dealing with the parties in conflicting processes. The overwhelmed state of another party brings and channels negative emotions into the process for resolution. As principals consider another proclamation to emotional intelligence, researchers must be open-minded to discover the good that stems from principals and teachers who do not regulate their emotions. The research shows that challenges may be viewed as favorable.
**RQ3:** What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?

According to Schmidt (2010), emotions as a theoretical construct in education are often overlooked when dealing with the impact of educational transformation and leadership. In most cases, principals do not know the power of emotions until it is too late. The number of teacher absences, teacher union complaints against principals, teacher walk-outs, and teacher transfers, all stem from an overlooked negative emotion from the principal. The downplayed negative emotion was not given full attention. The negative emotion resulted in an escalation of the teacher/principal problem and in some cases, a lost career.

Many research studies on emotional intelligence since the 1900s show how lack of emotional control lends itself to pervasive problems in conflict resolution. A study in 2003 by researchers Sutton and Wheatley shows that very little was known about how emotional intelligence affects teacher performance and educational outcomes. But, primarily in the last 10 years, elementary school principals are at times showing more negative emotions than positive emotions when dealing with teacher/principal conflicts. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2017b), a survey of secondary school principals found within their last 10 year data results that principals see their job as complex and demanding. It is obvious that the stress level produces principal reactions of frustration, disappointment, revenge, and power struggles on the job. This stress will eventually lead to negative emotions in the conflict resolution process, and over time this affects student achievement.
Historically researchers have not considered educators’ emotions (Hargreaves, 1998). Educators did not link human emotionality to teacher performance and student achievement. Focus in public education appeared on curriculum, instruction, and parental involvement. School leaders thought fixing curriculum issues solved poor student performance. Many educators believe learning new instructional strategies empowered teachers. As a result, empowerment was to prove that student achievement increased. Many school policymakers even considered focusing on parental involvement as the essential element to move student achievement. Therefore, it is the overlooked variable of emotional intelligence on the part of the principal that should be considered to enhance student achievement.

**RQ4:** What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?

Emotional intelligence is a developed issue in the schools, and this challenge has created a gap in how principals and teachers effectively handle conflict between themselves. Maltby and Day’s (2004) work researched one component of emotional intelligence, which is the dimension of forgiveness. The positive and negative aspects from the ideology of forgiveness in conflict resolution must be considered when looking at emotional intelligence with principals. Most principal’s look at their emotional states and are able to classify them as negative or positive. The work of these researchers shows how the positive and negative aspect of any emotion determines the outcome of the resolution.

The researchers below determined that emotional intelligence is handled differently based on gender. Besides the general rule governing principals and emotional
intelligence, researchers have also explored how gender plays a part in emotionality. Fernández-Berrocal, Cabella, Castillo, and Extremera (2012) studied gender and how it affects emotional intelligence. Their results showed that women show more emotions than men. Their studies also showed that women were more emotionally intensified than males in conflicting situations.

As elementary school principals choose not to give attention to the emotional aspect pertaining to individual conflict styles, in essence, students suffer academically. Whether male or female principal, each person must possess the ability to modulate emotions (Cherniss & Adler, 2000). Controlling emotions is important. Selecting not to act out negative emotions is an important variable in harmonious sustainability among teacher and principal.

Regardless of gender, research shows that emotions play an intricate part in conflict resolution and its outcomes. According to the work of Brody and Hall (2000), females are able to explain nonverbal talk in organizations. By considering gender, the outcomes in resolution may be different since women and men handle other people, situations, and conflicts in various ways based on gender.

Every principal has a different conflict style when dealing with teacher issues. Female principals may address conflicts differently than male principals do and vice versa. Conflict outcomes may generally be the same. In spite of conflict styles variations, pros and cons exist between principals. The first dilemma from gender-related conflict styles is the stifling of teacher creativity in the organization (Zhou & George, 2003). Teachers tend to hide their resourcefulness from female principal leadership. Teachers
who suspend their creativity in the classroom hinder student achievement from soaring to the maximum level.

Obviously, females make up teacher populations in elementary schools. But, leadership in schools is viewed as a masculine role position (Stuhlmacher & Poitras, 2010). Despite the principal’s role being considered masculine, the position is held by mostly females. It is apparent that females in elementary schools are forerunners in the field. According to the Roser, Brown, and Kelsey (2009), 58.7% of elementary school principals were females.

Fear, a negative emotion, can be ascertained from both genders. Therefore, in an effort to work with both genders to resolve conflicts through varied conflicting styles, how males and females handle their emotions should be considered. According to Danes, Leichtentrutt, Metz, and Huddletston (2000), men tend to withdraw, submit, and deny from the situation. The man will attempt to avoid the situation at hand. On the other hand, women tend to want engagement in the conflict. Women attempt to assert, aggress, and adapt to the situation, as opposed to running away from the problem. Skrobarcek (1998) affirmed the previous researcher’s claim. Skrobarcek found in her study that women want to cope with the conflict, as opposed to withdrawing from the dilemma. Her study found that there were five coping strategies found in female superintendents in Texas. They are:

1. Planning ahead for stressful events.
2. Talking to peers about events.
3. Getting away from the work environment.
4. Engaging in good nutrition.
5. Engaging in religious activities.
Conflict styles differ from person to person depending on their gender, but are not the sole variable in positive conflict resolution outcomes. Men and women differ in their defense mechanisms (Cramer, 1991). The way men and women handle their defense levels determines how each person will address the dispute or the conflict. People tend to act defensively based on their experiences in life. People who are more defensive in nature are normally people who have dealt with a lot of turmoil, disappointment, and frustration in their lives. So many unmet promises make for defensiveness ways developing in both men and women. When a person lives a life free from clutter, mishap, and disappointments, the person tends to live a happier and less defensive life (Cramer, 1991).

In dealing with conflict styles in men and women, a person must consider the defense level (Maricutoiu & Crasovan, 2014). The level of defense will determine the amount of emotionalism embedded in the conflict. The defense level is the amount of frustration that a person can literally deal with in a conflicting situation. Some people can deal with more and not have situations affect the person psychologically. Other people are affected to the point whereby they become ill and need medical support.

Researchers Thygesen, Drapeau, Trijsburg, Lecours, and de Roten (2008) speak of an influencing variable to consider when selecting a gender based conflict style. The researchers explain how men and women have dissimilar defensive arrangements. Women are more defensive than men because women express more emotions than men do. Women are also more emotionally intensified than men. These different defensive arrangements will be vital in reviewing how men and women pay close attention to the three defense conflict styles (Thygesen et al., 2008).
Apparently women are different than men when dealing with how they both internalize the disputing and conflicting situation (Danes et al., 2000). Instead of merely assuming that one disposition occurs when dealing with conflicts and disputes among genders, a person must look intrinsically at each person to detect how they vary in handling situations.

By females expressing more emotional intensity than men (Grossman & Wood, 1993; Shields, 2002), many conflict styles have been developed to aid conflict resolution effectiveness between genders. Some principals believe that women are more emotional than men when addressing complaints. Many teachers feel a female principal becomes just as emotional as they are in conflicting situations. The restriction to fixing the problem is the level of faith-based training for principals. Faith-based teachings control negative emotions. An elementary school principal limits self from learning resolution strategies when his or her strategies are not embedded in faith-based teachings. For example, the act of forgiveness is a faith-based principle of diplomacy (Moix, 1999, p. 600). Elementary school principal, whether male or female, must learn to forgive as a sign of emotional intelligence. To forgive as a principal means to move forward in the conflict resolution process. Not moving forward or forgetting the past dispute makes the conflict remain prevalent. An elementary school principal promoting forgiveness opens the pathway to heal an offended teacher. As a result, student learning will increase.

In addition to principals working towards de-escalation and resolution when negative emotions enter the process, interpreting what the mind conceives as a key component in process success is by having the ability to forgive. Maltby and Day (2004) both agreed when dealing with conflict styles, a person must consider the cultural aspect
of forgiveness. The power of forgiveness speaks volumes in conflict resolution models. The ideology of forgiveness itself among parties lends itself to possible resolution. Parties who lean towards wanting to forgive another party have a mind to work through conflicts to reach resolution.

Forgiveness, a positive emotion, gives fidelity to the process of conflict resolution that many researchers expound in their investigations. Researchers Maltby and Day (2004) speak about how forgiveness is categorized in two ways. The first type of forgiveness model is through a person acting positively. The other type of forgiveness is through the perspective of thinking negatively (Malty & Day, 2004). Both types of forgiveness must be considered when seeking positive results from conflict style models.

Another restriction in finding solutions for the problem is the absence of trust in the conflict resolution process. The idea of trust implementation of many gender-based conflicting style models is of uttermost importance. Trust speaks volumes of the level of confidence that a person has with one another. The outbreak of a principal’s negative emotional state stops trust from becoming stronger. In order to work through the conflict process, the trust factor must be established earlier between teacher and principal. Questionable trust makes resolution somewhat impossible. Teachers must have trust in principals. Teachers must have extended trust. This is trust within the legal grounds. Trust to believe the principal results in outcomes that were generated in the best interest of all parties involved, including students. Lack of trust creates ineffective conflict styles regardless of gender.

A third restriction in fixing the problem is the absence of empathy when dealing with conflict resolution effectiveness. Empathy is a core characteristic of emotional
intelligence (Wolf, 2010). The loss of emotional intelligence is another forgotten consideration in developing many conflicting style models. As principals and teachers work towards solving disputes and conflicts, the idea of putting one’s self in another person’s shoes is crucial. Elementary school principals must take the journey of a classroom teacher. Living the teacher experience teaches the principal teacher empathy. Principal empathy shows emotional intelligence and helps teachers in the conflict resolution process.

*RQ5:* What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

To better examine conflict styles, the researcher looked at previous models. The first conflict style was by Costantino and Merchant (1996). These researchers talk about the interest-based conflict management style. This model does not directly address negative emotions. It lacks the function of negative emotions and the relationship to the effectiveness on the model. The interest-based management style was established to work through conflicts. This conflict management model is designed to develop six principles that govern how parties look at the conflict on hand. These principles are:

1. Focus on interests
2. Possible negotiation acts
3. Provides low-cost rights
4. Encourages the discussion about the nature of the dispute
5. Encourages resolution
6. Focuses on all five factors to cause the model to succeed.
Even with the six-step conflict management model to address conflict styles between genders, the impact negative emotions play on the model should not be forgotten. The emotional aspect to the model is critical in the model effectiveness. Without a model directly addressing all components of the negative emotional web, the process becomes unreliable in terms of meeting the ultimate needs of the subject.

The interest-based conflict management style attempts to help principals and teachers work towards resolution, but it lacks the power of emotional unintelligence. Teachers and principals will not meet resolution if they have not learned to deal with the multiple negative emotions that may evolve in the conflict resolution process. Regardless of gender, male or female, all negative emotions must be identified and dealt with strategically in the conflict process. Eliminating the aspect of addressing negative emotions from principals and teachers hinders possible resolution and healthy schools. An unhealthy school cannot produce increased student achievement.

Ackerman, Kashy, Donnellan, and Conger (2011) found that a second model addresses how social relations exist as a conflict style too; however, these researchers did not clearly focus on the impacts of negative emotions on conflict resolution. This model addresses the positive aspect of engagement among stakeholders. Their study found through social relations model people were warm, cooperative, and expressed communication clearly. There were at least two limitations to their study. The limitations were: 1) the sample was from an exclusively European American population in rural Iowa, and 2) the study did not address all complexities that are inherent in family dynamics (Ackerman et al., 2011).
A third model for a conflict style was created by Blake and Mouton (1964), but this model did not address any aspect of negative emotions in the conflicting processes. The researchers discussed how the conflict style resembles that of the work of Folger et al. (2009), but these researchers added three other components, dominating, integrating, and obliging. Folger et al.’s (2009) model suggests:

1. Avoiding
2. Compromising
3. Dominating
4. Integrating
5. Obliging

These three models provide assistance for people working through conflict. Even though each model gives guidelines to help parties overcome disagreement, researchers argue that people are very aware of their actions, despite models that are put in place to help with issues. Schellenberg (1996) talks about the sense people have between knowing what is right and wrong when interacting with others. Teachers and principals know when they have acted and responded morally right towards each other. Every teacher and principal in elementary schools knows what acceptable character defines the principal and teacher. Intrinsically, principals know what is right and wrong. From external forces, including other principals, many principals contend with influences from others of what is both wrong and right. These external forces may change the direction of the conflict resolution for a principal. Instead, principals are influenced by other principals’ voices. Principals who listen to thoughts and ideas of other principals develop mental symbols. These mental symbols may be used to create an unhealthy school climate. One example
of a mental symbol may be the lack of forgiveness shown towards a teacher. As the climate changes due to the wrong emotions hovering over the school, student achievement is affected drastically.

Principal guilt, a negative emotion, determines conflict resolution progression. A principal who is guilty from his or her behavior decides what positive or negative direction the conflict enters. The principal’s inner sanction knows when he or she has broken a rule, procedure, or policy. The inner drive alarms when a principal has mistreated a teacher. A principal knows when she or he has overstepped boundaries in terms of what is appropriate emotionally towards a teacher.

The principal’s inner consciousness awakens him or her when an act is done against the professional code of conduct for administrators. The mind, will, and heart coincide with each other to communicate with each other if the principal has done something right or wrong. A set of principal peers will either confirm or refute what right and wrong already exhibited with self. As the wrong the principals have done is strategically dealt with, negative emotions will not develop with the teachers. Yet, it is identifying these pieces that assist with the principal learning from his or her mistakes. It is through these mistakes that principals see firsthand consequences of overreacting in his or her negative emotional states.

**New Improved Model for the Problem**

The development of a conflict style between genders, which encompasses assertiveness and cooperation, along with the model to address negative emotions impact on conflict processes will provide a more concrete and effective conflict style model for elementary school principals in Virginia. This model is called the Emotional-Centered
Conflict Management System (Roselle, 2012). The model addresses four areas that help teachers and principals in resolution. Since most principal and teacher root causes of conflict go unresolved, a five-fold model may be the solution for successful and sustained resolution. Each component in the model must be addressed. As this model takes into consideration the work of the systems theory, it is advantageous to explicitly deal with each component with fidelity. Overlooking a component brings unfavorable results to the process. Each part of the model serves as a primary catalyst in determining the key influences for stifling resolution between teacher and principal. The five parts to the Emotional-Centered Conflict Management System (Roselle, 2012) are:

1. Faith-based principles
2. Trust
3. Empathy
4. Training
5. One-to One Application Support

Previous researchers cited in Chapter 2 have extensively studied conflict styles between males and females, but omitted the power of negative emotions in the conflicting process. Analyzing former models find that limitations exist. First, Roselle’s (2012) model did not show the need for building the trust factor before implementation of any plan. Secondly, other models did not include the power of empathy in resolution. Next, most models separate faith-based principles from its practices. Faith-based principles include forgiveness, patience, gentleness, self-control, and longsuffering. Faith-based principles are the foundational structures needed to replace negative emotions. Overcoming negativity in the conflicting process is only an idea unless the faith-based
principle surrounds the ideology. An effective plan for teacher and principals must be inclusive of replacement strategies. Lastly, the need for the one-to-one application support for the model success is needed. Many teachers and principals hear general teachings and refuse to apply teachings. However, Roselle’s (2012) model supports providing 1:1 support for the principal to coach him or her when in a disagreeing situation with a teacher.

Seemingly, principal perception shows that simply identifying a problem may not solve the ultimate problem in public elementary schools. One reason is that the Emotional-Centered Conflict Management System (Roselle, 2012) does not overlook the power of faith-based principles in resolution. Trust, empathy, and one-to-one application in the approach make this proposed model effective. This Emotional-Centered Conflict Management System (Roselle, 2012) addresses the influence that negative emotions have on the conflict process. The need to learn spiritual principles such as forgiveness makes way for optimal resolution outcomes. The idea of trust leads principals to reach favorable outcomes. Empathy teaching produces promising results for teachers. It is obvious how each model component shows favorable outcomes with principal to teacher disputing outcomes when the emotional variable is considered. As conflicts are resolved in nonemotionally threatening ways by principals, teacher excitement returns to the classroom. When motivated teachers rule the classroom, whether male or female, the preparation of a lesson and lesson delivery improves. As lesson delivery from teachers improves daily, student engagement rises. Engaged student learning produces increased student achievement for all.
Theories to Address the Problem

A theory is essential in understanding lived experiences of people. Many theories have been created to explain human behavior. Some of the theories specifically address the actual issues of school leaders who serve as principals. Theories address teachers and their reactions to school leaders. Yet, with the many theories addressing school issues, the principal investigator addresses the theoretical approach from an overlooked perspective without misinterpreting the theory itself. Systems theory and social constructionism theory are presented in this literature review; hopefully they shed new light on the problem of principals serving as school leaders that overreact with negative emotions towards teachers. This problem is affecting student achievement drastically through poor teacher performance.

Conflict Resolution and the Systems Theory

Historically, systems theory had a range of pioneer research scholars. Ludwig von Bertalanffy was the initial researcher who founded and presented systems theory in 1937 (Hearn, 1979). However, systems theory was not first publicized until 1945 and popularized in psychology by James Miller in 1955. Social science did not see an influx in utilizing systems theory until James Miller developed a set of principles in 1955. These principles were tested upon a class of social workers in 1979 by later researchers (Hearn, 1979).

Von Bertalanffy reviewed a wide variety of studies and found that a general systems theory was needed to describe the everyday lived experiences of social subjects. Von Bertalanffy’s work launched one key element in that it described systems theory as a multifaceted array of components within shared interactions (Hudson, 2000). Simply put,
systems theory involves looking at individual components in relation to a whole. Pioneer von Bertalanffy’s (1968) main goal was to understand the unified disciplines in the social sciences that became individually torn apart. He later described the theory as interactive segments evolving from a central phenomenon.

Chorley and Kennedy (1971) extended the concept of systems theory by understanding it as the dissecting of individual elements and traits of social beings in environmental landscapes. Though much literature lends itself to define systems theory as the breaking down or separating the pieces of a whole to understand the general phenomenon, Kazemek and Kazemek (1982, p. 5) show how social workers perceive systems theory not as isolated parts, but as connected parts of an intricate ecological system. Meyer’s (1988, p. 276) research yielded a similar definition. She explained systems theory as the interrelatedness of a person and her or his environment. Meyer understood that a person is linked to other human beings, social environments, cultural forces, and physical area. A person is not who they are based on one facet per se; rather a person is made of an arrangement of people, places, and things.

The systems theory investigated by Schellenberg (1996) shows how it is the ability to look at the problem in pieces. In order for resolution to occur, the problem must be broken down into smaller pieces. These small pieces must be examined individually but in relation to the whole dynamic of the school issue. In many cases, principals do not always see the important pieces in a disagreement as a single piece of interest that initiates the conflict.

Principals see resolution with a teacher as having different pieces that they consider essential to the outcome of the conflict situation. Simon, Shao-Chang Wee,
Chin, Tindle, Guth, and Mason (2011) express how the heart of systems theory is locating the causes and consequences of social environmental issues. At times principals may misjudge the pieces to a conflict. Principals tend to ignore the emotional intelligence aspect in resolution, which is an intricate piece in resolution. When principals do not give specific thought to the emotional intelligence aspect of school leadership, then the conflict resolution process becomes delayed.

Dissecting the components of systems theory to determine what should be considered to hold theory truth is essential for a researcher. The first consideration in looking at a principal’s actions in relation to system theory is how theory is designed to make inferences about a person’s behavior (Richmond, 1994). Principals in schools are challenged with making quick judgments on a teacher’s behavior often. In the most intense disagreements in schools, principals are made to believe the worse about a teacher due to documented evaluations and one-on-one conversation from other principals.

The second consideration for a principal in relation to systems theory is the art of nullifying complexity while in the midst of chaos (Gharajedhagi, 1999). A principal must be trained in identifying the major piece of the problem in the conflict and then simplifying that piece in the resolution process. A principal who adds unneeded attention to a piece adds escalation to the existing conflict. On the other hand, teachers who become offended from a principal’s actions complicate the issue. Instead of working together with the principal to rid the school of a complex issue, an offended teacher uses energy by conversing with other teachers about the incident, therefore, corrupting the school’s positive climate.
The third consideration as it relates to a principal and system theory is the notion that the theory sees the world of a school as a multifaceted system. All of the school pieces are linked to everything else in the school (Sterman, 2000). Despite how unrelated the issue may be, it is still somehow connected to the whole picture of the school atmosphere. A principal who does not interconnect all of the pieces to a conflict sets an upcoming problem in motion.

Shaked and Schechter (2014) designed a model called the Systems School Leadership Model, which is one of many models based on the lived experiences of social subjects. This model shows how school leaders looked at school processes as a whole as opposed to pieces in isolation. This model was based on the system theory or what some may call the systems thinking model. Shaked and Schechter (2014) argued that school leaders must look at problems from a whole perspective and pay close attention to the interrelationships between all persons involved rather than an individual person. In this model, researchers offer similar positions concerning school leaders and their link to systems theory.

There are four characteristics of the model. The first characteristic is leading wholes (Shaked & Schechter, 2014). This simply means that the principal looks at all school processes as a whole. He or she does not isolate any situation. The principal determines how every piece in resolution is linked to a larger piece. A principal who leads through a whole perspective will have opportunity to address the smaller pieces towards resolution.

The second characteristic is considering interconnections and how these multiconnections influence many school stakeholders, including the teachers (Shaked &
Schechter, 2014). If teachers did not converse with other teachers about the principal, then a teacher’s interconnections with others in the school would be beneficial to the organization’s success, but teachers share information with other school stakeholders that discredit the principal when the school leader acts out emotions in a negative way.

The third characteristic is adopting a multi-faceted view as leader because often many tasks are assigned to a school leader (Shaked & Schechter, 2014) because of the role itself. A principal never has one assignment to complete on his or her list. There are tasks from the central office, parent body, teachers, as well as community leaders. The principal’s role is to handle many assignments, regulating his or her emotions to the point that teachers are not offended.

The fourth characteristic is evaluating the important elements that govern school life (Shaked & Schechter, 2014). Without judging each element in a school, then the leader cannot determine what to change and not change concerning the school. Evaluations are critical in determining the future state of the school. Self-evaluating is critical too. A principal who evaluates his or her relations with teachers sets high regard for how teacher and principal relationships determine favorably student outcomes.

Traditionally, systems theory was used consistently by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) who supported breaking down issues one by one in relation to the whole in conflict resolution. In using this theory, researchers found three factors involved in understanding the conflict resolution process. Principal input of emotions is important in resolution whether the input is from a positive or a negative emotion. The way to handle emotions is based on the type of emotion that is given by the principal. The way the
principal handles positive emotions will be different from how the principal gives attention to negative emotions in the conflict resolution process.

One factor concerning systems theory is the science of reducing complexity, according to Gharajedhagi (1999). Reducing problems into smaller parts assists with understanding the root of the problem itself. When dealing with conflicts among people, a person cannot overlook any emotion in the process because negative emotions are powerful.

Sterman (2004) argues that everything is linked to everything else. This means that one emotion is possibly linked to another emotion. Together emotions become complex. However, breaking down emotions one by one helps to understand the nature of the emotion and why the emotion is attached to the person.

The systems theory promotes adopting perspectives from other people. With the many different personalities of principals and teachers, King and Frick (2000) talks about how school personnel cannot reimage without components from systems theory. Principals receive valuable in-depth knowledge from other principals on varied ways to operate the schools. One principal does not have a monopoly on the best way of handling teacher and principal disagreements. Principals’ shared information on conflict resolution is a key component in wholesome resolution. The insight from a principal is the most powerful variable in reaching resolution in the conflict process. A principal’s views are influential. The principal’s educational background and experiences help effective resolutions in elementary schools.

The second factor for thought of systems theory is how the mind is influenced by social relationships (Gergen, 1994). Negative emotions produce in the mind to infiltrate
the conversations which build social relationships. Influences generate from various sources. Negative and positive influences make up how teachers and principals contend with perfecting their social relationships. According to Gergen (1994), social relationships are important when analyzing interactions between people. Through the lens of a teacher, dissecting what a principal says is crucial in determining the extent of social relationships between teacher/principal. It is through both the positive and negative emotional states of teachers and principals that their social relationships are either made resilient or weakened. This outcome is determined by the success or failure in social relationships.

Socialization energizes the mind. Negative emotions decrease as socialization enters the resolution process. Talking takes the mind out of complacency. At times principals engage in conversations that become over-stimulating conversations. Principals’ dialogue becomes almost entertaining. As an observer of principals, while engaging in conversations, the observer depicts gesture changes. These gestures, which are a form of conversational communication, are seen in various forms. These communication forms add spark to the resolution process. For example, hand motions communicate what words cannot say. What a principal says by hand gesturing is communication guessing. Non-verbal communications are designed to make the recipient guess what is literally being communicated. Both guessing and testing the communication from the principal brings bad energy into the resolution.

The resource alone cannot make the power. Systems theory suggests more than one piece to move forward in a process. An isolated resource cannot create power. The resource must be interconnected to another idea. Another source, along with a resource,
produces the power in a conflict. An individual has the potential to enhance the resource (Folger et al., 2009). An individual who includes a resource brings power into the conflict process. For example, if Party A brings a resource called “attorney” into the process, then the conflict spirals into a different direction. The “attorney” resource adds power to the side of Party A. Therefore, Party A is credited for adding power to the conflict process. The “attorney” resource could determine a different outcome. A resource does not have the equalizing sense of power. A resource’s power is only sparked based on the condition of another variable.

Frank (2006) asserts that school leaders must visualize the whole system and see the huge picture. Researchers have found that looking at pieces of a problem in isolation does not give ample explanation of what the real problem may be. Von Bertalanffy (1968) talks about how life cannot be explained without the systems theory. Examining life will be limited without defining life through the systems theory. In order for a principal to bring transformational change, the principal must look at all aspects of what the teacher is doing that sets a disconnection between the teacher and the principal.

**Conflict Resolution and Social Constructionism Theory**

According to Gergen (1994), social constructionism is the mental designing of the world by categories given by social relationships. As principals have the ability to place negative emotions in categories, it makes for better strategies in dealing with teacher to principal outcomes in resolution. Principals place their focuses in different mental compartments. A principal thinks mentally about various ideologies as a school leader. He or she may focus on student achievement, but the principal may not think intuitively about what minute things prevent successful student achievement. These duties include:
handling parental involvement/complaints, central office concerns, community issues, and state regulations.

On the other hand, teachers have many different mental focuses that oppose the principals’ focus. The different focuses hinder resolution. A teacher is concerned about lesson preparation. The teacher has a focus on instructional delivery, grading papers, and conversing with parents. Teachers who do not fully understand the role of the principal have contrasting views. These contrasting views create conflicts in elementary schools among teachers and principals.

Many principals endorse social constructionism theory. This theory is designed as a framework to decrease the rise of negative emotions in resolution. Each piece of the framework of the conflict between teacher and principal has many categorical focuses. In the midst of having multiple focuses, principal and teacher hold the common focus of student achievement for all. These varied teacher and principal pieces mean a mandate is needed for the principal to increase his or her socialization skills. The principal’s ability to socialize effectively is an intricate part of teacher to principal resolutions. These ongoing conversations between the principals and teachers are designed to develop and strengthen social systems to avoid conflict.

Social constructionism is indirectly based on the argument of Tannen (1986) who shares how relationships are created, sustain, and broken through talk. Negative emotions threaten relationships from developing and continuing. The simple explanation of a topic inconceivably causes a dispute, especially if negative emotions enter the process. Principals must be specifically careful of all forms of communication because there are many parts to communication that breed conflict between teacher and principal. As a
result of not tracking communication, a principal who is not using a system to identify emotions makes way for communication to be misinterpreted. For example, a principal who is talking to a teacher using an angry tone causes the teacher to misinterpret the essential message given by the principal. The teacher cannot really encode the message from the principal due to the negative emotional tone of the conversation.

There may be possible effects seen in schools when a principal does not communicate effectively with teachers, for example, the teacher will not properly plan lessons for students. Instead of a teacher taking ample time to prepare lessons, the teacher will either not plan a lesson or rush through lesson preparation. When the teacher rushes through a lesson, students will not receive the effective resources needed for them to understand the concept.

A second possible effect will be teachers may not provide effective instruction for students as needed because of the emotional wounds from the principal’s communication. Effective instruction takes time and a caring attitude of behalf of the teacher. A teacher who does not care will not provide resourceful instruction for students. Effective instruction means taking time to provide lessons which highlight the six components of Bloom’s (1956) cognitive taxonomy. These would be lessons that highlight: 1) remembering, 2) understanding, 3) applying, 4) analyzing, 5) evaluating, and 6) creating. A teacher who has lost the motivation to effectively plan lessons will not provide instruction that fosters each component on the hierarchy (Bloom, 1956).

A third possibility may be how teachers disregard the power of linguistics in principal and teacher relationships. The words teachers use to express themselves emotionally have repercussions. In conflict resolution, linguistics has huge implications.
According to Tannen (1986), linguistics is the academic discipline dedicated to considering how language works. Many teachers lack the ability to implement the basics in linguistics. This means a principal must learn and implement the basic components of linguistics and learn linguistic styles because it will make for favorable outcomes in conflict.

According to Tannen (1986), every day conversations lead to anomalous miscommunications because of a person’s conversational style. The wrong conversations spark negative emotions to rise. As principals converse with teachers in public and private sectors, the number of disagreements could possibly rise due to the nature of the job. Negative emotions such as arguments, strife, and contentions may develop from a teacher’s simple conversations with a principal. It is obvious that teachers and principals may have different conversation styles which adds to the possibly conflict. These varied conversation styles lead to conflict. These styles clash if they are in disagreement one with the other, and conflicts start when a principal is not knowledgeable of the conflict styles of teacher. As principals converse with teachers with varied conversational styles, a different approach is needed for principals especially if the linguistic style differs between principal and teacher. This different approach is necessary when addressing disputing issues with teacher and principal. As conversational styles differ, conflict may develop or experience escalation, if the conversation style of the principal is indirect.

The indirectness conversational style (Tannen, 1986) is widely used in schools by principals. Negative emotions may develop as principals converse using the indirectness style. This particular style is based on not saying what a person means, but really on how the other person perceives what was said. The main function of this conversational style
is not on what was communicated. The primary intention of the message is lost in the message deliberation. All the human energy goes into how the receiver decodes the message. As principals engage in indirectness in their conversations with teachers, the intensity of building conflict becomes stronger. As intensity grows, student achievement may ultimately be impacted simply by how principals communicate with teachers.

The indirectness conversational style is used in the systems theory model. The connection of the systems theory and indirectness conversational style used correctly decrease the amount of negative emotions in the conflicting process. Indirectness components are multi-faceted. Many pieces exist to an indirectness conversational style. Each piece of the conversation, whether by teacher or principal, plays a part in resolution.

According to Tannen (1986), the first factor considered must be a principal’s speed in conversation. The speed of the conversation is important. At times when a principal talks fast, the teacher may not be totally interpreting what is said. As the principal talks quickly, the teacher may not have time to conceptualize a thought before another idea is presented to the teacher from the principal in the conversation. Contrarily, when a principal speaks too slowly, the teacher may choose to ignore the message from the principal because the teacher feels the principal is prolonging the conversation for a hidden reason.

Conversations spoken by principals with a fast speed do not give teachers time to decode the message. Teachers sense intimidation on the part of the principal. The teacher communicates how this form of intimation is indirectly manifested from the speedy conversation. A teacher becomes intimidated if a principal’s conversation appears hurriedly spoken. The teacher may feel the principal is rushing the conversation to
possibly bypass information. This bypassed information may be detrimental to the outcome of the resolution. This bypassed information may be grounds to resolve, de-escalate, or escalate the conflict.

According to Tannen (1986), sound is a factor in communication that relates to dialogue. The pitch is key in determining the message from the principal. A principal who whispers a conversation may be sending a message that he or she may be hiding information from other staff members. On the contrary, if the principal selects to yell the message to a teacher, the teacher may feel the principal is trying to gain attention from other staff members and/or attempting to embarrass the teachers in front of his or her peers.

Principal talks must be evaluated for sound. The volume of the conversation may send a subtle message to the teacher. Whispering a message to a teacher may be communicated as not wanting anyone to hear the conversation. Perhaps the principal may not want anyone to hear the conversation for lack of factual information. Contrarily, shouting a message to the teacher sends the message that everyone should hear the conversation. This shouting technique could be used to embarrassed or ridicule the teacher. The principal’s hidden motive may have been to add more emotional turmoil to the existing condition.

The third factor is the principal’s intonation. Tannen (1986) shares how this one error in the multi-faceted linguistic system makes way for conflict to develop. It is apparent the simple message does not ignite the conflict or dispute. The simple message is free from interpreting any emotional states from the principal or teacher. Communication given to various intonations from principal with the teacher must be
analyzed. A principal who begins his or her talk with the teacher in a soft tone but later ends his conversation with the teacher in a loud voice sends a mixed message. Principal modulation of sound plays a part in determining what hidden message the principal is attempting to get across to the teacher. As the recipient of the principal’s message, the teacher is not accurately and consistently sensing the principal’s pitch. This leads to the teacher becoming unsettled in accepting any upcoming resolutions.

**Social Constructionism Imbedded in Symbolic Interactionism**

Mead (1938) shares how people connect meanings to symbols. Pressure, mental overload, and exhaustion are symbols. From these symbols meaning evolves. This meaning impacts the perceptions principals bring to conflict resolution development.

A principal’s interactions in schools come with many different symbols. Principals, at times, violate teachers in the process due to the symbols of a) pressure from assessments, b) mental overload stemming from multi-issues of parents, students, and teachers, and c) exhaustion from extended work hours and weekend responsibilities. From these symbols principals must develop a system of priority exchanging. In order for teachers to obtain buy-in, teachers must feel that their time in the classroom with students will not be robbed and/or taken away for mere fact of an unforeseen situation that occurred. Blumer (1969) shares how people respond towards symbols.

**Functionalism**

According to Merton (1934), each part of a person’s life is interdependent upon it being used as a whole. In the PI’s elementary schools, the researcher has spent at least 25 hours a quarter helping teachers perform well in classrooms. One major duty the PI had as principal was to engage in teacher empowerment. For example, while serving as
principal and the general overseer for instruction, the PI observed the teacher had strengths and weakness in the classroom. As the third grade teacher was teaching communication skills to a group of eight year olds, the PI noticed she needed assistance, from the principal. Therefore, the PI provided: 1:1 support, staff development, ongoing workshops, mentorship, and teacher modeling. In essence the teacher is dependent upon the principal and the principal was dependent upon the teacher. During functionalism, the PI served as a catalyst to provide instructional resources, strategies, and techniques to support teachers with all student learning modalities. The principal provided staff development for teacher weaknesses; in return the teacher provided better instruction for students to increase achievement. Principals held schools together by guiding teachers thereby contributing to society as a whole. The functionalism state of principals impacted many areas, such as ongoing quality instruction, better teacher performance, high school climate sustainability, decrease in daily discipline referrals, and parent complaints.

**Considerations for a Research Worthy Problem**

Effective communication brings healthy conflict resolution. Each component of the communication process is essential in resolution between a teacher and a principal. In order to determine effective communication between teacher and principal, there are several considerations to examine. The first consideration is the importance of the meta-message in conflict resolution, which breeds the conflict (Tannen, 1986). Meta-message has two parts. The message is the first part. It is the simple use of words. Meta-message combines the words. The combination of how it was said and any physical attributes that linger with the message is the meta-message. For example, when a teacher shares that he or she is not embarrassed from a principal’s conversation, but the teacher is shedding
tears after someone shared a personal teacher weakness with another teacher without the teacher’s permission, a meta-message is observed. The words expressed about the secret caused the conflict between the two teachers. However, the teacher’s tears were a sign of the physical attribute of the embarrassment. At that point, the statement of embarrassment was congruent with the teacher’s physical attribute of crying. A disconnect did not exist. The tears, the red-faced cheeks, the teacher gasping for air, and teacher having speech stuttering showed that the teacher felt embarrassed. The combination of words, usage, and physical attributes creates the conflict between the teachers and principals.

A second consideration is when the principal makes an error in indirectness when addressing a teacher and the ramifications of the principal’s mistake. A principal who interacts with teachers regularly deals with overall conversational psychology. The psychology of conversations is judging all pieces to spoken and non-spoken language to ensure honesty of thought. Communication on the part of the principal appears simple and free from wrong motives. Yet, when principals do not effectively communicate and they opt not to communicate because of fear, they are developing hidden animosity that later affects conflict resolution.

A third consideration is the principal’s judgmental aspect of the conversation between teacher and principal. A conversation is not just spoken words. Conversations are judged by the encoder and the decoder. There are many different pieces to conversation that may be judged. The conversational system works together to bring effective and non-threatening communication. Hopefully, these types of communication will not hinder but rather help the resolution process.
These three considerations of communication possibly have the power to infuse negative emotions into the resolution process. These negative emotions destroy teacher to principal relationships. Bolton’s (1979) work talks about the average person not communicating well in interpersonal relationships. He later tells how ineffective language causes interpersonal slits. The speed, intonation, and sound of a message may develop a slit. These slits are manifested through teacher loneliness, career incompetence, and teacher psychological stress. Slits in the resolution process possibly breed conflicts and/or disputes. On-going slits affect teacher performance and eventually student achievement.

In addition to the communication component relating to conflict, there is the component of faith-based principles. In order for principals to work towards de-escalation and resolution when negative emotions enter the process, interpreting what the mind conceives as a key component in process success is by having the ability to forgive. This is another component in the conflict resolution process equally important in communication (Tannen, 1986).

**The Problem and Principals’ Power**

Power is a reality-based but often overlooked characteristic of the principal’s role. Power affects the perceptions of principals in schools with teachers. Power hinders how principals handle conflicts, and power determines if appropriate training is necessary for change. Principals are given power without even asking for the power. Principals accept power when given the position as principal. The hierarchical set-up in elementary schools makes the principal’s position a power driven position. Regardless of a principal’s gender, each person in the position of principal is given power to evaluate and handle
teacher concerns. Power is granted to a principal despite the number of years the principal has had in the elementary school system.

The term power contradicts the idea of power Clegg (1989) who stated that culturally, people looked at power differently. In some cultures, men are given power as the way of life. Women with power in those same cultures were considered to be following the cultural norm in terms of how males and females are viewed culturally. Therefore, in many cultures, power was interpreted differently based on individual culture and not based on gender per se.

To have a universal idea concerning power, the first step will be defining power so teacher and principal will be in agreement with the definition of power, regardless of teacher culture. Folger et al. (2009) viewed power as the ability to influence or regulate an event. Despite culture, power materializes as people work together. People working together categorize power. As power is categorized, various types of power manifest differently within various organizations, especially elementary schools. Categorizing power simply means ascertaining needed power at certain times based on people, places, and things.

A person’s accessibility to resources has potential to change the course of the resolution. A resource is simply having valuable assets to persuade a resolution in a person’s favor. Resources create an image of how party members act towards the conflict resolution process. Resources may give power indirectly in a conflict resolution process, but resources alone do not create a power source in a conflict. Resources and skills together produce power in conflict processes. Resources are classified in terms of:

1. Resources used to persuade others.
2. Resources used to change the course of action.

3. Resources used to prevent others from making moves in the conflict process.

Parties can use a comprehensive range of resources to wield power (French & Raven, 1959). One particular resource will not work in every situation and context. The specific resource needed should be based on the particular conflict. The range of resources helps to diminish the power struggles that may originate in the process.

Gottman and Silver (2000) talk about power and emotions. Combined terms, power, and emotions make for a very difficult conflict resolution. Power alone is difficult to handle in resolution. Emotions that lead to negativity add challenges when seeking resolution, sometimes making it much more impossible. Connecting power and negative emotions causes compound-complex problems in the resolution process. Because power and emotions are in the mind and neither can be separated from cultural and political experiences (Gottman, 1994), learning how to effectively handle power and emotions simultaneously is key when considering options for negotiating in the conflict resolution process.

Resources can be negotiated (Folger et al., 2009). Interacting with party members makes way for the negative aspect of power to decrease. Negotiation sends messages that a party’s outcome may be hopeful. Negotiation always sends the message that a positive change may be in the process, regardless of the type of resource used in resolution. The usefulness of any resource is always negotiated through human exchange of information (Folger et al., 2009).

Negotiating with resources can change the perception of the power (Folger et al., 2009). A given idea has the potential to change each time a negotiable move is made. If
10 negotiations are made, perhaps 10 different perceptions are idealized in the process. The ultimate goal of negotiations is to suggest that parties find more negotiable ideas concerning resources. As negotiable ideas increase, the probability of negative emotions evolving due to power in the conflict cycle diminishes.

Negotiations can be made using non-tangible resources. However, the other party may select to use a tangible resource. Any time a person makes a step towards resolution is considered a move. Party members can make moves that are both visible and invisible. A person’s reputation is a non-tangible move. The person’s reputation has the same power as a tangible move has. The tangible move in this same instance could mean paying money for compensation. Regardless if the parties use non-tangible or tangible means for negotiating to deter power, as long as an individual allegiance is given to a resource, the power dynamic changes.

As individual allegiances are challenged in the negotiation process, whereby power sharing is discussed subtly, negotiator efficacy (Lewicki et al., 1994) must be explored. Emotions may obstruct a negotiated plan. As the gamut of emotions is revealed in a dispute, the emotional extremity determines the effect on the process. If positive emotions surface, the probability of conflict escalating is very slim. However, if negative emotions take charge, the likelihood of the conflict intensifying will be greater.

In the conflict resolution process, negative emotions can reroute the other party. For example, one party possibly had a strategic, negotiable plan drafted to present to the other party. The party starts to negotiate for agreement, then negative emotions surface. At this point, the other party must give courteous attention to the party member who is expressing a negative emotion. Or, a person on the same team must give attention to the
person who is releasing a negative emotion. Regardless of the party that gave attention to the negative emotion, the focus on the problem shifted. The party responsible for shedding tears used the tears as a resource of power.

On the other hand, emotions communicate what a person values (Lewicki et al., 1994). Facial expressions are forms of non-verbal communication, such as blushing. When party member blushes, while another party is conversing, then the other party receives a message that was said carries a passionate tone. Regardless of what the topic is, if the other opponent sees an area that zones in on the inner soul of a party member, the other team may rank the ideas on the negotiation table. In essence, the top priority may be placed on another tier if the other party member thought what caused the non-communicative blushing was the most important idea on the negotiation table. This tends to be defined as manipulating emotions.

In negotiations individuals must be in control of their emotions. People must pay attention to the different kinds of negative emotions that come forth in the conflict resolution process. As principals become frustrated, identifying the exact negative emotion and how often the emotion duplicates for the situation is important. Finding the pattern of negative emotions provides not only the exact type of negative emotion, but also the frequency of the negative emotion. If a principal is not careful, then negative emotions may cause teachers to act out of character. Hochschild (1983) calls it deep acting. This is when the party member selects an appropriate negative emotion for displaying the feeling experienced. Through deep acting, party members are able to act out the disappointments and frustrations for the teams. Kirby and Di Mattia (1991) argue how different thought designs do not lead to negative emotional consequences. A variety
approaches in the conflict process make for reversible outcomes. For example, as negativity overtakes the process, then perhaps an optimal outcome proceeds.

Reversal outcomes in conflict resolution stem from high expectations. People tend to negotiate the expectations in a school. At times, people fear promoting high expectations. Some people believe that expectations are unreachable, unattainable, and ignite conflict. However, Kirby and Di Mattia (1991) share how heated exchanges happen because work positions are never part of perfect systems. Therefore, the idea of expectations should be a norm, but it should be realized that it is an expectation that may not be reached. The unreached expectation should stabilize the power instead of producing new power-driven energies.

The behaviors associated with high expectations are not deep acting in its principles. Deep acting allows the disposition of at least one party member to be revealed. Individualism in negotiations by using resources to determine power is very time consuming. Systems theory confirms that looking at all of its parts make for a holistic view in rationalizing many conflicting situations. Just as individuals influence how resources are carried out, it is also important to examine the individuals who are used as a factor in the resources’ framework. People have personalities, preconceptions, array of abilities, and skills (Folger et al., 2009). The range of a person’s skills and talents creates social categorization (Folger et al., 2009). This speaks about how women’s social systems, if embedded with power, make women less likable.

Carels, Sherwood, Szczepanski, and Blumenthal (2000) promote the power of social supports among women. The research shows that women engaged in social relationships tend not to pose problems in conflict resolution when negative emotions
enter the process. It was apparent that women had people to discuss and share their concerns, fates, and troubles with as they endured their challenging situations. It was obvious that a positive correlation existed among women when females had ongoing, social relationships. The study showed how social support among women decreased high blood pressure. Social systems stimulate the mind and relationships, and help nurture social systems among people.

Every person is stereotyped in conflicting situations by a person who has a negative outlook about the person in question. Despite a person’s economic class, career, or education, the stereotype of people’s social class status is not changed. Social categorization deals with the idea of placing people in groupings based on their status in life. How other people view people is another way social categorization is developed. Tangible resources made available to each person determine the social category for a person, group, or organization.

Deindividuation (Folger et al., 2009) can be tangible and intangible moves in the process. This process is called deindividuation because party members take away the human individualities of a person. Party members replace the new name with degrading, demoralizing, and sarcastic names. A tangible example would be “name calling” in a situation. The “name calling” serves as a physical resource. For instance, instead of one party calling the group by their given, respected name, the party refers to the group as “the snobs.” As groups create names based on their perception of whom and what they think the group stands for, devaluing a person becomes obvious. Conversely, intangible resources can refer to party members’ intelligence, which is not concrete and physical. Intelligence serves as an ideological resource that cannot be physically touched or
spoken. The effectiveness of the resources can damage or bring success in the conflicting process.

Culturally, women lose the most from deindividuation. Men stereotypically perform much better in the world. Looking in retrospect, women are dominated by the men. In many careers women are viewed as second to men. Women are placed in social classes. Most women are not put in social groupings by their experience, skill, or ability, but by their gender. Janeway (1980) argues that this is the main reason for women taking frail roles in conflicting situations. Many women feel that the power has not been shared between them as it has with the men.

Men try to mask the use of their power in situations, on jobs, and around people. Folger et al. (2009) argue that people do not always act in the open use of power because it is not socially sanctioned. Instead, people intrinsically feel good about their power use, but extrinsically stray away from letting others sense or see the manifestation of their power. In essence, men disempower (Folger et al., 2009) women not only in conflicting situations, but in other areas too.

Berger (1994) tells how power is an element in the life of conflicting situations. Regardless of a person’s gender, some amount of power exists. Despite efforts to ignore power, it is impossible. Just as written and spoken language sends messages, so does the idea of power. Power communicates on its own. A person’s presence can reveal the amount of power that rests upon the individual. Consider a person who people have never met before walking in a room; impulsively one might insinuate the person is a person of status. The person has not opened his or her mouth. The individual was not introduced to
the group. The person’s presence made the crowd gather an interpretation of the amount of power available for the person to use.

As party members encode messages (Tannen, 1986), power displayed has the potential to offend the party who is decoding the message. The resource channel for showing power does not always consider the variables prior to acting in the role of the power source. So often, a principal does not communicate to school partners, teachers, or students that he or she is the powerful cannon in the school; however, the ideology of power manifests in the conflict process without notice.

Folger et al. (2009) explain how power produces power. The creation of power develops without notice, but power’s creation is orchestrated by the demeanor, communication, and intent of the principal. A principal’s way of carrying out business plays a part in if power is manifested. The principal’s style of communication makes it easy for power to enter a conflicting process. The hidden intent behind a principal’s motive creates subtle power displayed in the conflicting process. The principal’s intent may not always be verbally communicated with other stakeholders, but the essence of the power creeps into the process.

According to Folger et al. (2009), power must be balanced. One party cannot have more power than another power. Power must be given to both parties in order to have reasonable resolution. In order to grant power to both parties, then it must be determine which party needs power and which party has sufficient power. At some point in the conflict, it must be determined that one party possesses the mass net of power, while the other party is considered weaker in power (Folger et al., 2009).
Balancing means sharing the power (Folger et al., 2009). Conflict resolution that works does not require one party to monopolize the power. If one party lacks power, then building their power is fundamental. Unless power is shared, people in the conflict process will sense negative emotions, such as resentment, intimidation, inferiority, and dehumanization. Negative emotions that enter into the formula of conflict resolution stifle the outcomes of resolution. Scott (2008) argues favorably that negative emotions escalate in situations of conflict.

Mansbridge (1990) talked about the favorable outcome from balancing the power of conflicts. As parties act upon two different ground levels, a negative emotion of intimidation increases the flow of negative energy in the process. Working with and through negative emotions in the process, eventually prevents resolution. Common ground makes stakeholders able to agree with each other, as opposed to being at odds. Opposition in the conflict cycle hinders resolution.

Folger et al. (2009) speak about how party members seek to find unique resources that accentuate conflicts when common ground is ignored. This produces an escalation of emotional intensity. People locate additional resources to gain conflict ammunition. The sought-after resources generate additional negative emotions on the other party’s part. To prevent the conflict from growing and possibly costing lives, working to balance power is paramount.

As resources are available to promote power in the conflict process, skill is a second component that is also crucial (Folger et al., 2009). Skill is the ability to insightfully apply the principles of working through a conflict. Without the wisdom to work the skill effectively, another problem in the conflict develops. As people tend to
manipulate the conflict system of resources and skill, their power impact in the process becomes greater (Folger et al., 2009). Resources along with skill generate great gain.

Power never should be the determining factor in the outcome in the resolution process. By power having the ability to bring negativity into the process, it can be looked at in different ways. Power has the potential to have parties escalate a conflict. The idea of power has the potential to make party members decide quick resolutions to avoid going through the process for resolution. Power has the potential to heavily influence how the members in the process view and address the dispute or conflict.

Coleman (2004) believes power is abstract and abstruse. People cannot really figure power out when initially confronting with people in conflict. Many interpretations about power exist from various academic perspectives (Coleman, 2004). Consequently, Follet (1924) had an idea of power that refuted the work of Coleman; he believed that power was simply the capability to make things happen. When people are within the cycle of conflict resolution, some participant must have the ability to see what needs to happen and to make it happen. Coleman (2004) describes the various distinctions of power. He names them as:

1. Power as a Dynamic
2. Environmental, Relational, and Personal Power
3. Potential and Kinetic Power
4. Primary and Secondary Power
5. Top-down, Middle-Out, and Bottom-Up Power
6. Effective and Sustainable Outcomes
7. Perceived Power
8. General Versus Relevant Power

Gross and Guerrero (2000) speak indirectly about power through dominating as a component in conflict styles. These researchers confirmed that integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding and compromising (Gross & Guerrero, 2000) are parts to the conflict style paradigm. Integrating means finding new solutions, like conciliatory remarks in the process cycle. Dominating relies on the position of power by means of aggression and perhaps verbal dominance. Obliging puts another person’s needs above one’s own. Avoiding is synonymous with withdrawing from the situation either physically or psychologically, and compromising means to find the common ground between the differences (Gross & Guerrero, 2000).

Linder (2006) talks about how emotions affect conflict and are affected by conflict. Moberg (2001) suggests that parties in the conflict process are engaging one with another to select the most appropriate strategy that might foster resolution. At times the strategic process makes way for various negative emotions to surface. Both negative and positive emotions play a role in how conflict styles become effective. Both negative and positive emotions show a role in determining the outcome in conflict styles.

The Problem and Stereotypes

The conflict styles by men and women, in some cases, are generated based on various stereotypes. Rubin and Brown (1975) talk about how men and women show behaviors during a disagreement that is equitable. However, a few researchers examine conflict styles without speaking directly about stereotypes. Separating conflict styles without examining stereotypes is not productive for many reasons. Failing to look at stereotypes and conflict styles eventually affects the outcome in the conflict resolution
process since most women teachers feel threatened by male principals in the conflict resolution process.

One reason is that stereotypically, men are more forceful and domineering during conflict. This is consistent with gender-role stereotype (Davis, Capobianco, & Kraus, 2010). A person cannot separate what has been the norm for decades. People cannot attempt to overlook the image that is in the hearts and minds of people in society. In schools, male principals tend to have a consciousness of their tone, speed, and intonation when addressing teacher concerns.

A second reason is that men appear more assertive and task-oriented, while women appear to gravitate towards conciliatory means (Davis et al., 2010). Most men enjoy taking charge and productively working towards mastering one goal and then another goal. On the other hand, some women find pleasure in pacifying people and situations to move on if at all possible. Blake and Mouton (1964) confirm the work of later researchers, by noting women’s conflict styles, including compromising to allow for peaceful ends.

A third reason why looking at stereotypes and conflict styles in isolation is not beneficial is because female leaders consider themselves transformational leaders compared to male leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Even though researchers state men are more self-assured and focused, women still take the lead in changing an organization and making changes for the overall improvement of companies.

Stereotypical ideas in the workplace change how people view conflict styles between males and females. However, some researchers feel that there is not a difference between how women and men handle conflict, regardless of their managerial position.
Being male or female in a leadership role did not change how a person responded to the leader in any type of conflict process. In leadership, subordinates wanted the leaders to give concise expectations. When clear expectations were given, the organizational role superseded the influence of gender (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Wagner & Berger, 1997). Gender was not the governing force in deciding whether not a leader selected to act differently in the conflict process based on gender. The only difference cited was how students in schools responded to leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Wagner & Berger, 1997). Students could detect gender as an influencing variable to outcomes. Workforce norms may decrease or experience elimination by the effects of a wide cultural expectation (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Wagner & Berger, 1997).

**Factors that Explain the Emotionality Problem with Principals**

Principals have multiple roles in the schools. Despite the many roles of the principal, he or she must know how to deal with the emotions, whether positive or negative, which permeate during the day. The gender of the principal does not determine the role of the principal. The mere fact of having the principal title ensures a role of multiplicity. The principal serves as instructional leader, school manager, political leader, and conflict analyst. In each role capacity the principal must know how to deal with negative emotions within the paradigm of that role. For example, as instructional leader, the principal must be trained in the negative emotions that come his or her way as instructional leader. If the principal lacks in this area, the school climate suffers.

**Principal as Instructional Leader**

Hatton and Smith (1995) explain that the school climate is subject to the guidance of principals. The principal sets the tone of the elementary school. Research findings
showed that principals who followed the Instructional Leadership Model saw better results in high morale of the learning environment (Abdullah, DeWitt, & Alias, 2013). Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995) confirms Abdullah’s findings by stating that great schools make the principal focus on him or herself as an instructional leader because the leaders create the great school climate. According to Pretorius and de Villiers (2009), school climate is the heart and soul of any educational organization.

Even though the principal serves as the instructional leader, she or he is still responsible for the negative impacts that spring forth from an ill school climate. Normally this ill climate stems from a disgruntled teacher who was offended by the school’s principal. Pretorius and de Villiers (2009) argue that schools have personalities. If teachers have an impatient and inert personality, the negative impacts within that school climbs when abused by a principal’s conversations. Those multiple personalities in the school make the school’s culture reflect the overall personality of the principal and teaching staff. According to Abdullah (2012), the National Philosophy of Education states principals are responsible for healthy school atmospheres. A study was completed and found that a correlation between organizational climate and student success were inevitable. The study found that having these six positions in schools made for a better atmosphere (Abdullah, 2012).

1. Protecting Instructional Time

2. Maintaining High Visibility

3. Providing Incentive for Teachers

4. Promoting Professional Development

5. Providing Incentives
6. Having High Expectations

The strength of this model was ranking instructional time as most important. Then providing incentives for teachers allows teachers to know their work is not taken for granted. Also, promoting the idea for a teacher receiving ongoing professional training is a plus for the school’s climate. Even though there is much strength to this model, there are also limitations to this model. The first limitation is that the spiritual aspect in the school was overlooked. Providing spiritual and healthy emotional replacements for negative emotions helps keep the morale high in the school. Another limitation is the lack of ongoing training for principals. A principal needs to have the latest research presented to them dealing with their emotionality states in the elementary school. A third limitation is how this model is not specifically designed for an elementary school. In the formative years of instructing students, there are needs with teachers which are not mentioned that are essential in providing an effective elementary instructional program. Teachers in elementary schools deal with teaching the students the basics so that students are able to learn more challenging skills in the future. An elementary school that does not provide students with the best educational practices at the elementary level really stunts the child’s instructional journey for the next 12 years of schooling. Therefore, a principal must monitor their emotionality state when addressing teacher concerns because it is very critical in determining school academic outcomes.

Many debates evolve from principals making instructional decisions in addition to watching for negative emotion creeping into the conflict process. Planning and monitoring instructional programs in schools take a lot of effort in favorable problem solving. Prawat (1996) reflects on how educators must rethink present day commitments
to problem solving. Making instructional decisions ignites frustration in school personnel, which brings negative emotions on board. According to Leithwood and Doris (2006), administrators’ problem solving skills are interconnected processes that generate exemplary solutions. Schechter (2013) confirms what other researchers have argued, but he encourages Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for principals, but this PBL does not address any components of human emotionality. The PBL type of training is designed to help with problems to develop analytical and thinking skills only. Despite efforts to train principals in PBL, this model is criticized for not preparing principals for the daily demands (Copeland, 2001).

Thomas and Kilman’s (1974) model addresses workplace conflict as a five-fold process. Thomas and Kilman’s model is one of a few models that address how leaders should handle employee conflicts. This model is based on the systems theory. Briefly, the system theory states that each component of the model is significant to the model’s success. In this model, the two psychology researchers offer five components needed to obtain workplace conflict resolution success. The first component is the idea of competing. This means to take an assertive approach and to stand for what is right. The second part to the model is accommodating. This simply means to give in to allow a win/win for all, even if giving in should not have been offered. The third component of this model is avoiding. In this portion of the model, individuals seek not to deal with any of the disputes. The fourth component is the compromising aspect. This means that both sides are able to achieve something good out of the conflict. The last element to the model is collaborating. This means to have mutual respect for both parties and promotes reflective listening.
Thomas and Kilman’s model had several gaps in the model itself. The first gap was not identifying the emotionality state of the teacher and/or the principal. The next gap was how the model did not provide training to teach principals how to compete, accommodate, avoid, compromise, and collaborate. The third gap was how the model did not encourage spirituality in the conflict resolution process.

The model lacked research concerning five different factors. The first factor that was overlooked was the power of balancing the personality of an assertive principal. Even though a principal should be assertive and take charge in a school, the model did not show that there are times when a principal should be less assertive so that the teacher’s voice may be heard. A trained principal knows when to endorse an assertive disposition and when to be less assertive based on conflict severity.

The second factor that was ignored was the spirit of humility on the principal’s part. The model did not show how a principal must be modest. He or she cannot always allow his or her position to dictate a haughty attitude. The model was deficient in showing the power of meekness even when becoming accommodating to the teacher.

The third factor that was not noticed in the model was how to effectively become a reflective listener. The model disconnected the power of effective communication from conflict resolution. The model addressed collaborating, but the model does not show the principal how to listen so that important information given by the teacher is not avoided. The model did not mention the needed steps necessary to listen even to non-verbal communication gestures.

While the work of the Problem Based Learning model was effective for some school leaders, there still remained additional research needed to get to the root of the
problems surrounding conflicts between principals and teachers. The single factor is the emotionality state of principals during times of resolving conflicts. A principal who is not emotionally in control of self cannot resolve problems rationally with teachers. The principal is not able to provide resolutions that are in the best interest of students. As resolutions are made in a student-based motive, then principals will manage emotions when dealing with challenging teacher issues.

**Summary**

Conflict resolution seems simple, but very complex in nature based on the components of cited conflict resolution models in this chapter. The literature outlines a few primary factors that are linked to principals and teachers in conflicting situations. In addition to the literature pinpointing factors, the literature also shows the significance of emotional intelligence among workplace leaders. The literature reveals how power is a factor that must be considered when addressing teacher and principal conflicts.

Furthermore, literature showed how systems theory, social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, and functionalism play a crucial part in the conflict resolution process with teachers and principals. This chapter revealed how each theory substantiated and confirmed the work of many emotional intelligence scholars. Evidence-based practices discovered that effective conflict resolution is met when principals identify, regulate, and monitor their emotional intelligence, while in the resolution process with teachers.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Social science research is studied using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches. Each method has strengths and weaknesses. The selected approach by researchers is based solely on the extent of information the researcher expects to retrieve from the study. This simply means the researcher may select to use any of the three methodologies and find success in finding answers to problems. However, the information collected and analyzed from participants will be minimal if the most appropriate methodology based on the study is not used. This study examined perceptions of emotional intelligence and how, if not regulated effectively by principals, it affects student achievement in elementary schools. Through looking at a principal’s emotional intelligence, the Principal Investigator sought to:

- To understand the lived experiences from disputes generating between principals and teachers from a principal’s perspective.
- To explore the perceptions of principals about the impacts of disputes between principals and teachers on students.
- To gain knowledge that will contribute to more effectively addressing conflicts between principals and teachers.

Ellis and Levy (2008) made judgment saying that scholarly research only begins when a focused problem is supported in literature. The phenomenon concerning the conflicts between principals and teachers is quite evident. According to Ellis and Levy (2008), nothing really compares to a research worthy issue. Several researchers have
noted that research collection of data and its findings may be minimal if the problem is very narrow according to the reviewed literature (Nunamker, Chen, & Purdin, 1991).

To this resolve, a qualitative methodology is the best approach due to the power it obtains from gathering data out of both public structures and systems (Glaser & Strauss, 2008). Qualitative research works to comprehend the intricate interrelationships among all that exists (Stake, 1995). Understanding the true thoughts of a principal’s action is instrumental in developing a concrete theory. This study sought to explore conflict between teachers and principals at many different levels. Through this study, the PI aimed to determine if the conflict was an isolated disagreement or if the conflict had many different layers that must be addressed in order to see resolution. This study will lack validity and reliability if the works of Stake (1995) were not considered in determining the theory for this phenomenon. In his writing Stake (1995) talked about qualitative research grand theories and how they were derived from the observations of cause and effect relationships.

Willis (2007) concurred with researchers in the past by stating that quantitative research is the primary paradigm in many social science research areas, but he talked about how other researchers do not give allegiance to qualitative methodologies. A qualitative methodology makes theorizing simpler (Glaser & Strauss, 2008). As this study aimed to generate a theory, selecting the qualitative approach over the quantitative approach was more appropriate.

There were three pivotal reasons for the PI’s selection to use a qualitative approach. The first reason was to show how the researcher can gather from multiple perspectives (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 159). Qualitative research should have
smaller participant size than quantitative research. The key to the participant size is its ability to convey information to conceive a perception on the phenomenon. More participants do not guarantee additional data, especially if the data repeats itself in nature.

In this qualitative study, the range of participants’ experiences did not exceed six participants. The small participant size allowed the PI to still hear varied perspectives from the principals. The five selected participants brought volumes of intimate data in the study. Through this small five participant count, the PI was able to gain feedback and became intrinsically involved in the experience of the participants. Data were not limited because the researcher heard verbal and observed non-verbal communication cues from participants with different backgrounds. The smaller participant group gave the PI accountability so that important information was not lost in the larger participant size. Morse (1994) confirms that a smaller participant size is ideal in phenomenological studies, such as participant size not to exceed six to gather data. However, Morse (1994) does state that larger size participant pools ranging from 30-50 participants are needed when using other approaches, especially in a grounded theory study. In essence, the vast range of perspectives does not matter when gathering data from participants in qualitative studies.

In addition, in qualitative research, the PI selected differentiated strategies with the participants to ensure that the findings from the data would show various perspectives (Creswell, 2007). This study allowed the five participants to triangulate their points of view.

A qualitative approach seeks different points of view concerning how a principal views his or her behavior and the behavior of the teacher. Through the differentiated
approach, the researcher discerned the attitudes of both teacher and principal. The outcome of obtaining various perspectives allowed the elementary school principal to identify specifically the negative emotions he or she caused in the resolution process. By looking at the teacher/principal conflict, the PI heard scenarios from varied settings as data to determine the pattern of negative emotions from principals.

The second reason the PI used the qualitative method was found in the work of Guba and Lincoln (1988); the authors highlighted how the qualitative method is important for interpreting events. A chronological timeline of events is powerful in data collection in qualitative studies. Chronicling events allowed the participants to explain the phenomenon step by step. A timeline of events prevented participants from avoiding instrumental experiences in the data collection that was used to create emerging themes.

In this study, the PI used semi-structured interviewing to prompt discussion with participants using a pre-determined set of questions. These set of questions were divided into five major categories, including: The Origin of the Conflict, The Conflict and Negative Emotion Variable, Conflict and Interaction with Others, Conflict and Outcomes, and Conflict Resolution Options. These questions provided a timeline of events based on each principal’s lived experiences.

The goal of the semi-structured interview questions was to develop codes, categories, and themes. In addition, the PI obtained more vivid descriptions of the lived experiences from the principals using these questions. Follow-up questions were encouraged to gather more detailed summaries of the experiences between teacher and principal when involving conflict.
The third reason the PI used the qualitative methodology was based on the work of Healey (2009), who argued against qualitative research by stating without quantitative data, the social science researcher is impaired. He goes on to say that quantitative research outlines and refines existing theories. Yet, Charmaz (2006) expressed how qualitative research forms theory through systematic conceptualizations and ongoing comparisons. The tradition of phenomenology in the qualitative cannon is an excellent methodology to use to study principals’ interactions with teachers because the researcher is able to hear the lived experiences from both teacher and principal.

Despite the one potential pitfall based on Healey’s argument concerning qualitative approaches, it was clear the researcher should examine principals’ interactions and ongoing human experiences in order to collect and analyze valid and concrete data sets from participants. This data were only obtained by conversing with the principal and teacher in a one-on-one setting. Qualitative data researchers saw the expressions on participants’ faces. The face to face interviews and/or one-to-one conversations showed what statistical representations would never reveal. The quantitative methodology did not provide the enormous amount of information from first-hand lived accounts of the participants.

Qualitative research examined the aspect of what the data were not saying. National data sets gave allegiance to quantitative aspects of the data. But principals’ voices provide data that could not be omitted when attempting to find the solution for ongoing academic failure. Creswell (2007) shared how interviewing should be completed in multiple forms, such as: telephone interviewing, email, online focus groups and/or face to face.
Principals considered qualitative data, as opposed to quantitative data sets only. It was through the qualitative data from the schools that principals and teachers shared “the why” behind the quantitative data sets. Creswell (2007) shared how qualitative research lent itself to the process. Collecting qualitative data gave specific insight on the quantitative data, but it took time to retrieve grounded, solid data qualitatively. As principals conversed with teachers, these teachers developed ideas about the primary problem for student failure. If principals did not spend time interviewing teachers and gathering valuable insight as to reasons associated with academic performance decline, new voices with answers for student success would be withheld. By including the interviewing technique as part of evaluating educational practices, it determined the emotional intelligence of the principal intercepted the instructional integrity of the school day for students and teachers.

Qualitative data provided information from the natural setting (Creswell, 2007). Principals spent countless hours in the natural setting of school, engage in negative human behavior with teachers. It was through these teacher and principal conflicts that stagnant growth in student achievement in Virginia’s elementary public schools was witnessed.

Creswell (2007) talked extensively about the researcher relying on more than one data source (p. 38) in qualitative studies. The researcher must not only read questionnaires, but also interview participants who are in the field of the phenomenon. Through working in the field, the varied emotionality traits were seen with principals and teachers. The primary emotion was a negative tone between principals and teaches when a disagreement occurred. Negativity created reluctance. A principal who carried a
negative disposition as a school leader reciprocated that same negative stance to teachers. Looking historically, the principal’s attitude influenced teacher performance. However, today, teachers have a different expectation for principals. The principals in elementary schools today are being addressed by teachers who now hold principals to greater accountability in terms of emotional intelligence and its perceptions.

**The Phenomenology Traditional Approach**

There are five different qualitative traditions, such as case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory. Yet, selecting a phenomenology approach as an accurate method to investigate a problem is crucial, especially when the researcher is exploring principals’ emotionality states and how they impact resolution, which may possibly hinder student achievement in elementary schools. Many research traditions have excellent techniques for examining and exploring problems, but to research the phenomenon based on the lived experiences of human beings is profound. The researcher could consider any other traditions, but if the problem must be explored, then the phenomenon must be dissected to originate good data (Creswell, 2007). From amongst the qualitative approaches only the phenomenology tradition creates a lens for what the researcher sees, hears, and understands (Creswell, 2007).

Descartes (1977) believed that knowledge emerges from self-evidence. He mentioned how the talents and judgments of human beings are solid and true (p. 22). Therefore, the PI depended solely on the thoughts, intuitions, and reasons of elementary school principals who have worked with teachers in the school setting. These principals have lived the experience of teachers in conflict. From these teacher and principal experiences, the principal shares his or her perspective in relation the problem.
Kant (1966) looked at multiple sources for gathering information from human subjects. Kant explained that these multiple sources originate in three different forms. The first source is sense. This simply means information is solely gathered by observation. The second source is imagination. This source is gathered by synthesizing knowledge. The last source is apperception or the consciousness of concrete things (Kant, 1966).

According to Brentano (1973), experience by itself is the teacher. An experience teaches what knowledge cannot teach. Knowledge provides understanding of the phenomenon. However, knowledge must be tested. Tested knowledge only comes by allowing the subjects to endure an experience. From the experience, then knowledge is verified as truth. Schutz (1967) added another alarming element by stating common sense or science can go forth without the documentation of a lived experience (p. 290). Husserl (1975) reminds researchers people are only aware of the world around them based on their cognitions. Past researcher of phenomenology value real life experiences. It is by the lived experiences of participants that researchers find can pinpoint a worthy problem, and from the worthy problem, create solutions.

Factors Influencing the Phenomenological Method

When involving a person in a research method, there are fundamentals that must be addressed by the Principal Investigator (PI), regardless of the type of research. Ellis and Levy (2008) discuss essential factors that must be included in a research method. These researchers make it clear that the PI must answer the following questions to ensure a step by step scholarly study:

- What is going to be master in the study?
• Who is responsible for each task in the study?
• How will each task be accomplished in the study?
• When and in what chronological order will the tasks be completed in the study?
• Where will these tasks be done in the study?
• Why are these tasks needed to complete the study?

The Process of the Study

Cries for Institutional Review Board (IRB) reform have been cited by many different researchers (D’Augelli & Grossman, 2006). Despite the lengthy processes to obtain approval for studying human subjects, qualitative based researchers sought permission from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). After following through the detailed, step by step procedures for IRB approval, the recruitment of participants for this study commenced. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest purposeful sampling strategy when selecting participants. This simply means the participants have clear insight in the research problem and are aware of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The PI sought elementary principals for 30 days based on the established criteria per the IRB sanctions.

The PI was granted permission to collect voluntary consent from the participants upon the Institutional Review Board approval. Considerable control was given to the participants and over every aspect of the interview data collection phase of the study (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Therefore, each participant signed the consent form and agreed to: a) full explanation of the study, b) receipt of the IRB approved documents to read and documents read to by the PI, c) share questions to the PI, d) knowing the future state of
the study, e) share questions of their choice with the IRB, if necessary, f) receive a copy of all signed forms, and g) a final commitment to participate in a voluntary study.

Upon IRB approval, the PI started the recruitment period by making copies of a flyer. The PI distributed the flyers to school principals in various elementary schools. The PI used the one-to-one recruitment strategy for principals by word of mouth. The PI did not skip days when recruiting but recruited participants for 30 consecutive days. If the participant sought to become a study participant, the PI requested a written or verbal yes within 30 days of receipt of the recruitment invitation. A detailed IRB adult/consent form was given to the participants to read, sign, and express concerns to the PI (see Appendix A). The consent form addressed: a) what the study entails, b) the reason for asking the person to participate, c) the role of the participant and the eight required steps associated with the study, d) the non-use of video-taping and recording, e) the possible risks and dangers from the study, including confidentiality, privacy, and pseudonyms, f) the tools needed to keep information private, g) benefits to the participants, and h) the pay associated with being a part of the study.

After the 30 day recruitment period, five principals were found and each participant met the following criteria: a) the principal had served for at least one full year of experience in a public school, b) the principal had at least 10 teacher conflicts and/or negative interaction with a teacher within a 12 month period, c) the principal spoke English as a native language, d) principal was not reassigned to another school due to a teacher complaint, e) principal worked 12 consecutive months of service as principal, f) principal held Virginia administration and supervision endorsement, and g) principal’s
family members are not students or employees in the school in which the principal serves as leader.

This PI’s study used a specific model called transcendental phenomenology. This step by step model was used as the primary process by the PI. Moustakas (1994), the primary pioneer in phenomenology, mentions seven chronological steps to use in transcendental phenomenology. First, Moustakas speaks about discovering a topic. Secondly, Moustakas talks about the value in conducting a universal review of literature pertaining to the problem. Thirdly, Moustakas encourages the PI to develop a set of criteria to locate participants. Fourthly, Moustakas mandates the PI to obtain consent, affirm confidentiality, and talk ethics with the participants. Next, Moustakas shares the importance of developing a set of questions to guide the interviewing process. Then, he speaks about holding lengthy one to one interviews so that data can be bracketed, and follow-up interviews held based on the data given by the participants. Lastly, Moustakas reiterates the significance of both collecting and analyzing data to formulate textural descriptions which in essence grants meanings of the lived experiences. Table 7 is a detailed chart showing Moustakas’ and the PI’s steps, outlining the methodological process.
Table 7

*Moustakas’ Methodological Process Paralleled to the Principal Investigator*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Find the topic and question for the problem.</td>
<td>Determined problem based on stagnant student academic achievement in elementary schools in VA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Synthesize literature pertaining to the problem.</td>
<td>Located literature that discussed the power of emotional intelligence in the workplace among school leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop criteria to find participants.</td>
<td>Created a flyer, distributed, and recruited five participants in 30 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Provide instructions for the study including receiving consent, discussing confidentiality, sharing responsibilities of the PI, and the power of ethics throughout the study.</td>
<td>Developed a step by step outline of the process for the participants to read, discuss, and sign. The outline included participant consent, confidentiality, and ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Create a list of questions to steer the interview.</td>
<td>Developed 22 questions to initially guide the first interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hold lengthy one to one interviews with the participants that focused on the determined topic.</td>
<td>Interviewed all five participants for at least 90 minutes in at least three different settings to collect data and then held 90 minute followed-up sessions with all five participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Collect and analyze data to gain textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences to synthesize data to produce meanings and themes based on the experiences.</td>
<td>Developed researcher notes from the data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant Population**

The PI identified the problem in elementary schools and read literature discussing the problem. The PI created criteria to find participants and received IRB approval to start the study by examining principals’ perceptions concerning conflict with teachers. Secondly, examining how these principal perceptions affect student achievement indirectly and teacher performance. From the PI’s recruitment of 30 consecutive days, the five principals met these criteria:

- An elementary school principal in Virginia for at least one full year.
• An elementary school principal who has experienced at least 10 conflicts and/or negative teacher interactions with a teacher within a school year.

• An elementary school principal who is English speaking.

Contrarily, the PI used recruitment criteria for participants that would be non-eligible to participate in this study. The PI created non-recruitment criteria that included:

• An elementary school principal who had been reassigned to another school due to a teacher conflict.

• An elementary school principal who did not have 12 months of consecutive service at the school.

• An elementary school principal who is serving outside the state of Virginia.

Moustakas (1994) speaks candidly about confidentiality in the methodological process after the PI finds participants. From Nova Southeastern University’s IRB guidelines, the PI reaffirmed Adult/General Informed Consent for each participant. The PI developed responses to the questions from the IRB office’s predetermined IRB questions. The PI provided responses to the participants for the following questions:

1. What the study was about?

2. Why the PI was asking each participant to participate in this study?

3. What will the participant do, if he or she selects to participate in the study?

4. Is there any audio or video recording as a part of this study?

5. What are the dangers to the participant participating in this study?

6. How will the PI keep the participants information private during and after the study?

7. What if the participant informs the PI he or she would like to leave the study?
8. Are there any benefits for taking part in this study?

9. Will I get paid for being in this study?

10. Will it cost me anything to be a part of this study?

The PI was granted IRB approval four months after beginning the IRB process. Afterwards, the PI asked participants to read, review the Adult/General Informed Consent form for participation, and consent to participate voluntarily. Prior to signing the consent form, the PI had one-on-one conversation via telephone with each participant about the Adult/General Informed Consent form to clarify any misunderstandings and/or any negative feelings pertaining to the study.

The PI selected five participants based on the criteria. Each participant was given a pseudonym. The first participant name given was Ana. The first participant works in an elementary school in Virginia. The student teacher ratio in this participant’s school is 25:1. The participant has 14 years of experience as a principal. The participant obtained a master’s level degree prior to becoming an elementary school principal. The participant worked in this particular school for the past six years. This participant is an African American woman. The participant cited having multiple disputes but zero conflicts per week with teachers.

The second participant name given was Bna. This participant works in an urban school division. However, the participant’s school is in a suburban community. The student teacher ratio is 20:1 in Grades K-3 and 25:1 in Grades 4-5. The participant has been a principal for the past seven years. This participant is an African American woman. In a given work week, the participant has cited one conflict per week with teachers.
The third participant name given was Cna. This participant works in an urban school division, but in a suburban school. The participant has been a principal for two years. The participant is an African American woman with an estimated total of four conflicts per week with teachers.

The fourth participant name given was Dna. This participant works in a rural school district. The student to teacher ratio is 22:1 in PK-3 and 28:1 in Grades 4-5. The participant has been a principal for eight years. The participant handles one conflict per week with teachers. The participant identifies as African American woman with age range from 35-45 years old.

The fifth participant name given was Ena. This participant works in an urban school division. The student ratio is 25:1. The participant handles less than 10 major conflicts per week due to the demography of her student population. The participant is an African American woman with age from 40-50 years old.

**Data Collection: Interviewing Process and Formulating Questions**

In this phenomenological study, the primary source for data collection was through gathering data from an emailed survey and/or in-depth interviews. Both ways of gathering data were essential. The participatory data from interviews were gathered from a participant size not exceeding six or more participants. A small participant size of only five participants was used to establish a better rapport with participants.

Creswell (2007) repeatedly said to keep the participant number small, especially if people were describing the phenomenon (p. 131). The PI talked extensively to the five elementary school principals who are principals. As additional data were needed, the PI scheduled follow-up interview sessions. The PI took researcher notes to document any
educational jargon, conversational interjections, and possibly body language in one-to-one semi-structured or follow-up interviews.

In order for the PI to obtain responses from interviewing the participants by obtaining valuable responses, the PI developed research questions to guide the study. Research questions frame the study. Maxwell (2005) talked about how research questions draw out information being sought on the phenomenon (p. 69). Maxwell shared how the development of good research questions is crucial; with good research questions the researcher heard information that pointed out a clear understanding of the problem.

According to Ellis and Levy (2008), meaningful research questions tend to inspire the research problem. Through effective research questions, the study was framed, scholarly information obtained, and an understanding of the problem itself was revealed.

The PI formulated additional interview questions as follow-up interview sessions with all five participants to obtain clarity concerning the experience. The primary purpose of the second set of questions was to obtain a more vivid understanding of the experience (Creswell, 2007). The PI created questions based on a pattern of words and phrases used by the participants which prompted further explanations to answer a research question. The PI developed semi-structured questions. The questions were based on the five sections from the questionnaire to use as a guide. The semi-structured questions were based on the descriptive responses from the initial interview. From the descriptive information given to the PI, semi-structured questions and procedural sub-questions (Creswell, 2007) were asked by the PI. After semi-structured interviewing, the PI implied and tested implications with participants to determine meaning of experiences, scenarios, and interpretation of phrases.
Primarily, questionnaires provided data for theory development. In data collection, later discussed in the chapter, when a participant became reluctant to provide data, there was a method to work through the difficulty. The PI set the stage, and the participants responded.

A questionnaire was a valuable instrument to obtain information. The PI viewed the design of the questionnaires as a scientific art. The PI created the questionnaires in open ended format, as opposed to format ranking responses as agree and disagree. These types of questions did not give accurate exploration of how the participants related to the question. Instead of agree and disagreed responses, the researcher chose non-ranking responses. These responses would have ranged from extremely agree, agree, somewhat agree, agree a little, or do not agree. These types of responses were used in the second round of obtaining information for the PI. In spite of the challenges with using questionnaires, as an instrument, the researcher felt questionnaires are the most effective way to gain information from principal and teacher disagreements.

The PI designed questions according to Creswell’s interview protocol (2007). The protocol guided the interview and kept the participants focused. The participants were able to self-pace and work independently. In terms of individual observations of the participants, the PI used pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes. The five participants did not have any challenges with the questionnaire.

The PI electronically sent questionnaires to participants. Each category of the interview protocol had at least five questions; however, the last category only asked three questions from the participants. The categories’ focus included: The Origin of Conflict, Conflict and the Negative Emotional Variable, Conflict and the Interactions with Others,
Conflict and Outcomes, and Conflict Resolution Options. See Appendix B for the full interview protocol.

The participants had the option to write their responses prior to providing the PI with responses verbally over the telephone. Alternatively, the participants emailed the PI their responses and then the PI reviewed responses to validate if each response paralleled each research question. Despite consent already granted by participants, the PI upheld one part of Creswell’s dual recommendation at the later part of the interviewing process.

The most important attribute required of the PI during the questionnaire interview process was found in the notable work of Creswell (2007). He shared how interviewing was not merely formulating questions, but interviewing is mostly about listening. Hearing what was not said is data also. This was the power of observing.

The PI observed the actual interview was not solely about collected data from the five participants. Hidden data included: observing sounds, pauses, and intonations during the interview, all of which substantiated data from the five participants. The PI learned the overall goal of the interview was four-fold, to: a) get responses from the participants for data, b) listen reflectively, c) listen to patterns of what is said from participants, and d) listen for existing theory and new theory. From listening in the 90 minute session of one of the participants, follow-up questions were given to collect additional data relating to the lived experiences of the principals.

The last two recommendations that Creswell (2007) spoke about were gaining consent from the interviewee and providing a time frame for the participant to respond to the questions. The PI received consent, but time was crucial during the interview process. Time was of essence when collecting data for qualitative studies. In this study, the
participants did not exceed the time frame to respond to the research questions, but used 90 minutes universally among all five participants.

Research showed there was power in interviewing. Creswell (2007) discussed recommendations for researchers who are interviewing participants to gather data. First, Creswell talked about selecting participants based on a sampling procedure. Secondly, he talked about locating the interview protocol that will net the researcher the most information from the discussion. Next, he shared the value of using adequate recording tools, if the researcher was taping the conversation. This study did not lend itself to recording the subjects’ responses. The fourth suggestion was to create and use an interview protocol. Then, Creswell talked about refining the interview questions and identifying a place suitable to answer the questions, if needed.

Creswell (2007) mentioned one-on-one interviewing to avoid one person dominating the conversation and not having data equity. After the participants consented to be a part of the study, the PI emailed the questionnaire of 22 questions to each participant. The participants had one week to review the questions and to give responses to the PI in case any of the questions seemed unclear. If the participants needed to talk to the PI, the participants selected a date and time to have a telephone conference and/or follow up interview. After questions were sent, one participant emailed responses back to PI. The PI allowed the participants the opportunity to either answer questions on their own and email responses back to the PI or just answer the questionnaire and mail back to the PI. Afterwards, the PI thanked each participant that agreed to participate in the study.

In addition to the work of Moustakas (1994) in reference to qualitative research, Creswell (2007) spoke about interviewing people from marginalized groups (p. 43) in
qualitative research. Elementary school principals in Virginia may not be marginalized in terms of economic power, but marginalized in educational reform relating to emotional intelligence and the impact that emotionality plays indirectly upon student achievement. Creswell suggested researchers study marginalized groups from an interview style, addressing the participants with research questions that are open-ended in nature.

The PI developed five research questions to guide this study. From interviewing five participants from the questionnaire, these research questions and sub-questions were answered. The PI collected additional and specific information pertaining to the problem through these research questions. This qualitative approach was guided by five major research questions. The questions were:

1. How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?
2. What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?
3. What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?
4. What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?
5. What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

The PI received answers to these research questions by gathering textural descriptions based on the lived experiences of the five principals during the interviews. Two participants chose not to respond to the survey but selected to verbally share their
responses as opposed to written responses. Overall, participants sought one on one interviewing as the prescribed method for data collection. In the event the PI needed further explanation from the responses, then the PI scheduled follow-up interviews with the participant to collect additional data through textural descriptions via telephone.

The PI knew the value of a marginalized group and how these groups come in different forms when interviewing. The first form of data collection is through interviewing or receiving information from surveys where the subjects were asked either open or closed ended questions (Creswell, 2007). Other researchers agree with Creswell’s premise. The second form of data collection is through storytelling during the interview.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) talked about collecting researcher texts through multiple sources, including interviews and storytelling. In this study the PI’s intent was to gather volumes of information from participants through asking interview questions. From these interview questions the participants may share stories about their lived experiences as a principal. The PI planned not to exceed 90 minutes for each interview session.

The PI recruited a homogeneous group to interview, as opposed to a heterogeneous group. This grouping ensured each participant had compatible experiences and education. The demographics of the participants were: African American, females, middle age, and post graduate level educated personnel. Even though the participants all had race, gender, and education commonalities, this was not by design. Recruitment flyers were distributed, and these five African American, middle-aged, graduate level women participants consented.
Data Analysis: Part I

Gibbs (2008) encouraged multiple readings of text in studies. The PI read the text at least seven times. The purpose of seven readings was to obtain an accurate illustration of the participants’ experiences from the data. The PI transcribed all participants’ responses (Gibbs, 2007). The first read was done by the PI without any interruptions or coding. The second read was completed and the PI engaged in hand coding and located several codes based on the data. When the third read was finished, the PI jotted down remarks based on the participant responses. During the third read, the PI sought to create the transcriptions based on everything that was stated. The PI gave respect to every statement spoken. The PI gave consistent value to the statements written by each participant. After the fourth read, the PI gave reactions to the five participants’ responses. From the participants’ responses the PI started to classify statements as irrelevant, repetitive, and overlapping. Of the 777 statements, there were 177 irrelevant statements, 177 repetitive statements, and 177 overlapping statements. The PI observed a pattern of irrelevant, repetitive, and overlapping statements from three participants. According to the PI, there were at least five new horizons each time the transcriptions were read. After the fifth read was completed, the PI sited ideas emerged from the data. The sixth read allowed the PI to cite any new interpretations found from the data. The seventh read was completed to see if the PI saturated all the categories from the data collection. From the seven reads, the PI yielded 777 pieces of textural data which developed into 61 categories and emerged into five themes.
Data Analysis: Part II

Colaizzi (1978) addressed analyzing transcripts. From the analysis of the transcripts, five research questions were the nucleus of this study. These questions examined principals’ perceptions to see if their perceptions impacted teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. Using the five research questions as a framework, the PI followed the work of Creswell (2007) and his four types of research questions. Primarily, Creswell speaks about the exploratory type of research question (RQ1 & RQ2). Secondly, Creswell mentions the explanatory type of research question (RQ3). Thirdly, he shares the descriptive research question (RQ4). Lastly, the last type of question he encourages in research projects is the emancipatory research question (RQ5).

Moustakas (1994) investigated the most appropriate way to analyze the data. He coined a process called horizontalization, which is a process of transcribing the data from research questions. Any significant statements that were cited in the emailed questionnaire or interview responses were noted. The PI developed structured descriptions and meaning interpretation from statements, clichés, and educational jargon from the participants. The PI asked the participants to give additional details on significant statements that align with the undercurrent of the research study involving conflict between teachers and principals. In addition, the PI highlighted any experience from the principal and teacher that deems itself as a high functioning success rate in resolving teacher and principal conflicts. During this portion of the process of data analysis, the PI clarified any questions pertaining to the questionnaire responses and/or conversational interjections. The PI included this step to clarify accuracy of information from the participants and to void the PI from an interpretation of data bias.
Next, the PI engaged in clustering. The researcher identified the meanings of the various clusters from the documented data from the elementary school principals. The researcher looked at data from two perspectives of the principal. The first way was by a textural description (Moustakas, 1994) of the elementary school principals. The researcher actually wrote what the elementary school principal experienced based on the job responsibility itself. The second way to have more concrete data was by a structural description approach (Moustakas, 1994). This is when the researcher considered the context of the subjects’ environment and setting before deciding on concluding evidence from the data.

Initially, in clustering the PI listed all statements from the principals. The PI did not randomly select certain responses over other responses to include as data. The PI recorded all statements and quotes from the principals that were significant to the five research questions in the study. Afterwards, the PI eliminated statements and quotes that were repetitive, vague, overlapping, and/or could be reduced based on if the textural descriptions were substantial to the five research questions. Later, the PI searched for certain experiences that were astounding that captivated the real lived experience pertaining to the research question. From these captivated experiences from the principals, the PI classified these experiences as horizons. From these horizons, themes emerged.

Moustakas spoke about revealing some personal experiences from the same phenomenon (1994, p. 61). The PI selected to include personal experiences if needed. The PI’s responses did not create a bias towards the problem worthy phenomenon.

Following the interview, the PI used the model of Moustakas (1994) and Creswell
(2007) to analyze the data. Creswell’s method stated the following steps in moving forward with understanding a phenomenon based on interviewing and using questionnaires to obtain data:

- Ongoing reading of the transcripts to get a sincere feel of the intent of the participants’ disposition governing the phenomenon.
- Citing specific sentences from the principal that connect to the experience of principal to teacher conflicts.
- Formulating understandings and clustering these into categories that are universal in nature to all six participants.
- Integrating the findings, where saturation of the experience is highly notable.
- Confirming the findings with the six participants, where the PI suggests the participants to share remarks based on the PI’s final description of the phenomenon.

**Data Analysis: Part III**

Gubrium and Holstein (2001) concurred with the work of Creswell (2007). These two researchers concluded that transcribing is essential in data analysis. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2001), data was transcribed and read seven times for clarity. Transcribing is simply translating a narrative mode of data in oral form into a second narrative mode in written form (Kvalve, 2007).

As the PI for the study, several challenges occurred through transcribing, as the qualitative researchers mentioned. According to Kvalve (2007), time and resources posed challenges to transcribing. Gubrium and Holstein (2001) stated that when the PI
paraphrased and restated participants’ statements, challenges happened in the exchange of information.

The PI endured the challenges of transcribing the data. The first challenge was time as a Principal Investigator. Each one hour interview and review of survey responses per research may equate to at least 10-15 single space pages of written documentation. Time was needed to read and reread the data to get a concrete understanding of the original language and the momentum of the discussion (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001).

The second challenge of the PI was syntax. The arrangement of words and phrases to produce clarity of meaning to the hearers posed a challenge for the PI. Written documentation of the responses became a challenge to the PI because the participants did not have grammatically correct sentence formation. However, when the participants spoke audibly, the participants spoke in run-on sentences without notice. Therefore, transcribing oral information was difficult to judge.

The third challenge the PI had was transcribing based on the intonation of the participants. The rise and fall of pitch of the participants was done frequently. Speech pacing threatened the data collection process from the participants. Kvalve (2007) stated that oral communication and written text entail varied language games. The PI overcame the communication concerns to analyze the data.

Of the three major types of transcribing, indexical, unfocused, and focused, the PI utilized the indexical transcription model encouraged by Gibson and Brown (2009). The indexical transcription created data based on a timeline. The unfocused transcription involved designing a record of speech without any analytic concentration. The focused transcription involved developing a specific outline of what was said and done that
highlighted a particular behavior (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Through this study with elementary school principals in Virginia, the PI used the indexical transcription to set the responses of the participants in a timeline to hear the minute by minute thoughts of the participants. By logging time, the PI was able to systemically document the sentences of spoken by the participants. The PI was able to engage in phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). This was done by a minute by minute written documentation system to avoid missing any valuable scenarios or experiences.

Overview of the Data Analysis Process

- The PI read through the written transcripts at least seven times to gather a personal connection and feel for the subjects responses.
- The PI engaged in horizontalization to transcribe the responses from the participants.
- The PI developed structured descriptions from the participants.
- The PI interpreted responses and descriptions from the participants.
- The PI gathered information data from the experiences of the participants.
- The PI highlighted experiences from the principal that seem conflict worthy.
- The PI formulated meanings and clustering themes from the transcripts.
- The PI integrated findings from the data into detailed descriptions.
- The PI verified the findings with the subjects for accuracy (Creswell, 2007).

Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Credibility

Trust was needed in the phenomenological studies. Without establishing a level of trust with participants, the surveys would not bring understanding to the lived experiences of the five elementary school principals in Virginia’s elementary schools.
Establishing trust was a very challenging task, according to Thompson, Nadler, and Lount (2006). Trust could not be easily created. Trust took time from each participant. Therefore, the trust factor was set at the onset of the questionnaire. Participants were given a trust statement at the beginning of the survey or interview.

A second reminder of trust was shared at the mid-point of the survey. Also, at the end of the survey, trust was reconfirmed and reassured by all survey participants. By the participants not able to actually see the researcher face to face, the researcher’s efforts to develop a high level of trust were substantially significant.

Trust enabled the PI to seek buy-in from the participants. To have buy-in from the survey or interview participants, the PI promoted a three-tier type of trust as described by Lewicki and Bunder (1995). Since trust is very extensive and complex in nature, and difficult to obtain, trust must undergo processes in order to reach validity. Trust is measured by the three criteria supported by the work of Deutsch (1999) but modified by Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992).

According to these three researchers, the first type of trust is “deterrence based trust.” This trust is described as having consistency within relationships (Shapiro et al., 1992). Consistency is the act of living up to what a person says. If the person makes a promise, then it is the person’s responsibility to make sure the promise is met. Failure to meet the promise lends itself to a lack of trust among many different stakeholders. The second type of trust is knowledge based trust. The third type of trust is identification-based trust Shapiro et al. (1992).

The PI cannot force a particular survey on the participant. As the PI provided only one offer to obtain information for the phenomenological approach, the participants may
opt not to participate in the survey. Therefore, the PI presented two types of questionnaires to the participant. The purpose of the multiple types of the survey was to obtain buy-in and trust. As the participant accepted one of the two proposals, hopefully, the anxiety and apprehension associated with survey decreased. The PI implemented each type of trust throughout the duration of the research.

In terms of privacy, the researcher issued the questionnaire via email. The reason for the email questionnaire distribution was to eliminate the threat the participant might possibly endure from seeing the PI. The goal of the researcher was not to make the participants feel intimidated by the PI being present. Creswell (2007) argued that telephone interviews were the best form of gathering information because the participants would not have direct access to the researcher.

In terms of confidentiality, the PI did not engage in any biases. The PI worked as a principal for five years, and the possible perceptions of prejudice to favor the principal in the process was suspended. The researcher used the interview protocol to collect information because the protocol helped in organizing thoughts (Creswell, 2007). Through this protocol, the PI did not engage in any forms of biases as the PI acted in third party. In terms of validity, a purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) was used. The purpose was to ensure that these five principals had a clear understanding of the research problem. Only five participants were used because the information gathered from the study was consistent, and exceeding six participants was not beneficial. The PI was willing to allow any participant to withdraw from the study at any time.

Within the realm of reliability, the researcher (PI) used the qualitative sampling strategy of opportunism (Creswell, 2007). The PI took advantage of the unanticipated.
The researcher learned from what is presented to him in the sessions. Every piece to the resolution could not be detected from the scripted questions. The PI noticed the probable responses were not dictated for each question. The study’s excitement grew from unforeseen questions and responses.

**Credibility**

Eisner (1991) talked about the terms credibility of a study, as opposed to using the term validity. This study referred to convincing evidence used by one of three of Eisner’s standards to determine the credibility. The PI selected credibility by the use of structural corroboration in which several data types are used to sustain or oppose an interpretation (Eisner, 1991). In addition, the PI related to the work of Eisner that encouraged using a confluence of documentation to make the PI content about the explanation interpretations and final statements of the participants.

**Summary**

One of the biggest problems in education today is the perceptions of how negative human emotions rule the educational system. These unhealthy emotional perceptions by principals are excellent data sets to describe the lived experiences of five principals in Virginia’s elementary schools. The literature material in chapters 1, 2, and 3 depict how student achievement improved, if the single factor of emotional intelligence was cited and analyzed, as it related to a principal’s perceptions. Ongoing research showed student achievement linked to teacher performance and indirectly correlated to the principal’s leadership; therefore, it was crucial that these three pieces to the instructional paradigm receive analysis in order to effectively study the problem.
Studying emotional intelligence qualitatively played an intricate part in understanding the phenomenon concerning principals and teachers in the conflict resolution process. According to Scott (2008), the absence of negative emotions kept people from handling any type of conflict in organizations. Emotions and its relationship to the conflict resolution process were pervasive problems in schools, especially when conflict resolution outcomes impacted both principal and teachers. As elementary school principals handled ongoing conflicts with teachers, the cause and effect relationships from the perceptions linked to emotional intelligence in conflict resolution was addressed.

Additionally, research found negative emotions in a conflicting situation impacted the perceptions of how men and women use conflict styles towards resolution and/or de-escalation methods. With the large number of elementary school principals from cities in Virginia, who excluded how the principal’s negative emotional perspectives affected students, it was crucial that principals studied the totality of this phenomenon. From the analysis of the problem, understanding the “how” of the conflict needed to be examined.

This phenomenological study showed five principals not seeing the validity in testing the perceptions of their emotional intelligence, as negative or positive in nature. Furthermore, an instrument to examine emotional intelligence was not a part of the study. Only the perceptions related to emotional intelligence were discussed and the impacts principal performance via perceptions played on emotional intelligence.

The new systems approach towards human emotionality was needed for positive results in elementary schools to study principal performance. Furthermore, this study showed how previous researchers studied human emotionality extensively and its effect
on human behavior. But, the research disregarded the impact emotional intelligence had upon student achievement.

Moreover, this study determined how principal performance decided the healthy state of the school in relation to teachers. It was through the healthy state of the principal’s emotional intelligence that teachers’ performance became at an all-time high. According to the five principals’ perspectives, as he or she engaged in emotional regulation, then teacher performance with students improved. On the other hand, from the principal’s perspective, if the principal did not govern and regulate his or her emotions, then poor teacher performance was witnessed and students suffered instructionally in the process.

This study hoped to respond to three major areas of understanding. The first understanding was gained when the PI understood the lived experiences of conflicts between principals and teachers from the principal’s perspective. The second understanding was how the experiences told to the PI allowed an exploration of the perceptions of the five principals who have witnessed the problem firsthand. In addition, the PI was able to canonize those impacts of conflicts between principals and teachers on student academic performance. The last understanding was two-fold: the PI provided world-wide contributions to the educational sector that will teach and train school personnel on how to effectively address conflicts between teachers and principals; and to make universal contributions to the general population of conflict analysts.
Chapter 4: Findings

Review of the Study

This chapter begins by reviewing the significance of the study, the purpose of the phenomenological aspect of the study, and the statement of the problem, along with the research questions that govern this study. While looking at the problem itself between teachers and principals’ experiences, the PI sought to investigate the real life experiences of elementary school principals. From the initial investigation, the PI sought to pinpoint the principals’ perspectives regarding the conflict resolution process with teachers.

From the literature review, data collection, and thematic analysis, this study was solely designed to increase awareness of the principals’ perceptions and how those perceptions locate the root cause between principals and teachers that hinders student achievement.

From the elementary school principals’ perspective, the PI examined the principals’ interactions among teachers. The PI looked at scenarios, statements, and quotes from different teachers between principal and teacher. In addition, the PI determined five research questions to form a framework for the study. These following five research questions were used:

1. How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?
2. What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?
3. What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?
4. What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?

5. What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

Prior to developing the research questions, the PI found very limited data in relation to the phenomenon. Most researchers investigated student achievement and principal behavior in isolation, but few researched how principal behavior impacts teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. However, limited research showed how principal behavior affects teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. Therefore, through well-defined, specific-driven, and clarity-rich research questions, the PI examined this gap in an effort to locate the true cause governing the stagnant and declining states of student achievement in elementary schools.

This study had a tri-fold purpose. The first purpose was to examine the principals’ perceptions, as related to their emotional intelligence when dealing with conflicts involving teachers. The second purpose of this study was to explore why principals’ perspectives in a conflicting situation between teacher and principal is a unique overlooked variable. As the findings unfolded, this study looked at how the principals’ behavior determined building-wide student academic outcomes. Through examining principals’ perspectives and their emotional intelligence, these findings determine the gap in achievement with students that has been overlooked. The third purpose for this study was to determine, based on data from the five participants, what findings would warrant using a conflict resolution model or possibly the implementation of a new and improved conflict resolution model for principals.
Reviewing the Nature of the Problem

In the first three chapters, the PI argued that emotional intelligence impacts principal perspectives. The literature showed how principals’ perspectives in the workplace grossly affected teacher performance. As a result of ineffective teacher performance, students suffered academically. This was affirmed by examining the lived experiences of five elementary school principals in Virginia who opted to be participants.

The PI determined this study would be best achieved by adhering to a phenomenological approach. The PI used the data collection and analysis modeled from Moustakas (1994). The PI collected data from five principals using an interview process. The primary interview questions were designed proportionate to five categorical sections. The first category of questions sought data pertaining to the origin of conflicts. The second category of questions obtained data relating to emotional intelligence and its relation to conflict resolution. The third category of questions addressed conflict and the interactions with others. The fourth category of questions related to conflict and its outcomes. The last category of questions dealt with conflict resolution options. A thematic analysis of data was used as an overall approach for this study.

Emerging Themes

This phenomenological study examined principals’ perceptions relating to teacher performance and how teacher performance impacted student achievement. This has been an ongoing and overlooked issue for decades. After careful examination of principals who served as participants, the PI collected textural data to answer the five research questions that govern this study.
Regular review of data sets was completed to solidify applications to emerging concentrations (Poland, 1995). From the saturation of data through both collection and analysis, five themes emerged. These five themes provide added insight to this problem in Virginia’s elementary schools. One theme emerged for each research question. The PI determined these five themes related to principals’ perceptions governing conflict resolution among teachers in elementary schools:

1. Perceptions Related to Mindsets towards Teacher Expectations
2. Perceptions Related to Partiality
3. Perceptions Related to Priority Exchanging
4. Perceptions Related to Discipline, and
5. Perceptions Related to Invisibility.

The themes have been explained and confirmed through the statements, phrases, scenarios, and quotes of the participants. In addition, this study was justified based on review of scholarly literature. The next section provides the presentation of the emerging themes per research question.

**Data Analysis per Research Question**

In harmony with phenomenological ideology, scientific investigation gains credibility when knowledge sought is validated through descriptions that make acceptance of the experience likely (Moustakas, 1994). To this resolve, after the PI analyzed descriptions from the five participants, including considerations of each horizon and textural worth to help comprehend the phenomenon, the following themes emerged for each research question.
RQ1: How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?

The first research question was designed to find the origin of conflicts among principals and teachers. From documented responses of the five participants for RQ1, statements, phrases, and scenarios were given. From these descriptions, the PI developed meanings about the participant experiences. These meanings were clustered into 10 categories. From the 10 categories, one theme emerged. Of the descriptions, including statements, phrases, and scenarios, the PI deleted statements, phrases, and scenarios that were not relevant. Some descriptions were repetitive, and other descriptions overlapped in relation to RQ1. Extraneous statements were a part of RQ1, such that the PI reduced all descriptions to these major 10 categories for each participant:

- Teacher reactions in the classroom and mindsets towards leadership (Ana)
- Lack of professionalism and trust (Bna)
- Communication rules and misguided support (Cna)
- Reinforcement and consistency in the profession (Dna)
- Hidden support and proportionate support to the need (Ena)

The first major theme emerged from these ten categories in Research Question 1 (RQ1) pertaining to the principals’ perceptions was: Mindset towards Teacher’s Expectation. This referred to a teacher completing a principal’s directives, as the principal gave reasonable requests. Findings implied that teachers lacked mindsets to keep principals’ directives as an expectation. This was a root cause of conflicts in elementary schools in Virginia among principals and teachers.
Previous research focused on coping mechanisms relating to job performance for principals (Skrobarcek, 1998), as opposed to principal perceptions relating to teacher performance and student academic progress. The finding was substantiated in the theme Mindset towards Teacher’s Expectation. Exclusive to this study, each participant shared how conflict resolution was not a “big ticket item” in their individual districts in terms of importance. This was particularly evident in the statement by Participant Ena, “Instruction is the primary focus in my district. Even when I attend local, state, and national leadership conferences, the focus is never on conflict resolution.”

Research Question One (RQ1) extended previous research on teacher responsibilities and contributed to the theory of teacher loyalty (Roselle, 2015). Of the five participants, each participant determined that the origin of conflicts in schools with principals and teachers was rooted in the teacher’s mindset towards principal’s expectations. In the transcribed interviews, Participant Ana verbalized:

… I do not have problems with teacher insubordination in my building. But, I do hear of other principals who have problems with teachers following directives. One thing I attribute to not having this problem is I spend a lot of time building relationships with my staff. I do not ask anything of my staff that I will not do myself. If I say attend a weekend event, then I will be there. If I say, we are going to have a faculty meeting, then there is something that I really need to be discussed. I do not believe in wasting adults’ time. So, in return, I experience a staff that are loyal and are never insubordinate to my reasonable requests. But, I do see it as a problem in many schools regarding teacher reactions and mindsets towards principals.
The PI interpreted what Ana shared as a result of teachers noticing that the principals’ cared about each teacher equally. A principal did not allow one teacher to have special privileges over another teacher. If so, this would build a strong, favorable rapport with teachers in the building, then this would bring animosity among other teachers who did not have rapport established with the building principal. Furthermore, teachers who did not sense favoritism from the principal tended to adhere to all directives given the first time by the principal. The PI concurred with Participant Ana’s statements because when teachers sensed principal gratitude for their work, teachers abstained from insubordination issues in the school setting.

According to four out of five of the participants, principals perceived that teachers had some type of insubordinate mindset towards principal directives. These directives included but are not limited to: following rules, regulations, punctuality, morning and afternoon duties, and recommendations for instructional improvements. Participants noted that when teachers did not follow their directives, unhealthy emotions emerged, such as anger, frustration, bitterness, and revenge. These unhealthy emotions affected teacher performance and ultimately student achievement.

Per the study, all participants felt teacher performance fluctuated often. Their performance changed when the principal’s emotional intelligence was threatened. These changes determined teacher performance. Of the participants, 4/5 shared statements involving teachers engaging in conceptual mindsets impacted principals’ perception. Most of the participants narrated their stories concerning how principals’ emotional intelligence was affected when teachers did not follow directives by the principal.

Participant Bna shared her thoughts:
…Teachers engage in insubordination. Those that do are very unprofessional. However, I have learned to document in writing when a teacher selects not to follow a directive. This helps decrease insubordination. As I document behaviors of teachers, I sense a level of divide among us: principal and teacher, which is a normal divide. It becomes clear that I am the principal in power, and they are the teachers that must comply with my reasonable requests. Thereafter, I notice that the trust factor changes when dealing with teachers.

Participant Ena shares her narration about trust:

…I believe trust is a big factor for me as principal because teachers say one thing and they do another thing. I watch teachers say things to please me in front of their peers, but afterwards they do not live up to what they say. For example, I have a teacher that comes to me often to share what her team thinks of a decision that I have made. I listen to the teacher that brings the complaint. Then, I go and talk with the other teachers on her team to get more details about the complaint. Once I start investigating the complaint, I notice it really was the teacher who brought the complaint to me who had the complaint. However, the teacher lacked integrity and could not come to me and tell me what she thought of a directive I had given. This has diminished my trust with this teacher greatly. I have similar stories of teachers who complain through a general means instead of complaining as singular individuals.

In another example of such, Participant Ana narrated her perception about teacher mindsets towards principal’s directives.
…I see how teacher reactions in the classroom and teacher unhealthy mindsets may be a problem when it is towards leadership. I notice when teachers feel harassed by principals then teachers may not react favorably to a principal’s directive. This may be a simple belief, but I live by it as a principal. It is “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” I live by that truth in my every day practices with teachers. If teachers feel that you are concerned about them and not picking on them, they tend to want to do whatever you ask that is within their job descriptions.

Various factors from the study showed participants have emerging ideas. The PI identified a different slant to the question from one participant. The PI singled this participant out and highlighted her statements which were very surprising. Based on what was mentioned in the telephone interview, Participant Dna explained reinforcement and consistency in the profession, as factors for teacher insubordination to principal directives.

…I really do not believe that teachers think not following a directive is insubordination. A teachers idea of not doing what is requested is defined as something other than insubordination. I have learned many teachers need constant reinforcement. That reinforcement comes in different ways. For one teacher it may be giving a verbal reminder as I pass her on the hallway. To another teacher, I learn that perhaps sending an email reminder of what is due is ideal. However, because of the other duties I have as principal, I do not always get to “spoon feed” teachers so in essence a lot of what I need completed does not get done because I could not give the secondary strategy for reminding the teacher of what is due.
For some reason, even when I give reminders on the hall and send emails, after about one month, if I do not provide these strategies for teachers, some of them will convert back to their own way of doing business. Consistency is a big problem when dealing with defiant teachers.

Hidden support and proportionate support to the need was Participant Ena’s resounding response to the phenomenon. She narrated her experience as follows:

…I live by “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!” But, the surprising thing is how many of my teachers carry the same quote when dealing with me. My teachers see that I walk the walk. I do not ask something of them that I do not do myself. By me being the first one to follow what I expect, I have gotten a lot of teacher buy-in. It’s a spiritual principle that I live by that helps me, as a principal. Then, I always hear a fairness voice always ringing in my soul when dealing with teachers. So, even though no one is beside me coaching me along to be fair, there’s an inner voice that says be fair. I notice that teachers need support that is proportionate with their needs. It is easy for me to develop one type of support that supports all teachers. It takes a sacrifice for me to develop supports that match the needs of each teacher. When I develop supports that align to the need of each staff, it gives teachers a mindset to do what I ask of them every time.

A sense of unprofessionalism and trust were other factors that must be addressed when dealing with principal perceptions. It was determined by a participant that principals experienced a lack of integrity from teachers when at local and national conferences. The principals perceived this behavior as having lacked professionalism.

The participant said, “Teachers wait until they get away from the school and are among
other teachers and leaders from other districts and decide to share negative feelings they have towards the building principal and her or his directives.”

In the following narrated example, Participant Bna stated this scenario to validate her claim:

…We were at a local educator’s conference sitting at the table. My teacher shared with the other persons at the table what goes on at my school. I whispered to my teacher, “Let’s talk about that when we get back to our school.” I felt that because of what I had done as the principal, the teacher waited until she got in front of others to air out our dirty laundry from the school. To me when a teacher does this, it shows a lack of professionalism. I just do not sense a strong trust factor with a teacher who gets in a public event with strangers and share our personal school business. That just sends a very bad image of trust when it pertains to me and that teacher.

The PI concurred with Participant Bna because when emotions such as bitter, embarrassment, anger, and frustration were evident with the principal or teacher, then at times teachers acted unprofessionally by showing revenge or retaliation towards the principal. The PI observed how teachers “put off” certain behaviors until the most “staged time.” The staged time was the moment when other school stakeholders were present to witness the teacher demonstrating negative behaviors. In essence, this teacher behavior turned into a move that escalated conflict. The teacher made conflict moves that would be more detrimental to the emotional state of the principal. While this mindset tended to happen secretly, it was a realistic mindset of some teachers. This realistic
mindset of some teachers set the atmosphere for unprofessionalism in school buildings and at school events.

The PI examined all transcript excerpts from all participants, and they all carried the same slant until a different description emerged from Participant Dna. She released this new thought:

…I look at trust based on how the teacher responds to the students. As a principal, I am trusting teachers to provide parents with accurate and reliable accounts of what happens during the day pertaining to their child. For example, a teacher sent a parent an email and the parent came to the school. However, I investigated the situation. It appears that the teacher did not report an accurate account of what happened. The teacher gave information to the parent that would sound more aggressive than the problem really was with the student. I was really concerned about that teacher because I was hoping she, along with other teachers, gives parents truthful statements concerning what concern their children. In this case, I lost trust with the teacher. I felt that if I cannot trust you with a small issue that suspends me from following through to trust you in other areas pertaining to the school’s best practices.

Similarly, Participant Ena stated:

Trust is a big factor for me as principal because teachers say one thing and they do another thing. Teachers say things to please me in front of their peers, but afterwards they do not live up to what they say. For example, I have a teacher that comes to me to share what her team thinks of a decision that I have made. I listen to the teacher that brings the complaint. Then, I go and talk with the other
teachers on the team to find out that the other teachers did not make the complaint. It really was the teacher who brought the complaint to me on behalf of the other teachers. However, the teacher lacked integrity and could not come to me and tell me what she thought of a directive I have given. This has diminished my trust with teachers greatly.

Unlike other participants, Participant Cna went a bit deeper to explain that along with the lack of trust, communication was important. With regards to the first theme, Mindset towards Teacher Expectations, the PI examined transcripts from the urban principal and shared her descriptions for consideration.

…I believe I must have boundaries and rules if teachers are going to adhere to policy and procedures set by me. Sometimes, I break communication rules. I do not always allow the teacher to finish statements when sharing his or her side to a conflict. I take over the conversation. When I self-reflect, this is an area of weakness for me. I believe a lack of boundaries when teachers and I converse this causes the teachers to disrespect me and choose not to follow my directives. Even though I am the principal, it still cannot be a “talk at anytime” mentality when dealing with teachers. I must develop a space of time that I give teachers time to express their concerns without interruptions.

Here is a personal scenario. Teacher came into my office. And what we were discussing we had already discussed before and this discussion was getting the best of me. The teacher knows my passion for our students. Yet, the teacher still refused to follow the directive that I give. So, when the teacher started to talk, I interrupted her sentence and I added my sentences. I did not give the teacher time
to finish her sentences because when the teacher started talking again, I interrupt her words again and replace them with mine.

The PI agreed that principals must learn communication boundaries. A communication boundary is simply to know how much a principal can say at a given time. The PI witnessed teachers losing control and allowing very disrespectful phrases, such as: I am not going to do this or this child will have to stay with you, as principal, if he or she does not listen to me. Similarly, the PI observed teachers using disrespectful tones, whereby the teacher yelled at the principal or at times communicated the intensity of their words by slamming their hands on tables to enforce a point. Yet, in the midst, the principal lost communication control, whereby the principal said demeaning comments to the teacher such as: just shut up; get out of my office; and/or using profanity. Yet, at times, principals bypassed communication boundaries, which resulted in principals having situations similar to what Participant Cna described.

Participant Dna initiated several statements about communication. Of the five participants, Participant Dna overly expressed communication, as a factor pinpointing to the origin of conflict. She narrated this ordeal as follows:

…Effective communication is key when dealing with minimizing conflicts among teachers. I try very hard to communicate well with my teachers. I try to send out at least two types of communication of a message so that if one message type did not reach the teacher then the other communication type will. Normally, I will send an email about an expectation and a hard copy of the expectation in each teacher’s mailbox. But, some teachers ignore both types of communication. After
a while this becomes annoying because after I work to send out two types of communication and teachers still do not comply.

Participant Ena narrated several incidents involving communication with teachers. This is her account:

I work every weekend for my teachers. I keep the lines of communication open 24/7. I work on the weekends to perfect my communication with teachers. I do a weekly message with all teacher expectations on it for the week and following week. My teachers have my email and my cell phone. I encouraged my teachers to text me anytime. I strongly encourage my teachers to text or call me on the weekends so Mondays will not be a very strenuous day for me.

During the life of a principal, Participant Cna endured teachers showing insubordination and teachers not following through with principal directives with fidelity. Besides communication as a factor from teachers not complying with principal directives, Participant Cna described misguided support as another factor principals have to deal with in terms of teachers following directives. She gave the following narration:

…I am solely responsible for instruction and must answer to Director of Instruction, Director of Elementary Education, and Superintendent for scores involving students. I assume teachers want to become better instructionally so when I send other instructional support persons in a classroom to support and coach a teacher, such as the literacy teacher, title I reading support, title I math support, this causes conflicts between principals and teachers. I hear often teachers feel threatened by a second professional coming into their instructional space to give recommendations on instructional improvement. I notice that over
time this causes conflicts among teachers. For example, I did an observation and I did not like what I saw going on in the classroom. I see my observations as taking a picture. I write down everything I see going on in the room. So, when I hold a post conference with the teacher, I will not address the situation from a biased perspective. I will only share based on what I witnessed. However, by me not seeing quality instruction in the room, I sent another support person in the room to help the teacher. The teacher did not accept the help and felt I was not pleased with her professional work as a teacher. This caused a conflict between the principal and teacher. So, here I sent support to help the teacher, but the teacher reversed my help to call it threatening and embarrassing. This caused the other teachers to have a bad perspective of me as the principal. In essence, the teacher had a jewel in her classroom to help assist students and teacher with student achievement, but teacher turned the jewel into “snake-like” help. My expectation for the teacher was to accept and welcome my directive by sending in external support to help with the student and teacher weakness, but my support was rejected by the teacher.

The participant findings were congruent with the literature. The data show how teacher emotions are connected to principal perceptions. Principals were led by their emotions. As teachers opted to disregard set expectations, principals remain rooted in responding unfavorably towards teachers in the conflict resolution process. The way principals responded to teachers affected how teachers performed.

All participants shared how principal emotional intelligence affected teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. Each participant gave his or her own
account of how he or she regulated emotions. However, Participant Ena narrated a scenario, wherein she allowed her emotions to overrule making the most appropriate principal move towards an insubordinate teacher. This is her narration:

… I try not to act out my negative emotions, but this one time I had to let it out. The special education portfolios were due. This one teacher misled me to think that she was ready to submit her portfolios for submission to the state department. I ordered dinner for the teachers who stayed after school until about 9:00 p.m. to complete the portfolios. However, after I learned that the teacher did not give me the correct information pertaining to her portfolios, I was furious. My facial features communicated to her that I was grossly upset. When the food arrived for the teachers to eat, the look on my face said, “Do not touch it!” The teacher read my facial communication. I left the room because I felt I was losing control and I needed to calm down.

The systems theory confirmed that looking at parts of a problem is crucial in analysis. The perceptions of principals were broken into pieces to determine how those perceptions were linked to the principal’s emotional intelligence when addressing teachers. In the first theme, Mindset towards Teacher Expectations, the principals learned that teacher expectations were merely a set of little rules broken down into individual components. The principal role was to make sure teacher knew every dimension of the expectation. On the other hand, the teacher was required to respond favorably to the expectation set forth by the principal because the teacher knew all components of the directive.
The culture in elementary schools involved teachers opting to adhere or ignore directives set by the principal. When teachers failed to adhere to the principal’s expectations, the principal responded irrationally towards the teacher. With the vast number of expectations required by teachers, the principal sought teachers to hold fast to each expectation with fidelity. The data showed how principals were repeatedly swayed by various factors that stemmed from teachers’ mindsets towards their expectations.

The horizons of experiences lived by Participant Cna provided further “chunk by chunk” insight on the factor of consistency towards the phenomenon. Participant Cna shared:

…I learn to have a “go to” teacher in the building. I had to find at least one teacher in the building that regardless of when I give a directive or if I give multi-directives at one time, this teacher still would come through every time. I have learned to use that “go to” teacher to get a lot of the other teachers on board in terms of expectations. Seemingly, I notice a large percentage of the teachers like this teacher. The teachers look up to her and respect her. So, it is almost like if she says it then as a teacher I must do it. It does not bother me that I am the principal and the teachers listen to their peer over listening to me. I do not let that bother me. I only want the expectation done. By whom hands can get it done then I am satisfied. It has been working for me so I plan to continue to always find the “go to” teacher and get that teacher to get multiple stepped directives to teachers that I struggle with getting on board.

Participant Ena had a second scenario that worked when it came to consistency with teacher expectation. Her narration follows:
My Title I teacher is very good about following my directives step by step to the letter. When I am dealing with her I have to make sure that I outline everything that I need completed because if I do not include it in the directive, and it needs to be completed, the teacher will not do it. The teacher will not do it because I did not put it on the list as a directive. Teacher liberation is not considered when dealing with teachers who move step by step. Some days step by step works as a disadvantage for me.

The emerging theme from RQ1 was: Perceptions Related to Mindsets Toward Teacher Expectations. The participants confirmed the findings for this theme by documenting these 10 categories in their statements, phrases, and scenarios. They were teacher reactions in the classroom, unhealthy mindsets towards leadership, unprofessionalism, trust, communication, misguided and hidden support, reinforcement, consistency, and proportionate support to the need. As principals included these factors in their interactions with teachers, conflicts among teacher and principal decreased. As a result, teacher performance improved and student learning increased.

As the PI, the question arose: Why has the principal perspective governing teacher expectations not changed over the years? After the PI reviewed transcripts from the five principals and observed the pattern of responses, the PI noticed that many teachers have a very aggressive personality. The data from the five principals showed many teachers confronted principals often. The PI observed that this type of confrontation was aggressive in nature. Actually, teachers selected to challenge principal decisions and perceptions. Even to passive teachers in a school, to make their voice heard, passive teachers confided in neighboring teachers with the aggressive personality
to achieve their goals. For example, one principal mentioned teacher consistency as an issue. The PI believed what a teacher wants to do then he or she makes provisions to have it done for the success of the students and school. Even if a teacher lacked consistency, if the mindset was designed to warrant consistency, the teacher found a way to become consistent. It was an aggressive mindset from some teachers through the years that hindered better teacher performance, which ultimately affected student achievement.

RQ2: What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?

The second research question was designed to locate the challenges principals face with teachers. From the documented responses of the five participants for RQ2, statements, phrases, and scenarios were given. From these descriptions, the PI developed meanings about the participant experiences. These meanings were clustered into 10 categories. From the 10 categories, one theme emerged. As the PI reviewed the descriptions, which included statements, phrases, and scenarios, if descriptions were irrelevant, then the PI deleted each extraneous description. Some descriptions were repetitive, and other descriptions overlapped in relation to RQ2. Extraneous statements were a part of RQ2, wherein the PI reduced all descriptions to these major 14 categories for each participant:

- Lack of support and winning external stakeholders (Ana)
- Time management and Immovability (Bna)
- Silent Hurt and Misinterpretation of Faith Words (Cna)
- Falsified Parental Rights and Sixteen Disabling Categories (Dna)
Data Collection and Analysis Issues, Culture Differences, Disproportionate, Sub-groups, Multiple Roles (Ena)

The second major theme that emerged from these 14 categories in Research Question 2 (RQ2) reflecting on a principal’s perception was: Partiality. This related to the various ways principals are slighted and shown biases based on many factors, including but not limited to, their school’s student demography. This is a major challenge facing principals in elementary schools in Virginia when dealing with teachers.

Of the five participants, 4/5 participants witnessed some level of partiality, while serving as a principal. Some of the biases and partiality were tolerable, whereas other ways of partiality were unbearable, according to the statements of the participants. The partiality theme was an obvious common response from 80% of the participants.

According to one participant, “Confronting partiality was difficult! Overcoming partiality was equally challenging as a principal.”

Partiality is not obvious to detect, as a school principal when the partiality is not publicized for public view. The following excerpt from Participant Ana provided an example:

…I feel a large percentage of partiality is seen through hidden schemes. It is not very obvious to me as a principal. I learn of the partiality from public documentation and/or other principals in the district.

The PI believed as Participant Ana stated. All partiality is not seen at the building level. It is not until the principal attends other school system events that other principals tend to boast about the special privileges they have obtained from the superintendent. Many principals tend to describe going to certain conferences as special privileges.
However, looking from the central office level perspective, the superintendent selects conferences for principals based on the needs of the individual school. Yet, some school principals overlooked the real need for principals being selected to attend an out of state conference. For example, the PI has seen how if School A needs discipline training and a conference in California meets that need, and School B does not need the discipline training, then School A principal feels he or she was given a special privilege by the superintendent. But, in actuality School A was selected for the conference based on the needs of the school. However, until principals are together in a setting, other principals do not know that partiality exists.

Another participant (Bna) stated the following:

…I do not comprehend partiality because partiality is not done to me. Partiality is done as a result of me. According to my other principal colleagues, I get special treatment then you do not know how partiality feels. My district including, Director of Instruction, Direction of Elementary Education, and/or the Superintendent made certain principals feel like the golden child. This simply meant the principal was given privileges that other principals did not receive. Evidence of a conflict between a participant and some other school stakeholder allowed the participant to share the following transcriptions excerpt.

…I was brought a referral by his teacher about a kindergartner having a toy gun in school. Per the documented student code of conduct, I acted accordingly to policy, which stated an out of school suspension and possible expulsion. This policy stated whether the gun was real or fake. The same consequence applies for the mere sake to promote safety for all in public elementary schools. I suspended
the student. But the teacher and parent did not agree with my decision. So, after
the parents magnified my decision, the superintendent got word that the situation
had gotten blown out of proportion and later I was informed that I did not make
the best decision in terms of practice concerning the toy gun in school. I shared
with my boss, “I thought we had a no tolerance for guns in schools?” My boss
said, “We do; but that child is a kindergartner.” My boss supported the parents’
rights and decisions and told me that I had to rescind the suspension and welcome
the student back to school. I did not feel supported by my boss. I felt a bit
impartial. My teachers supported me but my boss did not. The community did not
even support me because the community thought a suspension was too harsh for
kindergartner students. I did not feel that the move my boss made allowed me and
the other parties involved to have a win/win resolution. In this case, I felt grossly
partial compared to me as the principal and the parent wins.

Several excerpts from Participants Bna, Cna, Dna, and Ena addressed partiality.

Participant Cna’s textural words follow:

…As I walk the halls taking a sweep of the building, I notice instead of teachers
spending time preparing for instruction, they are gossiping. It really bothers me
when teachers choose not to maximize their instructional time, but instead choose
to talk about the principals with other teachers. As a principal my thought is if
time is available, then why not use that time to perfect a lesson, as opposed to
doing something unconstructive, as gossiping about the principal. I learn this from
other teachers who come back later to tell me what others teaches said, while I
was doing my sweep for the day. I see this as partiality because the gossip time really could be used for instructional preparation for students.

Participant Bna spoke further about partiality:

…I observe teachers tend to hold their current new principal to the same standard as their former principal. I notice how teachers will not move forward by leaving the past behind them. Many teachers are stuck in the viewpoints and standards of other principals, as opposed to embracing the current principal from a clean sheet of paper. I witness often teachers who compare me to their former principals. They do not accept the new ideas and visions I have as school Principal. For some apparent reason I notice many teachers feel that they are slighting me when they show a liking for the former principal they have worked for. To me it shows partiality and it does not give the current principal a chance to prove their performance without past judgments.

Participant Cna provided an extensive narration about the experience of partiality:

…I do not always see and hear about the emotional scars that teachers deal with. Teachers hide their emotional hurts. They tell other teachers about how the principal has hurt them. But, they do not have integrity to come and share with the principal how they really feel. As long as the teachers do not open up and share with, then I feel they are not sharing information with me about how they feel about an issue. Also, the teachers offend me but I do not practice the faith words. I separate church and state. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration are church words. I never thought I could use those words in my world of work.

Participant Dna’s transcript provided further evidence:
… I deal with teachers who have to convince parents that their child was wrong and broke a rule in school. As I show parents documentation of the offense of their child, the parent still will not believe the report of the teacher. But the parent believes the report of the child over the parent. I get so upset because the child is manipulating the parent into thinking that what he or she did was not wrong.

Instead of parents believing the teacher, they would rather believe a lie and not hear the truth. As the principal I deal with teachers who do not understand how to educate special needs children. For some reason students with different disabilities scare people. As principal I notice if students have disabilities, such as learning disabled, hearing impaired, speech/language deficient, and other health impairments then coaching teachers along is easy. Yet, when I have teachers who have issues from students with disabilities, such as emotional disturbance, severe and profound, autism, and orthopedic, then teachers struggle with assisting students well.

Throughout the narration of Participant Ena, a pattern of statements showed up during the interview. Her narration follows:

…I have learned to accept there is a lot to being a principal. It is not the daily operations of school that gets me. It’s all the other stuff that goes along with the job. I struggle with not only collecting data but analyzing data every two weeks. For some schools who do not have to take bi-weekly assessments due to high performing schools, then I feel it is almost not right for some people to make the same money. I get the same pay but doing much more work. It seems like I get punished when I work in a low performing school, as principal. I miss the added
perks that come along with leading a school with high risks students. Feeling slighted makes me not always address teachers the way I should because I am handling their complaints but internally hurting based on the overload put on me as principal.

Participant (Ana) tells more about partiality:

I am learning how to suspend judgment on teachers. I see there are times when teachers do not meet the demands of their profession. According to the district-wide tool use for teacher observations, I witness some teachers do not meet minimal standard teacher performance based on a reliable and valid teacher performance tool. Then, I deal with facing teachers that rebel and are insubordinate. My principal’s director will ask me to suspend judgment upon the teacher and not document what has been seen in teacher performance. Yet, there may be another teacher that has not meet teacher performance standards and the documentation is followed through. The teacher I was told to put on a plan of action may not really need a corrective action plan. But, due to political moves, I am told to put the teacher on a plan. This is leading with a lack of integrity. Normally, I notice this corrective action plan is administered by the Human Resources department and by the principal in the school.

Participant Ena illustrated this further by exposing the PI to this new horizon in the following excerpt:

I had a teacher who had been in the classroom for over 30 years. This teacher had been at this one school for the past 20 years. The teacher had gain rapport with other teachers in the building, community, and central office administrators. The
teacher did not perform all of the teacher standards based on the assessment tool. As the principal, I gave the teacher needs improvement in about 2/7 domains. The teacher filed a grievance. After about a two month deliberation with Human Resources, the grievance department, the teacher and myself, I was asked to remove the needs improvement marking and not place the form into the teacher’s file. This really made me furious as a principal. I asked the question, if I show partiality towards teachers then how will a teacher’s performance improve?

Participant Cna shared additional statements about partiality. The participant described several aspects of partiality in relation to her teachers. These statements included, tone, power struggles, and data omission. The participant narrated this experience as follows:

Tone. This is my voice tone response towards a teacher in response to this teacher repeatedly not monitoring students’ interactions, while outside for recess. I have reminded this teacher and other teachers that recess is not a break for you as a teacher to chill; even during recess, you are required to still watch students. I reiterate this often. It just so happen that this day a student came into my office hurt physically. This first question I ask the teacher, “What were you doing during recess today?” I did not even wait for the teacher’s response because I know the teacher did not monitor students during recess, but instead the teacher was conversing with peers. The teacher was not monitoring students’ behaviors, while students were playing. When I see a teacher neglect their responsibilities whereas, students’ safety is in jeopardy, my tone changes. I admit that my tone changes aggressively when I see teachers mistreating “my babies.” I call my students my babies. This makes me furious as a principal. I hear some teachers express how
select teachers do not receive my wrath. They say I select certain teachers when my tone changes to the aggressive voice. I am not aware of any teacher that I deliberately pick on to show a more harsh tone of voice. But, teachers tell me that I am show partiality when addressing some teachers when it comes to tone. I disagree with showing partiality but I do agree that any student that neglects duties whereby a child’s safety is at stake may not get the very best of my tone as a principal.

Participant Cna articulated partiality well when referring to power struggles with teachers:

Teachers tend to think they win in conflicting situations with the principal, especially if the teacher files a complaint with the teacher union.

Participant Cna experienced data omission frequently, as a principal. Throughout the narrative of the participant, the PI heard a pattern of thoughts concerning data omission. This experience gives an account of how the participant views data omission in relation to teachers in a school.

Data Omission. I attempt to help teachers understand the power of data. Many teachers see data as a means to show the progress of students. I share with teachers that showing student progress through quantitative data is one benefit of data. However, I tend to frame conversations for improvement with teachers from data. Data gives me sentence starters. When I come to a faculty meeting and start talking about the changes that we need to make as a school, I get a strong resistance from teachers. Many teachers think that what I am discussing is my opinion and subjective in nature. Because some people fear data because data
usually is depicted in collapsed terms. People cannot really make sense of a lot of statistical data. Out of fear I found that teachers will ignore and runaway from data. Yet, I strongly encourage teachers to discuss anything pertaining to school with data in front of you. If data is not present then it is not important to have the meeting. Teachers engage in partiality any time they hold meetings and offer suggestions for school improvement without data. I tell teachers to talk about school operations and change without data is a sign of partiality. A teacher is being partial to the work of the school establishment to offer solutions without including data. Case in point is documented below.

I was talking to a grade level of teachers about some instructional changes that must be made. I encouraged teachers to use the building interventionist to assist with any teacher who had instructional weaknesses. The one teacher who needed help became offended by the building interventionist because the building interventionist did not share the teacher needed help based on what the data showed. The interventionist just talked about the weaknesses of the teacher. The teacher’s data was omitted from the conversation. This made for a very opinionated conversation with the teacher and a conflict originated between the classroom teacher and me as the principal. In essence, the interventionist was partial in communicating the real essence of the teacher weakness because she did not use data as a ground for support in entering the teacher’s classroom.

Partiality was not a huge problem for Participant Ana. The participant transcript demonstrated the following:
…I do not have a partiality problem in my school. I believe the main reason is due to not having many new teachers so partiality was not an issue. The teachers in my building are very friendly and they do not require much reprimand so teachers did not feel any partiality from me as principal. I do not see my teachers fighting for power as an issue, which I see as the main factor in partiality - a person wanting power and the other person will not relinquish the power. My teachers do not feel that I show favoritism to any teacher in the building so this is not an issue for me. If there is any partiality I sense it would be partiality from the community because I do not feel that the former principal received the lack of support from the community that I feel as current principal.

Several excerpts from Participants Bna, Cna, Dna, and Ena explained how teacher behavior caused blatant partiality from principals in elementary schools. Participant Bna narrated her perspective when she said:

…A lot of times, I have to clean the air. In our team administrative meetings, I share with them raw data. I encourage my team to take the raw data and share the data with your individual grade levels. Many grade level teams thought what was communicated with them was embedded in subjectivity. The administrative team member did not take the time to explain what was shared is based solely on data. The team thought I was picking on them and not on other grade levels. Because of that situation, I could have allowed my emotions to take over and respond unfavorably to teachers.

Variance with assessments was among experiences narrated by Participant Ena. The excerpt of the transcript follows:
…I deal with partiality when it comes to student assessments. Instructional assessments bring ongoing challenges from my perspective in terms of partiality. For example, some schools take one assessment per quarter, whereas some schools take assessment weekly and bi-weekly. The Superintendent determines the number of informal and formal assessments required per school. Normally, if a school struggles with passing yearly assessments, then additional instructional assessments are administered weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and/or quarterly. I must prepare for my teachers and students to be a part of ongoing assessment because of the former progress on national assessments. I see the need for these additional assessments, which are designed to identify the student academic weaknesses, as a short term plan for improvement. But, in my eyes, it still is a sign of partiality. The Superintendent does not want the principal to know student weaknesses at the end of the year. Assessing students at varying frequencies make for partiality because my school gets four assessments per month, but another school may not get an assessment at all for the month.

This second emerging theme, which is partiality, is supported by Participant Ena. On page 17 of her narrative, Participant Ena equates the act of partiality with assessments to pressure. Her sense of pressure is described texturally as:

…I feel the challenges from ongoing instructional assessments. I feel the pressure from four assessments per month. Because of the gap groups that my school services, I have the pressure of making sure each gap group passes the test. To assess my students weekly to me is just a bit too much. I think this is a big problem in elementary schools. I feel the students are over-tested. My teachers
share with me that their kids are being tested too much. I feel that as long as students are being assessed then teachers are not teaching. Students taking assessment is free time for teachers because during the assessment teachers are walking around and proctoring. I have counted the amount of time taken to assess students. I have had to give four assessments weekly and each assessment takes about one hour in terms of preparing for the assessment, the time to take the assessment, the post work to do with the assessment. I counted that a teacher spends up to about three hours’ weekly dealing with assessment. I believe this time geared for assessments may be given to teachers for lesson preparation, execution of lessons, student remediation, and/or tutorial sessions.

Literature supports this partiality claim. Put simply, partiality is a bias. The data supports the understanding that poor communication causes partiality in elementary schools. A partiality mindset forms with teachers each time a principal does not communicate effectively.

The PI gave equal relevance to all factors shared through statements, quotes, and scenarios concerning partiality. From each participant’s transcribed interview, the PI selected excerpts that were exhaustive descriptions of contributing factors to the phenomenon. Evidence of these descriptions is stated below:

…I experienced partiality when the district hired a principal from out of state and gave that principal a starting salary that was higher than an elementary principal in the city. Also, I dealt with partiality when the district assigned me to serve as principal over two schools without a hike in pay. I was two principals in a one person body with the salary of one person. I felt sense partiality to the highest
degree and I am sure my emotional intelligence suffered from what was done to me openly in two different situations. I cannot recall one time that anyone communicated to me as to why I was dealing with this partiality as an elementary principal. – Participant Ana

…I feel a sense of partiality when I get around other principals in the district at staff meeting. Recently, I won a local principal prize. The Superintendent’s office sent an email to all principals informing each principal of the accomplishment that I made and the honor bestowed upon me. After two weeks, not one principal acknowledge the honor that was given to me. I felt a very strong degree of partiality because about two weeks ago another principal received an honor for an accomplishment. Many principals in the meeting congratulating took time to congratulate her. But, not one person said anything about the special recognition I received. – Participant Cna

…At one time I was the only principal in the district that did not have an assistant principal. I felt a sense of partiality for an entire year because I was still expected to live up to the same expectations, meet guidelines, and do the task as the other principals. In essence, I had the same assignments with less help. – Participant Dna

Feeling slighted I feel often. There are programs that my school does as an at-risk school, but we do not receive the recognition that another school gets that does the same program. Seemingly no one talks about the great things we are doing. I guess because I my school receive Title I funding. Also, in terms of pay, I feel slighted because teachers always get the increase in salary, but the principals do
not. I work extra hours without pay, but the teachers work extra hours and most of the time we are mandated to pay them. There is a bias in the school sector that shows favoritism towards teachers and not principals. – Participant Ena

Principals must dissect partiality and examine its individual parts. Partiality may be looked at from systems theory because principals focus their leadership style on the individual pieces. One principal lives by the quote, “The little foxes kill the vine, according to Song of Solomon.”

In order for principals to overcome partiality, they must address each factor correlated to partiality. Dissecting each part of partiality helped fix the problem faced by principals. Systems theory promoted breaking down parts into pieces and so it should be with looking at partiality. The PI encouraged principals to break down the partiality problem into pieces. This allows principals to literally understand the world of teachers better.

Despite Participant Dna’s textural descriptions did not allude to her breaking down information and experiences to pull it apart into pieces; her statements are consistent with literature associated with partiality. Her transcripts illustrated this analytical procedure:

A parent is concerned about her or his child’s grades. The teacher responds to the parent with all negative information pertaining to the child. The principal suggests rewriting the message to the parent sounding more optimistic. As the principal, I coached the teacher along as to how to write the letter step by step. To write the letter step by step allowed the parent to see individual pieces that warranted a failing grade for the quarter. To coach teachers in letter writing for a parent is
challenging, but necessary to de-escalate and/or resolve conflicts that parents form with teachers in reference to their children.

It was apparent according to the PI that some teachers tend only to write negative comments about a child and teachers share negative information with the parent. The PI believed that teachers must be trained in how to share the bad news with the good news. The PI upheld the thought: “Good news trumps bad news.” Teachers who share good news with parents along with the bad news tended to get a better established rapport with the parent. Good news described the strengths, talents, and gifts of a child. Bad news was classified as the weaknesses, ill behaviors, and wrong motives of a child.

Participant Ena’s textural words summed up the emerging theme of partiality. Her statement follows:

I have to remember that I signed up for this job. No one came looking for me. I went looking for the job. So, I tend not to complain too much about being slighted. But, it is always in the back of my mind.

After collecting and analyzing data, the PI asked the following question in reference to RQ2: What prevented teachers from bypassing partiality and still seeing the major needs of the school? I reviewed data sets from the transcriptions and observed a flow of responses that pointed to principal rapport. Teachers tended to perform well for the principal with whom they had an established rapport. Regardless of the demands of the teaching profession and the decisions principals make, a teacher went the extra mile to complete assignments and tasks, and fixed their attitude for the sake of pleasing the principal. For instance, several principals mentioned how some teachers did things for some principals and not for others. As teachers developed a professional liking for the
principal, teachers bypassed all retaliation, revenge, and vengeance schemes to make the principal happy.

RQ3: What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?

The third research question was designed to pinpoint the factors associated with overlooking this phenomenon. From documented responses of the five participants for RQ3, statements, phrases, and scenarios were given. From these descriptions, the PI developed meanings about the participant experiences. These meanings were clustered into 10 categories. From the 10 categories, one theme emerged. As the PI reviewed the descriptions, which included statements, phrases, and scenarios, if descriptions were irrelevant, then the PI deleted each extraneous description. Some descriptions were repetitive, and other descriptions overlapped in relation to RQ3. Extraneous statements were a part of RQ3; therefore, the PI reduced all descriptions to these major 10 categories for each participant.

From documented textural descriptions of the participants, the PI finalized the following categories per each participant:

- Gender and Elementary Schools, Culture, and Adaptive Leadership (Ana)
- Dignity and Allegiance (Bna)
- Ranking Ordeal (Cna)
- Offense Turnaround (Dna)
- Lack of training, fear, application (Ena)

The third major theme emerged from these 10 categories in RQ3 reflecting on a principal’s perceptions was: Priority Exchanging. This theme involves putting duties and
responsibilities in some type of order in importance to avoid conflicts with teachers. This is another major challenge confronting principals in elementary schools in Virginia when interacting with teachers.

Of the five participants, all participants dealt with priority exchanging in some capacity, while serving as a principal. Ranking the incidents that occurred during the school day in terms of most important to least important and handling the most important incidents first was a challenge for principals. The principal juggled the most important situations along with not forfeiting instructional needs in the midst. This perception alone was obvious, as in its existence, but it was hidden from consideration as a factor that hindered teacher performance and student achievement.

Based on the developments of the third research question investigated why the phenomenon had been overlooked in elementary schools from a principal’s perspective, it was alarming to document how each participant alluded to priority exchanging in some form of communication, whether in statements, quotes, and/or scenarios. It was clearly evident that principals must position all incidents based on importance, but to always remember the number one focus for the day is instruction. These descriptions from participants aided in understanding the essence of the phenomenon.

Based on what was described during the telephone interviews with the PI, the participants initially did not respond that they understood conflict resolution and its connection to principal duties. As the PI conversed with participants, it seemed the PI spoke a foreign language different from the native tongue because the participants lacked understanding concerning what the PI shared. The participants seemed clueless as to the ideology of conflict resolution in schools with teachers.
The participants narrated several statements that affirmed that speaking of conflict resolution was not top priority in their schools and districts. For example, Participant Ana shared:

…If they (Central office personnel) talked about conflict resolution, I must not hear it. Conflict resolution is not a topic that you hear often in school.

Participant Ena alluded to the same sentiment; she said:

…Usually, I am trying to learn about other things. Seemingly, there is not a lot to learn about conflict resolution and my district does not think it is that important because you do not see it advertised much. It has not been a focus for me, and my district does not promote it as a focus.

Participant Dna verbalized how her school division viewed conflict resolution:

It is not a popular discussion. They know we have conflicts in our schools. But, I believe they want us to handle it the best way we can.

It was apparent that conflict resolution was not a high-regarded commodity when dealing with principals in elementary school. Because to conflict resolution terminology was not a part of the principal’s jargon in the profession, the PI strategically listened to statements to ensure clarity. The PI spent time enlightening participants to the real world of conflict resolution. The PI kept a running log of responses to determine any discrepancies in the textural descriptions.

To detect discrepancies, the PI reread the responses seven times to avoid a misperception relating to causes for overcoming the problem. Several times during the participants’ narrations, the PI documented one statement, however, when the PI
summarized what was said, the participant disagreed with the statements. For example, the PI asked, “What time does conflicts occur in your building?” A participant responded:

I do not have conflicts in my building at any time during the day. Not in the morning, not in the afternoon and not during dismissal. There is not a definite time for conflicts because I do not have conflicts in my school.

Later, the PI heard the same participant state, “There was conflict between the assistant principal and a teacher. The teacher felt the assistant principal was harassing her as a teacher.” The PI documented a discrepancy. In one instance, the participant said, “There were not any conflicts in her school.” Yet, the next statements referenced the assistant principal and the teacher having a conflict. These statements alerted and affirmed with the PI that many teachers, principals, and school divisions were not familiar with terminology involving the nature and ideology of conflict.

Each participant created categories that reported the theme of priority exchanging, as a third perception of elementary school principals relating to conflict with teachers. The common language among participants was there were countless responsibilities and duties that a principal perform daily. Participant Ena shared:

…As a principal, I held at least 50 different mental conversations with teachers in one hour. This meant I changed my thought processes to shift at least 50 times in 60 minutes.

These multiple thought processes became overwhelming for participants. This was an example of a situation encountered by a principal within the first 15 minutes of an hour. In addition, Participant Ena cited a few thought process changes on the job for one hour. The statements are shared below:
1. Telephone calls from some teachers in reference to being late for duty due to car trouble.

2. Parent wanted conference with teacher because of a statement the teacher made about the child yesterday.

3. Concerns from the custodial staff in terms of window being knocked out overnight.

4. Superintendent’s secretary sought numbers for a report count.

5. Teacher was absent and her neighboring teacher does not see lesson plans for the substitute.

6. Fight on the school bus.

7. Parent call stating parents at the bus stop are confronting students.

8. Copier was not working and teachers could not copy their work for the day.

9. Parents refused to sign in to the building to walk child to class.

10. Complaints from parents stated milk has expired date on it.

The third theme emerged as narrations given by participants advanced. Participant Bna gave the following scenario:

I had a male employee who was having a conflict with a pregnant parent in my school. My employee who works in the cafeteria had this ongoing conflict with the parent, which stemmed from morning arrival (intake) at breakfast. Because my male employee could not reconcile with the pregnant parent, the male employee called his sister from another school to fight the pregnant parent in my building. The employee’s sister is also an employee within our school division. My employee’s sister came to my school during morning intake and punched the
pregnant parent in the stomach. From this situation, I had to: 1) call the police, 2) contact Human Resources, 3) Contact Director of School Nutrition, 4) Find Adults, as witnesses who saw the assault, 5) Collect Statement from pregnant parent, 6) Collect Statement from my male employee, and 7) Contact principal from other school for collaboration. This incident took the entire school day and I could not monitor instruction or evaluate teacher performance for the entire day.

Prioritizing exchanging was a challenge for Participant Bna as described in the scenario above, as well as the other four participants. Several factors influenced prioritizing exchanging. Three out of five (3/5) participants shared priority exchanging is an issue due to the multiple types of circumstances principals handle daily, especially in the morning during intake process. The central factor was school culture.

Participant Ana had difficulties understanding morning intake incidents prolonging throughout the entire day because the culture of her rural school was different from the culture of an urban school. She narrated this experience:

The culture of my school is that morning intake goes smoothly without the drama. The temperament of the school appears to be less stressful. Nothing dramatic is happening during morning intake. However, in other schools where I served as principal, I have seen an incident from morning intake with parents lingering all day and instruction for students becomes secondary instead of instruction being primary. When this happens, principals feel the pressure and intensity from investigating incidents along with trying to keep the main thing the main thing, according to Stephen Covey.
Here are scenarios of 3/5 participants that contend with during morning intake, when they shifted away from student achievement as a top priority because of an incident that caused the principal to re-rank priorities. In essence, the principal was asked to exchange priorities for the mere sake of keeping peace within the teacher, student, and parent body. Three other participants had narratives that confirmed priority exchanging.

A disciplinary infraction happened with a student and a teacher assistant. The teacher assistant felt the student was very disorderly and disrespectful. As the principal, I did not suspend the student because the teacher assistant did not follow the school-wide plan for discipline. When the teacher assistant approached me about incident, I asked these three questions: Have you conferenced with the parent? What expectation did you set for the child? How do expect the child to change without showing the child how? Because the teacher could not give me sensible answers to these questions, I told the teacher assistant that I would not be suspending the child. The teacher assistant said, “I do not know the school-wide steps.” I took the time to revisit the school-wide steps, which were sent to the teacher assistant electronically via email. This situation took about two hours because the teacher assistant was adamant about the suspension. The time I spent re-teaching the teacher assistant on the school-wide steps to take for discipline was time I could have used for monitoring instruction and evaluating teacher performance. As principal, I sense when I am not giving ample attention to discipline and instruction, but because I have been charged to keep the peace in my building, then often I have to make instruction secondary and the non-instructional issues with teachers and staff primary. Every day I deal with priority
exchanging. On a day that I scheduled an observation with a teacher and if I am not able to get to complete the observation due to an emergency, then teachers become negatively emotional, which affects principal perspective. – Participant Cna

Participant Dna had another scenario, wherein the principal exchanged priorities and did not make daily instruction a priority but seemingly non-instructional concerns became first. This participant shared her textural descriptions concerning priority exchanging:

A student brings a weapon to school. This incident takes my time all day long to investigate and to do the paperwork it involves. I have to: 1) send a letter to parents through two different communication systems may be email and or electronic voice via telephone, 2) documentation to the School Board, 3) Contact police department, and 4) Inform staff. Each one of these steps takes my time. I am not able to get a classroom observation completed because student safety is indirectly promoted as the top priority.

During the tenure of Participant Ena as a principal, she had several incidents regarding a morning intake circumstance taking all day to solve which prohibited her from monitoring daily instruction. Below she narrated the scenario:

…I had to deal with bus fights all the time. It was a daily practice. I noticed if a problem happened in the neighborhood then it would spill over to the bus stop and on the bus. While riding the bus, a fight would happen. After the bus arrived to my school, I would start the investigation. After I reviewed the bus camera, called parents, talked to student witnesses, report incident to the division’s safety and
security, and gather the bus driver’s report then I would grant the consequence due for the punishment. Most of the time, I had set up my day to include visiting classrooms to evaluate instruction, but what I had planned, a lot of time, could not happen because of the unpredictable situations that occurred during morning intake. In essence, what happened concerning the bus investigation became primary and instruction became secondary.

Some of the participants moved from a general perspective understanding priority exchanging to a more specified understanding of the third theme. Participant Ena’s statements examined the various pieces of priority exchanging and considered the conflict resolution perspective. Participant Ena looked at priority exchanging from these two theoretical viewpoints: symbolic interactionism and functionalism.

Participant Ena took refuge in priority exchanging. She allowed theory to soothe the misery and frustrations that linked itself to priority exchanging, as a principal. The participant recognized that there were many events, situations, and emotions that captivate one’s mind as a principal. The participant exclaimed, “As a principal you cannot share with teachers all you deal with for fear of what I feel might be misinterpreted, misjudged, and/or misguided.”

A unique pattern emerged among the participants. All participants spoke about having to change their disposition to become proportionate with the behaviors of the teacher, and Participant Ena narrated the experience with extensive details. Yet, Participant Ena did not share how she had to change her ways or personality to have teachers get on board with the vision or mission of the school. The responses emerged
from a sub-category named Adaptive Leadership as one piece of the principal’s perceptions involving priority exchanging.

**Adaptive leadership.** All participants supported the arguments made by Ury (1993) who promoted “Shuttle Mediation.” If a conflict occurred between the teacher and the parent, and the principal could not bring order between the two adults, at this point, the principal promoted the shuttle mediation design. This is when the principal talked to the teacher in isolation. The principal talked to the parent in isolation. At times, the principal talked to the child in isolation. As the principal went back and forth to talk to each party, the principal engaged in shuttle mediation. The principal became adaptive to the emotional state of the teacher, parent, and child and the principal responded based on the other party members. One participant (Dna) admitted to this happening at least four to five times per week. For example:

> It is always my best practice if teachers are not listening to each other, then separating them is best. Resolution means first listening. If two teachers are talking at the same time, then who is really listening? I have learned to allow each teacher time to share while the other teacher is listening. This is best done in isolation.

Several factors rooted in adaptive leadership were sited from the data of the participants. The factors were: preferential treatment, teacher expectations, decision making, and teacher longevity. These are the perceptions that principals have relating to the overlooked issues concerning the factors that address this phenomenon. Factors include preferential treatment, teacher expectations, and teacher longevity.
**Preferential treatment.** Participant Ena presented a brief review of factor one in her statements. The participant narration follows:

Every school received school-wide initiatives; but every school did not get the equity involving the recognition for success of the initiative.

Another participant (Bna) stated how ranking ordeal was a serious factor. The participant shared this textural statement:

…I know preferential treatment exists because I get the preferential treatment. But, I do not know how it feels when you are not the principal receiving the preferential treatment.

**Teacher expectations.** Participant Cna talked a bit about factor two in her statements:

…I am always sounding aloud the value of teacher expectations. I believe our students deserve to have teachers portray the very best in practices, ethics, attire, and morality.

**Decision making.** Participant Bna held ongoing conversations that guided this thought in reference to factor three:

…I have to decide if I want to deal with the multiple behaviors that come along with establishing rapport with teachers. I notice that when I talked to teachers in a group, I get one personality. But, when I talked to teachers one on one then I get a totally different personality type from the teacher. In most cases, the group teacher’s personality is the fake characteristic. But, the personality in the one-to-one session is the real heart of the teacher. I have to decide if I want to deal with dual personalities in the teacher circle at my school.
**Teacher longevity.** Participant Ena highlighted an experience in the following narration:

…I had to write up a teacher who was not following the faculty code of conduct. I spoke with the teacher at least 10 different times and provided options for improvement. However, I felt the teacher was abusing my meekness so at one point I had to document her behavior and forward to Human Resources. However, based on the teacher having over 25 years in my school, I was asked to remove her reprimand letter from her Human Resources file.

These participants’ responses showed the commonality that 5/5 participants deal with Priority Exchanging at their schools. In order to keep conflicts among teachers at a minimum, principals must learn the factors linked to violating priority exchanging. As principals consider teacher longevity, decision making, teacher expectations, preferential treatment, and adaptive leadership as factors to priority exchanging, then finding substantial resolutions to fix the phenomenon remains on the cutting block for academic reformation with students and teacher performance.

The PI asked the question concerning Priority Exchanging: Why do teachers lack patience when it comes to work and school? The PI reread the transcripts relating to RQ3 and observed ongoing statements about ranking duties and responsibilities. It seemed obvious that teachers understood that patience was required in the school profession. Patience was a virtue that people use in the public, including grocery stores, dining restaurants, and fast food places, but at school patience was an unrealistic human attribute to have. For example, when teachers mentioned how the principal did not follow the discipline plan for one situation that led back to lack of patience. Why not believe that if
the teacher “weathers the storm” then perhaps the next time the principal will adhere to
the protocol. It seemed teachers were not sensitive to their colleagues’ needs. Another
teacher may have had a more serious disciplinary infraction with a student that may have
caused an out of school suspension. To avoid multiple out of school suspensions for one
school, the principal selected an alternative to out of school suspension. As a result, the
teacher who believed the principal bypassed the protocol lacked patience to believe that
next time the principal may act in his or her favor according to the protocol.

Research Question 4: What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal
affected teacher performance?

The fourth research question was developed to list the reasons justifying
inadequate teacher performance when principals did not regulate their emotional
intelligence. This perspective brought insight governing this phenomenon. From these
descriptions, the PI developed meanings about the participant experiences. These
meanings were clustered into 10 categories. From the 10 categories, one theme emerged.
Of the descriptions, including statements, phrases, and scenarios, the PI deleted
statements, phrases, and scenarios that were not relevant. Some descriptions were
repetitive, and other descriptions overlapped in relation to RQ4. Extraneous statements
were a part of RQ4’s interview, therefore, the PI reduced all descriptions to these major
10 categories for each participant.

From documented textural descriptions of the participants, the PI finalized the
following categories per each participant:

- Emotional Silence and Forgotten Students (Ana)
- Bullying Reversed and Disloyalty (Bna)
• Onsite Rebellion and Humility (Cna)

• Communication and Facial Teachings (Dna)

• Hierarchy Overrules Building Systems and Problem Transfers (Ena)

The fourth major theme emerged from these ten categories in RQ4 pertaining to the principal’s perceptions in terms of: Discipline. This referred to the principal standing alone concerning disciplinary referral outcomes when teachers disagreed with the principal’s decisions for students’ consequences. This was another challenging perspective principals deal with often between principals and teachers in elementary schools in Virginia.

Each participant overwhelmingly cited that disciplinary infractions posed a tremendous threat to how teachers perform in the overall productivity of the instructional programs in elementary schools in Virginia. The pattern of responses from participants involving a teacher’s emotionality from writing a referral and the principal’s decisions were surprising. This theme occurred multiple times during the participants’ statements. According to the participants’ statements on perception relating to discipline, teachers believe his or her decision should be the overarching consequence for the infraction. In the event the teacher disagrees with the principal’s outcome for student consequences, teacher performance and student achievement are impacted in the five elementary school principals in Virginia.

Discipline was the documented challenge that prevails over student achievement per the five participants based on statements, quotes, and scenarios from the participants. According to the findings, 100% of the participants found that discipline was the primary factor causing principals to deal with negative emotions from teachers.
From the factor linked to principals and teachers engaging in conflict stemming from discipline, the PI found reasons pertaining to this phenomenon. The reasons were cited in the statements, quotes, and scenarios of 5/5 participants.

Participant Ena shared this textural description as a reason discipline posed a threat to principals:

…I deal with unwavering emotions from teachers who write referrals when outcome is not in the favor of the teacher. I notice that teachers who write referrals daily and submit referrals to me often jeopardize the impact I see towards effective teacher performance. In any given day when a teacher writes a referral, they want the harsher of the consequence for the student. If my consequence is a call to the parent, then the teacher is not satisfied. However, if I suspend the student, then the teacher is emotionally fulfilled. As the principal if I do not do what the teacher wants, sometimes the teacher may call the Director of Elementary Education to discuss my actions pertaining to discipline.

The PI agreed with Participant Ena. Teachers wanted their course of action to overrule the principals’ decision. This was an ongoing issue. When the principal did not go along with what the teacher wanted, usually the teacher dreaded to perform school responsibilities. The effects were disappointment and/or resentment that showed up in the conflict process between teacher and principal.

Per the transcriptions from the participants, 5/5 principals asserted unnecessary instructional energies into handling teacher issues from a disciplinary referral much more than requests for instructional assistance. Several participants shared these statements
paraphrased by the PI as a second reason discipline is an issue with teachers and
principals.

Principals’ noted that teachers contacted teacher unions without the principal’s
knowledge because the principal did not support the teacher’s decision as
documented on the referral. Principals were unaware of the negative emotions
teachers had concerning a decision a principal made. Afterwards, the principal
received a letter from the U.S. postal service demanding a signature for receipt of
letter. As the principal completed the demands of the union requests, this took
away time from monitoring instructional time given for teachers. Teachers called
teacher unions unknowingly to the principals when principals did not respond the
way teachers thought they should have responded in terms of student
consequences. But, teachers did not call teacher unions on themselves when their
teacher performance was inadequate and their students failed assessments. The
principals sited a bias when teachers called teacher unions. Urban city principals
felt they handled at least 15-20 referrals per day. Whereas, in the rural county,
principals dealt with no more than five referrals per week.

The PI thoughts mirrored the five participants concerning teacher unions,
teachers, and principals. Teachers used teacher unions, as power against the principal to
win conflicts. For some reason teachers lacked the ability to handle their own conflicts
with principals without using teacher unions. The culture in schools slanted towards the
teacher winning a conflict with the principal with teacher union representation. The
teacher believed a teacher union as the guiding force for positive results, according to the
PI.
The PI identified two different manifestations (disloyalty and onsite rebellion) concerning discipline as reasons principals and teachers battled. With these two participants, it was apparent that following written protocol was significant in how principals responded to discipline. Participants Bna and Can were paired based on what was mentioned during their interviews concerning disloyalty and onsite rebellion. Their narrated perspectives follow:

…The remarks I get from my teachers is nothing is ever done in the school when teachers write referrals. The teachers who wrote the referrals do not come and communicate their emotions relating to their view on my consequence, but other teachers in the building tell on another teacher. I often tell my teachers there is a protocol to follow. If you follow the protocol, then you get support. If you do not follow the discipline protocol, then I encourage you to follow the protocol so that you can get favorable results. I have provided a formal training on the importance of the discipline protocol. I have provided ongoing informal trainings on the importance of the discipline protocol. Yet, some teachers refuse to adhere to the protocol, but they want me to honor the suggested consequence for the referral the teacher submits. In actuality teachers tend not to be loyal to the protocol that was established for them to follow. – Participant Bna

…I feel the same way. Teachers must learn to honor the protocol that has been established. Teachers must have some level of consistency in their work ethics. If we train the teachers in the protocol for discipline and a teacher refuses to comply with the steps to follow, then as a principal, I tend to not have much patience for this teacher. The first question I always ask a teacher who sends a referral to me
is, “Did you follow the discipline protocol step by step?” This may sound harsh. However, if I suspend a child then the parent has questions. I can only give parents concrete and factual answers if the protocol has been followed. In essence, if the protocol has not been followed then that tells me as the principal the teacher was less tolerable in dealing with the student’s infraction for the day. In essence as teachers ignore protocols then teachers are insubordinate. — Participant Cna
Participants showed how teachers lacked commitment and were disloyal to following directives and protocols with fidelity. These factors affected the principals’ perceptions in dealing with teachers effectively. Through transcribing the statements and quotes from 5/5 participants, it was obvious that teachers participated in onsite rebellion. This meant the teacher chose not to listen to the directive given by the principal while on school grounds. There were ongoing statements that alluded to onsite rebellion.

Participant Ena shared a scenario relating to onsite rebellion as another reason pertaining to discipline:

There is a parent that is very mean to her son I would say. I think this parent speaks very harshly and rashly towards the child. Usually, the parent comments to me when I call her about the son is, “Don’t make excuses for my son.” However, as I investigate the course of action, I find the teacher wrote a referral because the boy was playing with Legos in class. The teacher wanted the boy suspended, but I try to deter the teacher from thinking about suspension because the student is homeless and the parent is very hostile when the boy gets into any trouble while in school. As a consequence for the referral, I chose to let the boy sit in my office for detention for two days so that the boy would not experience the rash tone from
his mother behind Legos. I shared with the teacher the reason the boy is consumed with playing the Legos. After investigating, I find the boy is consumed with Legos because the boy plays with the Legos as a pastime in the evening because he is homeless. I tried to get the teacher to be somewhat empathic concerning the child’s situation; but the teacher refused to be understanding. The teacher was adamant about having the child suspended for playing with Legos. It was apparent that regardless of the energy I placed into the child not being suspended, the teacher did not feel in my office was a harsh enough consequence. After I made an appeal to the teacher at school, the teacher readily rebelled against my decision so that I may uphold hers.

The fourth theme emerged as narratives given by participants advanced the understanding about forgotten students. Looking at discipline factors, the PI argues that the principal’s perceptions towards teachers who respond differently to students, some in negative and unhealthy ways, impact teacher performance and student achievement. Participant Ana illustrates how forgotten students and emotional silence plays an intricate part in de-escalating conflicts pertaining to disciplinary referrals:

…As a principal sometimes I silence my emotions, such as: dread, fear, frustration, and unresponsiveness. I cannot always respond the way teachers make me feel. If I act out my emotions, the conflict only escalates itself. I choose not to overreact because the kids are at stake. I do not want to delay giving students what they need because of my lack of emotional regulations. These unhealthy negative emotions provide leeway for me to become engrossed in the emotion and not address the teacher effectively. It seems like when I sense these negative
emotions teachers intuitively sense that I am feeling negative emotions. In essence I am silencing these negative emotions temporarily by not bringing awareness to them at the appropriate time. I believe this causes a more horrific problem futuristically.

Participant Ana briefed the PI on the following excerpt concerning reasons for discipline issues:

…A teacher wrote a referral for a student fist fighting with another student. The principal suspended the student for one day since it was the student’s first offense. My school has a zero tolerance for fighting. The teacher did not agree with my decision. The teacher wanted more suspended days for the child. As a result, the teacher conversed with other teachers about the decision I made. For over 30 days, the harmonious relationship the teacher and principal was broken for one month later. The teacher was affected by the principal not honoring the consequence for the offense. The principal felt the student paid for the crime. Yet, the teacher wholeheartedly disagreed. In the eyes of some teachers, some students are forgotten and do not even stand a chance for help to overcome their personal behavioral infractions.

The fourth theme emerged as discipline given by participants. In addition, Participant Dna’s transcript showed the following statements:

I notice that when I started the year with new teachers to a building, I did not have many conflicts with teachers, as opposed to teachers being in the building for 5-10 years prior to my coming as the principal. I found that factor concerning rebellious teachers diminishes if I started the school year with new teachers. I
observed when teachers have been in a school prior to the principal coming, teachers bully principals. But, principals seek to change the ideology governing bullying teachers by going into schools as the new principal with new teachers coming on board.

Throughout the narrative from Participant Cna, she often articulated statements pertaining to reasons for conflicts among teachers and principal stemming from discipline. Her narration pinpointed onsite rebellion and humility as reasons for conflicts:

…I do not always like the negative vibes I get when teachers are not in agreement with my decision from a referral. I believe there is a mental fallacy towards teachers who believe that onsite rebellion is okay in schools and that it does not impact the advancement of student achievement. The teacher’s mindset towards discipline affects teacher performance. To not believe that is a fallacy. The big issue that I face takes a modest approach when dealing with teachers who disliked my decision, but still do what is best for the person as a teacher.

Participant Dna spoke many different statements pertaining to communication and facial teachings as reasons for conflict from teachers relating to discipline. The participant narrative follows:

A referral from a teacher stated a student used profanity towards him. The teacher had not written a referral from September to April. During the middle of April the teacher wrote the referral because the student used profanity during class time in front of his peers. After the principal reviewed the referral and spoke with the teacher, the principal issued detention to the student. The teacher was upset with the principal’s decision of the situation. After the teacher received notice about
the outcome of the referral, the teacher asked, “There is no way the student can be suspended for three days?” I guess my facial features communicated that I was not in agreement with her not going along with my decision. The principal said, “Not at this time.” The teacher said, “If the student is not suspended for three days, then I (teacher) will stay home for three days. But, one of us will not see each other for three days. The teacher called in sick for three consecutive school days.

The PI often saw that teachers retaliated with the principal when the principal chose not to take the teacher’s recommended course of action. Some teachers for some reason did not trust the decisions of the principals. This caused ongoing conflicts in schools among teachers and principals. Participant Ena shared the following:

> From a principal’s perspective, teachers must experience win/win in all their situations when it pertains to discipline. However, the teachers do not know the mandate the Superintendents put on a principal for reducing the suspension rates. So often principals want to suspend, but yet have been asked not to suspend to keep students in school so that may obtain instruction. It has been determined that every lost day for students was at least six hours of missed instruction.

Participant Dna saw communication and facial teachings as denoting categories emerged as a discipline theme. The participant shared this quote:

> Ineffective communications lead to discipline concerns from teachers.

Participant Dna noted this statement:
I believe that teachers must receive communication on each step that a principal takes in the referral process. If a step is missed in terms of communication, I will be confronted with negative emotions from teachers.

The list of negative emotions included but was not limited to the following list generated by the five participants that were spoken in the duration of their interview. These words were not mentioned frequently or overused. These words were a part of the transcription and sparked a surprise with the PI.

Demanding, hatred, insensitive, isolated, untrusting, vicious, aggressive, angry, critical, bitter, dread, grief, panic, guilt, manipulated, de-valued, and overwhelmed.

The systems theory put into perspective the perception of principals concerning discipline in elementary schools in Virginia. In essence, the participants showed how a discipline referral is complex in nature. The discipline referral was associated with everything else in the school. Despite the fact that the referral seemed an isolated part in schools, discipline must be looked at as a variable that was complex in nature and linked itself to teacher performance, grants, out of school suspension programs, in school suspension programs, panel hearings, and unemployed parents.

Participant Ena verbalized a statement that aligned with the issue involving principals and teachers. The narration was shared in paraphrased form from the PI.

For the situation pertaining to a student who brings a weapon to school whether the weapon is real or fake, the documentation is complex. There are many individual steps required in order to complete this investigation. Each step is time consuming and takes away from the principal monitoring teacher performance
and instruction. The teacher must write a referral. The principal must collect data from the teacher, student, and witnessing students. Both are equally important. Yet, both take away from the providing instruction for students. In addition, a panel packet of about 20 pages must be completed on the situation to determine the weapon and others affected as substantial or unsubstantial threat, which requires more time away for instruction. In the process teachers become angry and upset when time is taking from them, even if the time is for required documents.

Another question developed from the PI governing RQ4: Why do teachers place principal performance solely on how principals react to a disciplinary referral from the teacher? The PI returned to the data and saw surprising data sets that revealed principal performance was linked to actions from the principal towards a referral. The PI understood that teacher respect, school safety, and protection of instructional time were paramount in an elementary school setting. However, a principal’s performance could not be solely determined by disciplinary outcomes. On one occasion a teacher stated, due to the complexity and the multiple steps to finding a favorable resolution in a disciplinary proceeding, that the principal favored the student. As teachers grasped the concept that principals are working in the best interest of all stakeholders, then teacher mindsets towards leadership will change. However, many teachers had a selfish personality trait that governed classroom settings. Teachers who viewed other principal attributes to determine principal performance affected change in positive ways, which ultimately improved teacher performance.
RQ5: What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

The fifth research question was designed to collect data from a two-fold perspective. The first reason was to evaluate existing conflict model effectiveness. The second reason was to propose a new conflict model, if data points to existing models having gaps that prevent principals from interacting appropriately with teachers. The fifth research question was created to examine existing conflict resolution models to validate their effectiveness with principals and teachers in elementary schools. From documented responses of the participants on this question, the following categories were created.

The first research question was designed to find the origin of conflicts among principals and teachers. From documented responses of the five participants for RQ5, statements, phrases, and scenarios were given. From these descriptions, the PI developed meanings about the participant experiences. These meanings were clustered into 10 categories. From the 10 categories, one theme emerged. Of the descriptions, including statements, phrases, and scenarios, the PI deleted statements, phrases, and scenarios that were not relevant. Some descriptions were repetitive, and other descriptions overlapped in relation to RQ5. Extraneous statements were a part of RQ5; therefore, the PI reduced all descriptions to these major 12 categories for each participant:

- Inner Strength and Golden Rule (Ana)
- Mediation and Comfortless (Bna)
- Change and Complacency (Cna)
- Incentives and Insubordination (Dna)
• Past Experiences, Staff Development Trainings, Flexibility, and Journeying (Ena)

The fifth major theme emerged from these 12 categories in RQ5 pertaining to model effectives as: Invisibility. This referred to the principal using an invisible model that was mentally embedded based on previous theories, philosophies, and experiences. Through this theme the participants presented perspectives related to conflicts among teachers.

The data for RQ5 was very alarming because the transcriptions were limited based on the other five research questions. The PI found the participants were limited in naming conflict resolution models. The common element among 5/5 participants was that not one participant used a tangible conflict resolution model to address disagreements with teachers. A model existed for student discipline, but a model was not in place for teacher to principal conflicting interactions. Therefore, the PI did not gather many statements, quotes, and scenarios based on conflict models that were being used in the field with principals. The conflict model language was new to the participants. The initial response for each participant was shared below:

…What is a conflict resolution model? I do not think we use that in our division?
What is it similar to? Naw, I know we do not use anything like that here. – Participant Ana

…We use a model for students but not a model for teachers. What will this model be used for by teachers? – Participant Bna
…No, we do not have a conflict model for teachers. Even in the schools I worked in previously we did not have a model to use when dealing with teachers. – Participant Cna

…Conflict resolution model?? My district has never mentioned that kind of model. Let me think to make sure. No! I have not even heard of a model like this. I can see it helping me, but nothing has ever been presented to me in terms of walking through a process to handle teacher complaints. – Participant Dna

…The division focuses on money to learn pedagogy for us. My district does not put money into conflict resolution models. Even when I attend conferences locally and nationally, I have never seen a lot of workshops referring to conflict resolution sessions. It is not a top priority in the field for principals to have training in conflict resolution among teachers. – Participant Ena

The PI was astounded by the responses of the five participants. With school shootings on the rise, the PI could not believe schools operated as a school division without a conflict resolution model in effect. The PI could not conceptualize a school division opting not to have a mandatory conflict resolution model in place to meet the needs of both teacher and student along with a model to address teacher and principal conflicts. The PI attributed the lack of knowledge to the conflict model to people overlooking the true need to fix disagreements, conflicts, and mishaps. The PI saw how people falsely believed that conflicts could be addressed and fixed by merely talking one to another or allowing time to transpire to dissolve the conflict. The PI believed that a conflict cannot be resolved or de-escalated with a substantial and measureable conflict resolution model. The PI believed that an analysis of the conflict was crucial along with
solutions written step by step to fix the problem between teacher, staff, student, and principal.

The PI named a few models for the participants to resurface knowledge of a conflict model. Yet, 3/5 participants could not name a model used in their district. The other two participants’ statements follow:

…We use a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) model. This is the model that we use for students, but nothing use for teachers. – Participant Bna

…Yes, we use a model for students but I cannot recall a model for teachers. The only model we used at one time was the Comer model, but again that model was used with students not teachers. – Participant Cna

The PI was surprised by the data collected with this research question. Therefore, the PI sought questions to discover if the principal’s school did not use a conflict resolution model but maybe the district provided a model, but the school had refused to implement the model. Per this approach, the following statements were made by the participants:

…I cannot name a conflict instrument that even the district uses or was presented to me to use. – Participant Ana

… Name me some conflict models to use with teachers. Perhaps conflict resolution model is used synonymous with another term. I cannot say that I know of or have used any tangible model to assist with teacher to principal conflicts leading to resolution. The district has never given me any of those models to use. – Participants Bna and Cna
…I am really trying to think previously of any models that may have been presented as a district-wide model. No, we have never had a model used at the local school level or a district-wide model to use and I have been here for over 10 years. – Participant Dna

…Maybe the district does not see it as a district-wide need. They promote principals finding your own model and work the model that you pick. Accountability to a conflict resolution model is not a focus in our district. – Participant Ena

Initially, 100% participants referred to conflict as a word associated with negative connotations with the PI. When the PI first asked about conflicts, the participants could not name a conflict per se with teachers. The PI used synonymous words and/or phrases to denote conflict, such as disagreement, quarrel, inconsistency with your vision, difference of opinion, and argument, and the then participants could quantity conflicts for the day. The participants associated conflict with a process associated with legal processes.

According to the teachings of Coser (1967), conflict is defined as a struggle over values and claims to scarce power. From the theoretical definition, 3/5 of the participants agreed with the definition and changed their thinking pertaining to conflict. However, 2/5 of the participants gave a slightly different definition as to how they defined conflict. Participant Bna narrated the definition of conflict as:

…When teachers are not seeing my vision and they need assistance with understanding why we should go in this direction.

Participant Cna narrated the definition of conflict as:
Most of the conflicts I deal with come from scheduling. So, I define it as not getting what you want.

The overall context of the term conflict was defined as a disagreement that happens when people do not comply with the directive from the higher power system in a school, such as the principal. For example, in the elementary school, the principal is the higher power systems, even though assistant principals and counselors served as principal designees. In the school district, the Superintendent was the higher power system. In the entire state of Virginia of schools, the State Superintendent was the higher power system over all school districts and superintendents.

From the surprising initial definition of conflict from the participants, the PI sought to collect data about knowing the purpose of a conflict resolution model and its purposes in elementary schools. The textural statements were given from the participants below. Participant Dna shared this textural statement:

…I think having a conflict model for me to use would be very helpful. Nothing beats having a tool box of resources when confronting a teacher.

Participant Ena shared the following statements:

…I believe a model is needed to frame my thinking as a principal. I use an operational covenant procedure that I learned from a colleague years ago so I use it to help me with teachers and conflicts. This covenant model helps me and the teachers. After time, the teacher holds me accountable to using the model.

The emerging theme from RQ5 was: Invisibility. The PI analyzed data on how the five participants could not name a particular conflict resolution model that they used with teachers, but the participants described an invisible model used with teachers. A tangible,
concrete, name-driven model was not used by participants, but a mental and invisible model was used and implemented by principals with their teachers. Yet, the PI documented participants used portions of an established model in their practices for resolution, yet they could not identify the name of a specified model.

For example, Participant Ana and Participant Bna used the Ability Model (Joseph & Newman, 2010). This model shared how people worked to distinguish their power over their emotions. For example, Participant Ana shared:

I stay calm when I am dealing with teachers. I never get out of character emotionally.

Participant Bna stated:

I have learned to listen and not always give what I think. I listen more and act less. I can only act like this but when I am in control of myself.

Out of the five participants, 3/5 participants reflected on using parts of this model unknowingly. The participants were Participant Cna, Participant Dna, and Participant Ena. They used parts of the Managerial Grid Model (Blake & Mouton, 1964). This model talked about the five approaches to effectively handle conflicts, such as integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising.

The PI examined transcripts from Participant Cna and affirmed her using parts of this model. Her statements documenting leaning toward domain four (avoiding) when dealing with teachers. Her textural descriptions follow:

…I withdraw from others at school to psychologically compose self to get in control of my emotions. I will run to my office and close the door just to get away from the problem. When I get in my office by myself, I tend to get better.
The PI documented Participant Dna using domain five of the model (compromising). Her narration follows:

…My leadership style is to always know the mid-point to every conflicting situation. For example, I always listen to both sides and recognize there is truth in both sides. That from listening to both sides, a determination of the resolution should be me.

With regard to Participant Ena, the PI found this participant using domain three (obliging) in her daily practices with teachers and conflict:

…I put my teachers’ needs before my needs. For example, in grade level meetings, I have prepared an agenda of what to discuss so that we can move as a school towards the vision. However, it seems teachers bring their own agenda of what they want to discuss. Instead of becoming aggressive and making sure my agenda items are discussed, I allow the teacher’s agenda to super-rule my planned agenda. This happens all the time. This is a mindset. There is not a model that tells me to put teachers’ needs before mind. But, I learn from experiences how to keep the peace. This is a model that I keep in my head but it is not on paper.

The participants described an invisible model when addressing conflicts with teachers, as a disengaged intervention (Wilmot & Hocker, 2007, p. 213). Through this intervention, the participant had a choice not to discuss the problem at this time, avoid the problem, and/or not to respond to destructive comments by the teacher. Three participants described their intervention through these textural descriptions. For example, Participant Ana shared a spiritual intervention that she used to assist with resolution with teachers:
…I wholeheartedly believe in prayer. I believe that prayer opens the door for what I say when I talk to mediate with a teacher to work. Some people may not believe in the spiritual aspect of school leadership but I do! I pray before I approach any teacher with a conflicting situation. I rely heavily on the power of prayer in my leadership as a principal. And for the past years as principal, I have found prayer to work.

Participant Cna shared interventions was a tri-fold step; the steps are transcribed below:

…The first thing I do which may seem funny – I jump in my chair in my office and recline and maybe will shed some tears. This gets my mind off the problem. The second thing I do is I believe in meditation. I think about things that are positive. I try not to think about the conflict between the teacher and myself. The third thing I do is communicate to other principals to validate how I am feeling to confirm that I am making the right move. For me, these three interventions help me jump into what I need to handle in terms of dealing with a teacher disagreement.

Participant Ena shared this intervention as follows:

…As I principal, I try to hold on to implement these traits secretly, such as: respect, responsibility, communication, participation, and listening. I want to respect all teachers. I want to give teachers responsibility and participation in duties of the school. I want teachers to communicate and be effective listeners as well. A lot of times when dealing with an issue with a teacher, I throw the ordeal off by thinking of something positive I need the teacher to do for me. I am often
flattered by how teachers will change their unhealthy emotional energies into healthy emotions when I reverse the ordeal and encourage a positive gesture.

Many of the participants (3/5) worked through conflict resolution with teachers using invisible techniques, but participants did not refer to techniques of a particular model. However, the PI witnessed how the 5/17 strategies from the Williams and Williams (1984) model for managing and transforming anger was used by these three participants. Williams and Williams (1994) highlighted 17 interventions to assist with managing anger in the conflict resolution process, but the PI only included the five interventions in these findings which participants alluded to in their responses. The five interventions were:

- Reason with yourself.
- Distract yourself.
- Listen.
- Increase your empathy.
- Talk to conflict partners.

Even though these interventions were classified as part of the “Anger Kills” book, three participants implemented these interventions as practices in the elementary schools with teachers. The following participants reported how this invisible model was used daily in their schools. Participant Ana gave the following narration:

…I really try to put myself in the shoes of the teacher. I spend a lot of time listening to what teachers have to say. I really try to be empathetic and caring when I make solutions for how to fix the problem. I try to approach the situation not as “my way or the highway” approach but I deal with them as a partnership to
solving this problem. I promote doing right by others and having my spiritual inward drive to lead me to handle situations according to faith based principles.

Participant Dna gave the following narration:

… I have always dealt with teacher conflicts from a joint effort. Regardless if my teachers are insubordinate, I still try to respect them as a person. I never want my teachers to think that I do not care about them. One thing I always do is before I approach a situation I always take time to reflect on how I think the best path would be to have a happy resolution. If I do not see a happy resolution, then I take the time to be silent before I go and handle the situation. Also, I have learned teacher incentives help deter a lot of conflicts from escalating.

Participant Ena gave the narration:

… I believe in “Think Time!” This is the invisible model I see often. When I take the time to think, I am usually happy with my decisions as the principal. I try to think about situations that are similar to what I am experiencing and how those situations turned out. If the outcome was not favorable I take a new route to deal with the issue at hand. I want to say staff development would help me in this area, but the options are not there. But, I try to keep the momentum of doing what I think is right based on my education and experience. In essence, it takes being able to deal with all sorts of teachers in many different circumstances. In all things, I think before I take charge.

The PI agreed with Ena that a principal must engage in Think Time. Think time decreased emotional turmoil from moving into the conflict process with teacher and
principal. Think time allowed the principal to revamp his or her thoughts. Think time caused positive emotions to override negative emotions.

Because none of the participants used a tangible conflict resolution model but used invisible models, each of the participants sited how a concrete model did not solve conflicts, but invisible models de-escalated and solved conflicts. There were three sub-themes associated with participants not using conflict resolution models. They were: Speed, Proportionately Misaligned, and Fear.

**Speed.** Five fifths of the participants experienced using a mental model to solve conflict, but these participants did not govern their actions by a certain model per se. However, Participants Bna, Cna, and Ena shared textural descriptions related to speed of events impacted using a tangible model. This referred to the idea that things happen quickly. This meant a principal lacked the time to galvanize thoughts and put the actual experience into a physical model.

Participant Ena shared the following excerpt:

...I had to learn that everything is not an emergency. I teach myself that after all these years, I know school. I teach my teachers to uphold this same motto: “We know school!” This means we know what happens when teachers and students get together. Throughout my career, I learn to look at situations as emergency or everyday stressor for the job itself.

**Proportionately misaligned.** Of the five participants, 5/5 shared how the conflict resolution models worked, but participants did not attempt to use the models because they were proportionately misaligned. This meant the sample population that was a part of the study to justify the model was not proportionately aligned to the group of teachers that
were serviced. Therefore, the participants determined that presented models were proportionately misaligned. Of the five participants, 3/5 participants reported this claim, and their statements were cited below:

Many models do not match the clientele of students that I service. But, there are not any models that align with the issues I am dealing with as principals with me teachers. – Participant Bna

I have never heard of a model that goes along with what teachers are doing per school. I deal with teachers not watching kids while at recess. Is there a model that addresses this teacher deficiency? – Participant Cna

I believe that is impossible to have a teacher model to match my teacher issues at my school. Perhaps I can pull strategies from a model that will be well suited for my staff. – Participant Ena

**Fear.** Only 1/5 participants shared how fear prevents implementation of new models. Participant Dna shared this scenario:

…I remembered a conflict resolution model that my former principal used. I tried to use it as a principal, but I found it did not work for me! It’s almost like you have to create a teacher model just for your school for that particular time in order to see results. I tried to implement a former conflict resolution model, but found it to be useless.

Several excerpts from Participant Cna were documented. Additional transcriptions were documented per the PI request.
…When I feel that teachers are getting on my nerves, I go through a passage with my emotions when dealing with a teacher during an aggressive conflict. But I eventually get back to feeling a happy and healthy emotion.

Participant Cna illustrated with this statement:

…When I feel myself becoming angry, I withdraw myself. It is best to pull away. It helps everybody in the process. Once I act out anger, I cannot take back what I have put out there in the public.

Participant Ena shared similar statements, by saying:

…When I get bothered by a teacher, usually I will go to another peer to talk about something totally different from what I was just experiencing.

From analysis of data, the PI observed that each participant mirrored the five step stages of Pondy’s (1967) model. The PI asked if the participants knew of this model, and each responded, “No.” Not one of the participants could name this particular model, but their behaviors were congruent with the stages outlined in this model, according to the PI. The characteristics of each stage and how each participant gave qualified data transcriptions to support each stage were completed by the PI.

Stage One: Conflict is latent when insufficient resources are involved in the process

I pay close attention to the diversity of my teachers. Hearing and seeing the diversity in their lifestyles helps me to find the appropriate resolution strategy to address the conflict. Incentives keep the peace. – Participant Dna

Stage Two: Conflict becomes perceived when latent issues hit at least one party.

Proactive mindset is the key to leading a school as a principal. I work hard to put preventive measures in place to avoid possible principal to teacher conflicts. I
think it boils down to learning how to get a teacher to work through the issue we have and not approaching the teacher as uncaring. – Participant Bna

Stage Three: Felt conflict happens when one party changes the feelings of another party.

When my negative emotions take off then my feelings are affecting the other party in negative ways. Now, I try to allow my emotions to correct the negative emotions from the teacher. This means me having an attitude to want to see different results and my being confident in whom I am as a principal. – Participant Cna

Stage Four: Manifest conflict exists when one party acts on the felt differences.

I work very hard to watch teacher emotions when they are upset with each other about an issue. I keep teachers separated. If I need to then I call for my assistant principal to help them. One thing I try to do is get the teacher “off stage.” By this I mean if the teacher has an audience, I try to get the teacher out of the spotlight. At the point, the teacher calms down and we are able to reconcile differences. – Participant Ena

Stage Five: Aftermath happens when new relationships are formed as a result of how the conflict manifested.

I have learned that creativity comes from a conflict. I learn a new way to handle a problem. Also, I learn more about the teacher that I did not know prior to the conflict starting. – Participant Ana

The PI shared Pondy’s Model with participants. From one of the statements of Participant Ena, the PI was surprised by the response and looked further into the challenges and benefits of using a staged conflict model. Whether a principal’s
perspective of the model meant using the model as an invisible or tangible visible tool, the principal reported they act with a sense of invisibility concerning conflicts with teachers. For example, Participant Ena stated:

...At times I do not have time to decide mentally where I am in the stage process and act accordingly so I learn that there are challenges to using a step by step process. I act upon what I know is right to do!

Contrarily, Participant Ena spoke candidly otherwise about staged conflict model. Participant Ena extended her statements by sharing the challenges of using a staged conflict resolution model. Poole (1981) talked about coherent step by step models in conflict are not best in decisions with groups. Instead, using a variance of steps depending on how the group wants to address the circumstance is better, according to Poole and Roth (1989). Several participants report how when addressing teachers as a grade level or committee, it was always best not to use a concrete step by step model for conflict resolution. Participant Ena shared a narration on the challenges of concrete conflict model.

...One major reason is that the district does not promote conflict resolution models. I do not know why they do not make these models available for us. We tend to focus on pedagogy not conflict resolution options. The district is not thinking along the lines of conflict resolution. They do not want to bend by getting away from student achievement and best educational practices for teachers.

Even though all participants never used a tangible conflict resolution model, such as Pondy (1967), as a principal, according to Participant Dna, she gave a narration of why
she thought it may be a benefit to use in working with teachers. This model allowed the participant to be on the lookout for teacher triggers, which Folger et al. (2009) encouraged.

…It would be nice to have a set of look for behaviors in reference to teacher behaviors. The list would give me options to use when addressing teachers. Also, this list of triggers would help me “stage” my emotions to handle the response of the teacher. I am able to get prepared emotionally prior to seeing teacher behaviors. Having this set of triggers gives me a mental bank of resources to use to help resolve conflicts with teachers.

The PI had one final question: Why have elementary schools not included a conflict resolution model since ongoing conflicts occur throughout the day? The PI went back to all transcripts and viewed the pattern of responses from the five participants. The PI heard vividly that school leaders and principals have not considered conflict resolution models, and schools were not thinking along the lines of conflict resolution models. Instruction tended to have major importance. For example, each principal mentioned they were clueless as to a specified model for the school and/or division. The PI was somewhat shocked to learn that not only was a conflict model not a part of the school or district, but the term of conflict resolution model seemed foreign. The PI thought some type of conflict resolution model named in the school and district was needed. This resolution model should be used for the mere sake of leading an elementary school with a proactive approach to conflicts among teachers and principals.
Principals as Participants

The PI contacted the participants via telephone who consented to the study to thank each for their participation. The PI explained to each participant the steps to the study, including the beginning, middle, and ending stages of the study. Within 30 days of the participants consented and the PI distributed the questionnaire via email.

The PI selected the five participants, and when the PI received written consent from the participants, their consent forms were stored in a confidential area. From the participants who agreed to participate and consented to the study, 3/5 met the 30 day timeframe to sign the consent to the study after receiving the recruitment flyer (Participants Ana, Bna, Cna). The other 2/5 consented within 60 days of the recruitment flyer being distributed (Participants Dna and Ena). The PI granted pseudonyms to disguise the participants’ original names and to keep all their data confidential. The participants were named with identification as: Ana, Bna, Cna, Dna, and Ena.

The PI received the questionnaire from 1/5 participant within 30 days of their receipt of the questionnaire (Participants Ana). The PI did not receive the other 4/5 participants’ questionnaires back within 60 days (Participants Bna, Cna, Dna, and Ena). The 4/5 desired to give responses to the questionnaires via a telephone interview. The reasons given to the PI for the telephone interview preference were: countless other duties, meetings, and other responsibilities of the elementary school principal that prevented the participants from returning the questionnaire back within the time frame. Fear of the questionnaire was not a determinant in failure to meet the questionnaire return timeframe.
Prior to receiving data from the participants, 4/5 participants asked the PI if they could respond orally via telephone interview, as opposed to writing responses to the questionnaire. The PI agreed. The PI borrowed from the work of (Creswell, 2007) in terms of interviewing. The PI developed a protocol at the beginning of the interview process to ensure interview effectiveness. The PI established criteria for the telephone interview with the participants. The PI determined that evening hours were best for the participants due to participants working during the day. The PI allowed the participants to select their date and time for the interview to avoid making the interview a mandate. The PI was mindful of the participants’ time and did not allow the interview to exceed 60 minutes per session. The PI was concerned about the participants sensing emotional dread from working all day then conversing over the phone for longer than 60 minute sessions. Prior to the telephone interview starting, the PI shared his appreciation for the participants giving up their time to allow for data to be collected for this study.

The PI adhered to an interview protocol during the interview. The PI gave the participants the goal of the interview. The PI gave participants the questionnaires prior to the telephone interview to review the questions so they would not be confronted with cold questions. The PI created questions based on the advice of previous interview researchers. The PI developed five types of questions for the participants. The first set of questions addressed the origins of conflict. The second set of questions dealt with conflict and emotional intelligence and its relation to principal perspectives. The third set of questions dealt with conflict and interactions with others. The fourth section addressed conflict and its outcomes. The fifth set of questions dealt with conflict and its options for resolution. There were a total of 22 questions. Each of these interview questions gave
further insight to the five research questions for the study. The PI distributed questions. The PI received questionnaires from 2/5 participants via email (Participants Ana and Bna) even though Participant Bna initially desired telephone responses only. After the PI received data from the participants, the PI read the responses seven times. The PI summarized and paraphrased statements with participants throughout the interview. The PI held a follow-up telephone interview to affirm the written responses.

The PI listened reflectively during the telephone interview. The PI sited one disadvantage to the telephone interview, which was the inability to detect non-verbal physical communications, such as winking, tapping, arm movements, etc., during the sessions. Therefore, the PI made notes of all sounds, sighs, prolong wait periods prior to answering questions, the number of repeated requests to a question, as well as the number of times the participants started to give a response and stopped mid-stream and restarted their thoughts again from the beginning.

The PI listened attentively to any emotional sounds during the interview, including sounds of emotional happiness or sounds of emotional sadness. The PI underscored the statements that followed when the participants gave an emotional sound during the interview. The PI wrote notes in the margins for surprise phrases and words used during the interview. The PI logged sounds, such as “aha” for emotional happiness or “ugh” for emotional sadness. The PI highlighted in the field notes any metaphors or similes made during the telephone interview. The PI restated the responses back to the participants for accuracy. This process was repeated for each of the five participants.

The PI used telephone interviews in lieu of participants submitting their questionnaires via email for the second and third interviews. The telephone interviews
(Willis, 2007) were conducted to obtain specific depictions of the lived experience from the principal. The PI developed a narrative of the lived experiences through data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). The interviews did not exceed 60 minutes per participant during any given session. Multiple sessions were needed for all participants and did not exceed 60 minutes per participant during any given session. The multiple sessions were used for clarity of previous data collected and follow-up questions.

The PI followed a protocol at the ending of the interview as well. The PI thanked the participants for their time. The PI reminded the participants of the upcoming gift card as an incentive. The PI reviewed all field notes while participants were on the telephone for clarity and accuracy, while thoughts and experiences were presently on the mind of the participants.

The PI reread the field notes at least seven times to get a feel for the data and the experience of the participant. The PI collected and secured both written questionnaires and telephone interview field notes in a safe place.

**Data Collection**

Moustakas (1994) refers to two types of phenomenological studies in qualitative research. Of the two types of hermeneutical phenomenology, the PI used transcendental phenomenology for this particular study. According to Moustakas (1994), transcendental phenomenology concentrates more on the participants and not on the Principal Investigator. In the data collection process, Moustakas encouraged principal investigators to embrace the ideology of Husserl’s (1975) concept of bracketing. The PI engaged in bracketing to obtain a clear focus for the study and did not allow extraneous information to deter the PI from finding an answer to the research problem.
The PI engaged in horizontalization, which Moustakas (1994) refers to as classifying statements, in terms of irrelevant, repetitive, and overlapping statements. From the statements and quotes from the participants, the principal investigator reduced the information from the participants to only include information that produced a new horizon of thought for the study. While keeping in mind, according to Moustakas (1994), that it was impossible to galvanize every horizon because knowledge is never final, the PI, therefore, included every presented horizon based on the quality of the statements to help in finding a solution to the phenomenon. Once there were no new horizons given from the five participants, five themes emerged. These five themes will be used as contributions in further research and to offer solutions for the phenomenon.

Initially, the PI distributed questionnaire and responses were given back to the PI to begin the data collection process. Participants who did not want to respond to the questionnaire sought the telephone interview. After collecting statements via written questionnaire and/or telephone statements, the PI started to read each transcript from the questionnaire participants and the PI-created transcripts for the telephone interview participants. The PI read each transcript from all five participants seven times whether sent via email and gathered in the telephone interview.

Using the five participants in the study, the PI used a method outline by Creswell (2007) to facilitate data collection and analysis. To collect data, the PI used the questionnaire along with telephone interviews. The PI collected the data from the participants over a three month period of time. The PI engaged in indexical transcribing in the data collection and analysis of the study. The PI used indexical transcribing for three reasons based on the work of Gibson and Brown (2009). First, the PI wanted to look
at the experiences of the participants at a glance from the data. Secondly, the PI wanted to
detect only relevant information pertaining to the phenomenon itself from the data.
Thirdly, the PI wanted to see what actually occurred at given points during the hour long
television interview period from the data.

From using indexical transcriptions, Gibson and Brown (2009) suggested that the
PI consider these three points in collection and analysis. The first point was that PI must
quote the same terminologies, vocabulary, and indexing system universally when
collecting data. The second point was that the PI must review the transcriptions often to
ensure relevance to the emerging interest of the study when collecting data. The third
point was to use words and phrases truthfully to represent the analytic issue when
collecting data. The PI began utilizing the three point guidelines to ensure effective
transcribing in indexical form from the data collection process.

The PI referred to the work of Creswell (2007) who mentioned that the PI must
create and take questions to the field experience to receive clarity of thought determining
the phenomenon. The PI implemented Creswell’s guidelines by creating instantaneous
semi-structured questions based on the responses of the participants. The PI redesigned
questions from the first questionnaire. The primary purpose for the change of questions
was to obtain a more vivid understanding of the experience (Creswell, 2007). The PI
created questions based on a pattern of words and phrases used by the participants that
prompted further explanation to answer a research question.

Table 8 shows semi-structured questions from Participant Ana, which created new
horizons that added to the textural descriptions. The PI used these hundreds of
transcriptions to triangulate data, as mentioned by Creswell (2007). The table below
shows the semi-structured and procedural sub-questions asked for one of the five participants (Ana). This random participant was selected by the PI without any guidelines. This chart shows the additional questions that were generated from participants’ statements during the data collection process.

Table 8

Questions Used to Interview Participant Ana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section I: The Origin of Conflict</th>
<th>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Name a specific location where a conflict started due to a negative emotion.</td>
<td>What is the root cause of conflicts occurring among teachers in the conference room area with the administrative team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. In a school setting, name a specific time when a conflict started from a negative emotion outbreak.</td>
<td>Why do you feel there is not a consistent time when conflicts occur among teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Describe a specific situation during the school day when a dispute evolved.</td>
<td>What causes teachers to prevent conflicts from evolving with the principal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. In a conflicting situation whereby the issue was not resolved and the outcome of the parties talking led to negative emotions during the conflict resolution process, what caused the conflict from de-escalating and/or reaching resolution?</td>
<td>What specific strategies do you use to avoid conflicts from escalating with teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. If the conflict was not resolved, how was the unresolved conflict handled?</td>
<td>What secondary strategies do you use to avoid conflicts from escalating with teachers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section II: Conflict and the Negative Emotion Variable</th>
<th>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Have you faced a conflict whereby you showed negative emotions in the conflict resolution process? If so, name each emotion.</td>
<td>Name the negative emotion you felt coming up but you did not allow teachers to see when dealing with your assistant principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Describe a situation when a conflict started and positive emotions were expressed in the conflict resolution process.</td>
<td>Discuss how you were able to maintain your positive emotions when dealing with the assistant principals’ harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Explain a conflict situation that led you to act out anger, however, you overcame the anger emotion and acted in the opposite disposition of what the other participants were expecting.</td>
<td>What kept you from acting out anger when dealing with your assistant principal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Name a moment when you expressed anger in the conflict resolution process, but had justifiable reason for your anger.</td>
<td>What kept you from developing anger when dealing with the assistant principal that indirectly affected your teachers and your interactions with them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. How did the negative emotion initially enter the conflict resolution process?</td>
<td>What kept your negative emotions from entering the conflict resolution process when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III: Conflict and Interactions with Others</td>
<td>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Describe a situation when anger or another negative emotion was the main variable in a teacher/principal conflict or dispute.</td>
<td>How did you deal with the harassment variable in the conflict process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Tell a time when a conflict started between teacher/principal and positive emotions were a part of the conflict resolution process.</td>
<td>Indirectly when you were handling a conflict with another teacher, name the positive emotions you dealt with whether the outcome was what you wanted or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Tell about a time when others thought your anger or any negative in the conflict resolution process was not accepted by other personnel in the school or community.</td>
<td>How did the community escalate the conflict with the no tolerance gun policy concerning the referral written by the teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Describe your preferred approach when dealing with party members who enter the conflict resolution process at the beginning with negative emotions.</td>
<td>Explain why you adopted “do unto others as unto yourself” theory as an approach to handle conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Section IV: Conflict and Outcomes</th>
<th>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. When anger or negative emotions appeared in the conflict resolution process, discuss the specific outcome resolution, de-escalation, or no resolution reach.</td>
<td>By not engaging in the anger component of your emotions during the discipline conflict, what secondary emotions did you keep under subjection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. What were the next steps when resolution was not reached in the process?</td>
<td>What alternative steps did you take when threat making enter the conflict resolution process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. After party members conversed about a situation and resolution was not reached, did retaliation ideas enter your mind? If so, name and discuss each retaliation idea.</td>
<td>How did you handle external party members who sought revenge in the conflict process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. List obstacles that prevented resolution.</td>
<td>What steps actually were taken to prevent resolution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. How did anger or any other negative emotion ruin the conflict resolution process?</td>
<td>How did your emotion of being unsupported determine the building culture you promote in your school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Section V: Conflict Resolution Options</th>
<th>Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. What did you do to fix the negative emotion variable in the conflict resolution process?</td>
<td>How do you handle the multiple bus referrals that come in from bus drivers that may affect Pre-K teachers’ emotional state?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. What new emotions, negative or positive evolved from not reaching resolution?</td>
<td>What preventive strategies do you take to remain calm and attentive when addressing non-resolved conflicts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. When negative emotions, anger, sadness, and frustration became a part of the conflict resolution process, what plan did you put in place not to repeat these negative emotions from entering the next conflict?</td>
<td>How do you implement your mediation skills resolving upcoming conflicts among teachers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phenomenology studies refer to past knowledge to help understand the problem (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The PI showed indexical transcriptions of one participant (Ana) using a timeline. This timeline was based on principals’ perspective from the semi-structured interviews. These questions were to gain insight about former experiences governing principals. The PI held a telephone interview and from the interview these textural words were documented in 60 minute blocks of time. The ongoing time citations show the amount of time the participant used to respond to the semi-structured and procedural sub-questions. The first block shows the amount of time it took Participant Ana to respond. The next block shows conversation durational time to a question. For example, Participant Ana conversed from 1.09 to 2.45 in minutes, including the PI’s time to read the question and for the participant to respond. The denoted time in the block refers to the time when the participant stopped sharing statements for data collection for that particular question (P= Principal Responses; T= Teacher).

Table 9

*Minute by Minute Log of Participant Ana’s Transcriptions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time by Min</th>
<th>Principal’s Perception Responses from Semi-Structured/Procedural Sub-Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.09</td>
<td>Name the positive emotions that you experienced when a conflict spiraled in your favor? Fairness is the positive emotion that I always want to exemplify being a principal in my building. I am teaching my teachers to have the same level of respect for each teacher who works in our school. If we practice fairness with each other, then conflicts among each other will be minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.45</td>
<td>Tell how you gravitated to showing respect when dealing with teacher conflicts indirectly? My assistant principal has challenges with other teachers so in essence this affects how I have to deal with teachers in the building. My assistant principal was demoted. I feel my role as principal working with a former principal is that of training. I take the perspective of a trainer when dealing with my assistant principal. This way I am always showing respect. I never show emotions of a belittling emotion when dealing with the assistant principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.49</td>
<td>Tell how you indirectly changed the negative emotions from a staff member that was towards a teacher? My assistant principal pretty much I would call harasses the staff. I get many complaints from teachers and parents about how the assistant principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
handles them. My assistant principal can be very picky to the point that she is really harassing them.

| 05.17 | Tell how you remain calm and positive even when teachers disagree with your decision concerning a referral outcome? Well, if teachers disagree with my decisions, they do not tell me. Pretty much the teachers in my building all get along. A culture of getting along was established years ago, even when I was an assistant principal at this school. The culture of the teachers is they all just got along. The togetherness in the building was good back then. It’s always been a close knit community. I had some transition of staff, but still they all get along for the most part. The evident feeling in the building is friendliness. |
| 07.03 | What steps do you take to redirect the possibly conflict in a different way when addressing teacher referrals? The first step is to get both sides of the story. For the most part these bus referrals are from four year olds not wanting to sit in their seats. I do not have a lot of discipline referrals from the inside the building. Most of my referrals come from the bus. I normally handle about 3-4 referrals daily. |
| 09.00 | Name the negative emotion you felt coming up but you did not allow teachers to see when dealing with your assistant principal. The only emotion I felt at the beginning was being reluctant with helping her because she was a principal before. But, I taught her to treat me the way you want to be treated. For example, the Superintendent respects me because I work hard. So, because I sense the professionalism from my boss that makes me want to transcend that feeling to others that I lead as principal. |
| 12.36 | Discuss how you were able to maintain your positive emotions when dealing with the assistant principals’ harassment when dealing with your teachers. Again, it goes back to treating people the way you want to be treated. Even though the principal had been a principal much longer than I have, I still do not let her intimidate me but I still remember she was placed with me so I could train her. Evidently, the higher ups did not think she had the right training so she was sent to me to train her. When I keep the attitude of modeling for her, I am able to remain positive with my emotions when interacting with teachers. |
| 13.56 | What kept you from acting out anger when dealing with your assistant principal? I never am alone when dealing with the assistant principal. I always bring the teacher with me so together we can discuss the issue. By me having both of them there, I cannot allow any negative emotions to overtake me because I am being a model to both parties: the teacher and the principal. When we all are together, I often remind the assistant principal of the respect emotion that I am looking her to show when dealing with a teacher who has broken a policy concerning teacher duties. |
| 17.33 | What kept you from developing anger when dealing with the assistant principal that indirectly affected your teachers and your interactions with them? I put myself in her shoes. I knew she was angry about the demotion so it was my job not to allow that anger to befall me but to intercept it and keep it from affecting my teachers. |
| 19.00 | What kept your negative emotions from entering the conflict resolution process when addressing your teachers concerning your assistant principal’s actions to them? My teachers were upset when dealing some of what my assistant principal would say to them. |
| 21.45 | How did you deal with the harassment variable in the conflict process? I remained calmed and I listen a lot to what people are saying. When I stay focused on being calm and listening then I am not giving attention to the negative emotion, harassment. I try to stay calm. My being high toned does not change the feel of the situation. |
| 23.00 | Indirectly when you were handling a conflict with another teacher, name the positive emotions you dealt with whether the outcome was what you wanted or not. Tolerance is
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>How did the community escalate the conflict with the no tolerance gun policy concerning the referral written by the teacher?</td>
<td><strong>P=</strong> The situation was a student used his finger and made a gun and pointed his finger towards another student. <strong>T=</strong> How do I write up on a referral what the student had done? <strong>P=</strong> Because the school division has a no tolerance for guns in schools, I will have to suspend the student. <strong>T=</strong> Will you call the parent or do you want me to call? <strong>P=</strong> I will call. <strong>P=</strong> The parent was not satisfied with the outcome of my decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.05</td>
<td>Explain why you adopted “do unto others as unto yourself” theory as an approach to handle conflict. If I do not promote this theory then teachers will see me as a problem. My teachers feel supported by me as their principal. The teachers say I walk with them through processes especially with special education students. When teachers write discipline referrals and I walk with teachers through the discipline process, the teachers feel supported.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.55</td>
<td>By not engaging in the anger component of your emotions during the discipline conflict, what secondary emotions did you keep under subjection? Unsupported. I felt central office did not support me in what I did to the student. Because the incident got blown out of proportion, the district did not like how the community felt by the decision I made. Central office did not support me. If you want to be thrown under the bus, do something that central office disagrees with; you will be thrown under the bus. Betrayed was another emotion I felt because I was told by central office, “Practice over policy!” It was policy to suspend the student, but it was not practice to do so as the principal. The jokesters will roll you under the bus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.40</td>
<td>What alternative steps did you take when threat making enter the conflict resolution process? I called other personnel to come to my school to check for safety since threats were made. People made a sweep of the building to ensure safety. At one point, I even requested the police to ensure safety.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.50</td>
<td>How did you handle external party members who sought revenge in the conflict process? I spent a lot of time overcoming being frustrated. That was the emotion I had to deal with because I thought I did right by upholding the no tolerance for guns in the schools and when I did it became a problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.30</td>
<td>What steps actually were taken to prevent resolution? If I decided to act upon how I was treated then resolution would not have been met and we probably would be dealing with the discipline issue today. I accepted what was done to me and I moved on.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.30</td>
<td>How did your emotion of being unsupported determine the building culture you promote in your school? I did not let it affect my interactions with my teachers. Overall, the teachers accepted what was done and kept on providing good instruction for the students. I did not see how any instruction was slighted because of this community concern from my discipline decision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.03</td>
<td>How do you handle the multiple bus referrals that come in from bus drivers that may affect Pre-K teachers’ emotional state? I take them one at a time when they come in. Nothing too bad to stress about. Usually, they deal with students not wanting to stay seated why the bus is moving.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.09</td>
<td>What preventive strategies do you take to remain calm and attentive when addressing non-resolved conflicts? I still remain calm. I know that it will work out. I do not get into the power struggles with teachers. I tend to make the best decisions for all. If teachers have a problem with my decision they do not tell it to me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you implement your mediation skills resolving upcoming conflicts among teachers? I try to live up to the culture that the teachers have created in the building. It is a very cohesive spirit in the building. I do not want the school to lose that cohesion that share among each other. So when an issue comes up then I try very hard to mediate quick fast and in a hurry because I do not want to jeopardize the cohesive spirit in the building among the teachers. We got a new teacher and that teacher does not fit the mold of the school. But, the older teachers are doing daily team building activities with the new teacher to make her fit so she will not break the cohesion among the teachers. I have a unique staff they are doing whatever it takes to make the new teacher excel. The good thing is that I see the new teacher opening up to the older teachers support. So, if I see an emotion from the new teacher that the old teachers may have overlooked, I shed light on the emotion and share with the old teachers so they can consider the emotion of the new teacher. I have a very healthy staff. They make it work. Also, I cover classes for teachers. When I do that the teachers can hardly believe it. That alone makes my mediation voice acceptable. The teachers believe me when I share a recommendation for improvement for the mere fact I covered a class. It’s like I get teacher buy-in.

The session ended with the PI thanking the principal for their time and responses. I reminded the participant of the gift card incentive that would be coming for the participant’s willingness to help in this study.

Participant Ana asked the PI to reread the questions in Section III several times. The PI repeated the question several times, but the PI did not interpret the question, following Willis’ (2007) suggestions to not interpret questions during an interview. In contract, Participant Cna asked for questions in Section I to be repeated several times. The other three participants did not need questions repeated.

Polkinghorne (1989) claimed statements must be well grounded and supported for a study to be credible. Therefore, asking follow-up questions was essential. The PI observed new data developed from the semi-structured questions. From the descriptive responses from the participants, the data were reorganized. The PI stored the data for confidentiality and security. The PI reread the data transcriptions seven times as well. The PI summarized and paraphrased the responses with the participants. Several times the PI reconfirmed the responses with participants—at least five times for accuracy due to the participants who used pronouns, while examples were shared. To avoid the PI
misinterpreting the data, the PI reconfirmed the responses and clarified to whom the
pronouns referred.

Data Analysis

Colaizzi (1978) addressed analyzing transcripts. From the analysis of the
transcripts, five research questions were the nucleus of this study. These questions
examined principals’ perceptions to see if the perceptions impacted teacher performance
and student achievement indirectly. Using the five research questions as a framework, the
PI followed the work of Creswell (2007) and his four types of research questions.
Primarily, Creswell speaks about the exploratory typed research question (RQ1 & RQ2).
Secondly, Creswell mentioned the explanatory type of research question (RQ3). Thirdly,
he shared the descriptive research question (RQ4). Lastly, he encouraged the
emancipatory research question (RQ5) for a study.

The PI used each type of Creswell’s type of research questions in the questions
for this study. For instance, each research question matched a type of question outlined in
the work of Creswell. Each research question examined the phenomenon between
principal and teacher conflicts from the principal’s perspective and its effect on teacher
performance and student achievement indirectly.

According to Moustakas (1994), a phenomenology study was guided by research
questions which originated out of a passionate interest. From a passionate interest, the
goal of each research question was created to gain answerable evidence, as to why the
decrease and/or stagnancy in student achievement in elementary schools in Virginia have
been a problem in schools. Through these five research questions sufficient data were
collected and analyzed to grant findings to the phenomenon. The data from each
participant were used interchangeably since the PI recognized that a commonality existed in many statements among the five participants, as elementary school principals.

Creswell (2007) stated in phenomenological studies, questions can be asked universally among participants due to each participant having similar experiences and education as a principal. Table 10 showed the textural descriptions that originated from the participant. This chart showed an example of a participant’s descriptions that led to various horizons.

Based on the work of Moustakas (1994), research questions revealed the interpretation of the human experience. From the five participants’ experiences valuable experiences pertaining to principal perceptions concerning principal and teacher interactions in the conflict resolution process were gained. After data collection from the questionnaire, interviews, and semi-structured interviews via telephone, this analysis led to 1,125 profound statements and 100 categories. The PI did not exceed 100 categories noting that the PI determined too many categories may be confusing, as mentioned in the work of Gibbs (2008). From the 100 categories, the PI developed five major themes.

The PI saturated the process for maximum data collection. The PI used the model of Miles and Huberman (1994) for effective data collection, coding, categorizing, and developing themes. First, the PI documented all phrases and statements shared from the participants. Secondly, the PI formed meanings from the phrases and statements. Thirdly, the PI clustered meanings to reduce and/or delete irrelevant, repetitive, and overlapping statements. Fourthly, the PI sought horizons, and lastly, the PI allowed themes to emerge from the clustered horizons (Moustakas, 1998). Below are data collections from Participant Ana and RQ1 that serve as an example.
**RQ1:** How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?

Table 10

*Participant Transcriptions to New Horizons*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases, Statements, and Quotes</th>
<th>Horizons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can see how my AP lost her principal’s job. She harasses the staff.</td>
<td>Concerned about rapport in the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many complaints from teachers about the AP</td>
<td>Concerned about teachers reactions in classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a two-way street</td>
<td>Feeling a partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She rides the person and then I have to go in and redirect her</td>
<td>Feelings of fear and intimidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline. The staff gets upset when they feel I do not handle the referral the right way.</td>
<td>Teachers and discipline referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They get upset.</td>
<td>Negative emotions and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the teachers are upset it does not get back to me.</td>
<td>Communication silence building-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We get to a place where we learn to live with the situation. “We agree to disagree”</td>
<td>Overlooking concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those jokers will roll you under the bus.</td>
<td>Mindset towards leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school system will roll you under and throw you under the bus.</td>
<td>Mindset towards leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Moustakas (1994), principal investigators heard surprising or rich statements. The PI sighted some surprise statements from the participants. The statements included: stories, symbols, and the number of rich points (Agar, 1997) cited in the participants’ responses. Agar defined rich points “As any time in the data collection process that the participant shared new information and took the conversation into a different direction” (Agar, 1997, p. 1159). The PI tested those statements to determine if those statements should be deleted. Along with logging statements and surprise statements in the data collection protocol, an interview guide was used for structure. The interview guide had six columns for each participant to document responses. Each column represented the phrases and statements from the participants, reoccuring words
or phrases of the participants, and frequently cited emotions to determine the perception of the participants.

The PI later created a second interview guide. This guide allowed the PI to reorganize the statements of the participants and development of categories for each participant based on each research question. Table 9 shows random selection of one of the participant’s responses and categories as an example. During the interview, the PI used marginal remarks (Gibbs, 2007) to cite the number of times certain terminologies were repeated and the documentation of the storytelling events.

Cooper (1989) spoke candidly about employing a variety of channels. The PI interviewed five participants. These participants gave statements from multiple channels. These channel varieties will be used for triangulation of data. From the first interview, phrases and sentences were formed concerning the experiences. Meanings were formed and those meanings were clustered. From clustering, themes emerged.

Table 10 showed the phrases, sentences, and statements. From these statements, the PI formed meanings from the statements and phrases. From listening to the statements, the PI heard theories and explanations of human behavior. Of the multiple statements per participant, the PI narrowed the topics so that they would not exceed two clustered meanings per statement. Below was an example of a participant’s statements and how the participant statements were clustered to form meanings. Also, the PI noticed that many of these meanings correlated with these two theories: symbolic interactions and functionalism. These two theories will be linked to the findings in chapter 5.

**Symbolic interactionism.** Mead (1938) shared how people connect meanings to symbols. Pressure, mental overload, and exhaustion are symbols. From these symbols
meaning evolves. This meanings impact the perceptions principals bring to conflict resolution development. Applying the theory of symbolic interactionism in elementary schools by principals must be considered for healthy resolution between principals and teachers.

Each participant gave an excerpt addressing symbolic interactionism. Both their symbol and textural words are below narrated. Participant Ana labeled one of her principal symbols as stress. She narrated:

…There is a lot to do in so little time. I am the type of principal that I do not turn in any reports late. I handle every situation that comes my way with a sense of urgency. By doing so, it leads to stress. My staff is all women this year and a lot of schools seek males in their elementary schools to be able to handle the challenging male student behaviors. At one time, I used to stress about that, but not now. I used to stress about substitutes not showing up, but now I cover classes, just like a substitute would do. This position has taught me how to adapt my leadership to whatever the need is for the day. In so doing, it can become very stressful as the principal.

Participant Bna identified one of her principal symbols as regret. She narrated:

…There was a time when a faculty member wanted to call for a staff prayer. But, before I could get to the faculty member who was leading the prayer, the prayer had already happened. I did not want to pull the dignity away from what the teachers wanted to do. But, I had to remember there were one Jehovah Witness teacher present and one Jewish teacher present. Based on previous spirituality conversations with these two teachers, I knew they would not feel comfortable
being a part of the faculty prayer. However, those two teachers joined in the prayer so they would not feel isolated. As the principal, I carried the regret around for a while because I felt I failed in my allegiance to those teachers who had different spiritual persuasions from the majority of the staff. I regretted that I could not get to the prayer initiator, and I regretted I allowed that prayer vigil to happen on my watch as the principal. I still have foreshadowing thoughts about that today.

Participant Cna identified one of her principal symbols as insecurity. She narrated:

…I always need my boss to affirm what I am doing is right. Because wisdom is a big part of leadership, I want to make sure that I am making the right wisdom decision when dealing with teachers. I did not bring every situation to my boss because I did not want to be a pest so I ranked in importance those items I needed to run by my boss to ensure that I was making the best wisdom call as principal.

Participant Dna talked about secrecy as her principal symbol. She narrated:

…I put out a lot of small fires concerning teachers that no one knows about but me and the teacher. I really work hard not to allow another teacher to find out what has happened. I handle the “small fires” before they become a big school-wide issue. For instance, some teachers become offended when I say something to them in terms of not holding up best practices. Instead of the teacher coming to me, the teacher goes and shares the offense with another teacher. Then, the other teacher comes to me. Afterwards, I have to reverse and turn the offense around so that it will not spread and affect other teachers in the building. This is all done without people knowing what is going on in the school.
Participant Ena referred to “stage fear” as her principal symbol. She narrated:

...I spend my day when a conflict happens or is about to happen fearing what might happen if I do not intercept in time so I get the teacher away from where the situation may become a scene. In essence, I call it, “getting the teacher off stage.” This is a hidden characteristic that no one knows I deal with but me. Neither have I received training on how to deal with these situations. No one knows the stress that comes along with keeping teachers off stage. But, I believe this is a good stress investment to not cause a conflict to escalate and other teachers to become emotionally wounded. Through trial and error, I learn how not to allow the hidden symbols associated with the principal’s role affect my interactions and perspective concerning teachers in my school.

A principal’s interactions in schools come with many different symbols. Principals, at times, violate teachers in the process due to the symbols of: pressure from assessments, mental overload that stemmed from multi-issues of parents, students, and teachers, and exhaustion from extended work hours and weekend responsibilities. From these symbols principals developed a system of priority exchanging. In order for teachers to obtain buy-in, teachers felt their time in the classroom with students was robbed and/or taken away for mere fact of an unforeseen situation that occurred. Blumer (1969) shared how people responded towards symbols.

Participant Ena narrated how she implemented functionalism in her school on a daily basis. The narration is shared below with a teacher dealing with priority exchanging through functionalism:
Principal had a very aggressive teacher and was goal oriented. The teacher did not like meeting the objectives stated in the lesson plan. Normally, if the teacher could not meet objectives, the teacher would become very impatient with students and become very picky as a teacher. The teacher priority was teaching the lesson and student behavior was secondary. The student caused the teacher to exchange his priorities. Instead the teacher had to focus on student behavior first and instruction secondly. The teacher became furious with the student and the teacher eventually lost control and yelled at the student and said, “Get out!” The student left and roamed the hallways. I ran into the student asked why he was on the hall. The student shared the scenario. I encouraged the teacher not to put a child out without another adult transferring the student to the appropriate place. I provided the teacher with options for his aggression. Additionally, I coached the teacher in pacing himself better to ensure fulfillment of his lessons. In essence, this is what occurred: the teacher provided instruction, but did not respond to the student’s behavioral needs appropriately. The principal provided one to one coaching on dealing with students with discipline concerns. In return the teacher was able to keep his job, not have parent complaints, not have to contact with Social Services for a missing child, and allow the student to maximize instructional time in class.

The PI developed five emerging themes by using horizontalization, phenomenology reduction, and clustering, and then developed five major themes based on the statements of the five participants. The PI confirmed themes by what the five participants shared. According to Denzin (1978), local informants act in the role of judge as they evaluate findings from an investigation. Therefore, the PI considered the
statements from the participants that were congruent with the themes as highly achievable data confirmation. Secondly, the PI acknowledged themes, as truth documented by literature review articles. Thirdly, the PI noticed thematic consistency based on the various days and times that participants had the experience which led to the same conflicting outcome with teachers. Participant quotations are shared below for thematic confirmation evidence per research question.

Moustakas (1994) mentioned follow-up interviews. The PI held two follow-up interviews. Through these follow-up interviews, a few surprises were reported along with statements reiterated by participants. Along with cited similarities and differences from the participant responses, there were a few statements that enhanced the study. The surprised statements were included in consideration for emerging of themes.

From the comparison of data through collection and analysis, the PI made contributions to several places of influence so that this phenomenon would not be overlooked in the future. The following places of influence received notification of the findings of the study:

- Several public school systems in Virginia with declining student achievement rates.
- Council meetings in Virginia of poor performing school districts.
- School board meetings in both rural and urban cities in Virginia.
- Local newspaper agencies of cities with low academic performance rates.
- Radio stations in Virginia who support making a difference in low performing school districts.
- Local educational conferences in Virginia.
• Community and civic meetings of neighborhoods where demography links to poor academic achievement.

Credibility

The PI upholds the credibility of this study by using the qualitative works of Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) to include:

1. The participants responded to five research questions at different times. The first data statements were given in mid-February 2017. The second data statements were given the first week in March 2017. The third data statements were given in the middle of March 2017.

2. Two participants responded to five research questions in private and via a telephone interview. Three other participants responded via telephone interviewing only. All semi-structured interviewing was held via telephone.

3. The participants held various perspectives even though they each are principals. Two participants (2/5) responded from a rural education perspective. Two participants (2/5) responded from an urban education perspective. One participant (1/5) responded from an urban education perspective, but school is held in a suburban community. In addition, two participants (2/5) hold doctorate degrees and the other three participants (3/5) hold master degrees.

4. The participants ranged in years of experience as a principal. The participants responded to the questions from both novice and veteran principal perspectives.
5. The data was analyzed using the following theories to justify participant statements and behavior: systems theory, symbolic interactionism, and functionalism.

The credibility of the study was based on these statements above. In addition, this study did not show any unintentional misrepresentation because the transcripts were verified (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001) a minimal of seven times. Based on the verified statements, the PI drew conclusions for each research question based on the multiple triangulation sources.

**Summary**

The five participants gave statements, quotes, and scenarios that helped the PI to understand the phenomenon governing elementary schools in Virginia. Through ongoing conversations with participants via questionnaires and telephone interviews, the PI collected volumes of data. From the extensive data collection over a three month period of time, the PI determined five major themes associated with principals and teachers not able to effectively handle conflicts in schools. The first theme was Conceptual Mindsets towards Teacher Expectations. The role of the principal included, but was not limited to: understanding trust, unprofessionalism, consistency, and reinforcement. The second theme was Partiality. The best practices of the principal included, but were not limited to: the participant cited understanding, immovability, falsified parental rights, cultural differences, and external stakeholders. The third theme was Priority Exchanging. The principal knew how to rank school circumstances in terms of importance, whereas teachers did not feel slighted. The factors to remember included but were not limited to: dignity, lack of training, and adaptive leadership. The fourth theme was Discipline. The
principal knew how to contend with onsite rebellion, communications, hierarchy overruling, and facial teachings, as a few factors. The fifth theme was Invisibility. The factors associated with this theme included but were not limited to: inner strength, mediation, incentives, flexibility, and journeying. Principals implemented these five major themes into their daily practices. The effects were: conflicts minimized, teacher performance improved, and student achievement increased.

After careful examination of the data from the five principals, the essence of these experiences distilled into a composite of the phenomenon, which was that the mental alertness of the principal determined both teacher productivity and performance.
Chapter 5: Summary

The structure of chapter 5 was based on the following format. First, the PI provided an overview of the study. Secondly, the PI explained the selection of the qualitative and phenomenological approaches to govern this study. Thirdly, the PI explained the criteria for selecting participants. Fourthly, the PI presented the research questions. Then, the PI released the emerging themes and sub-themes and identified the justifiable literature to support each finding from the study.

Phenomenon Overview

The perceptions of elementary school principals affect teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. The responsibilities of the principal entail power usage. Power played an intricate part when addressing principals and their relation to teachers. Alinsky (1971) shared how the perceptions of power may sometimes be misunderstood because power is not solely what a person has but what the opponent thought the other person had.

From the principals’ perspective, teachers felt principals had the power to abuse rights. The findings of the five participants showed how principals have power, as leaders in elementary schools. Yet, the perception of the principal misinterpreted by teachers depended on how they responded to the symbol of power working on behalf of the principal.

The PI examined interactions between principals and teachers in conflicting situations. From examined interactions, the root of the problem was identified using a qualitative methodology. Qualitative researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) explained how PIs studied things in their ordinary settings; they tried to understand a
phenomenon based on the participants’ statements. Creswell (2007) reported if a problem exists, qualitative methodology is the best suited approach for the problem. Therefore, from a qualitative method, the PI selected the phenomenology approach so that he could hear full statements, scenarios, quotes, and examples from lived experiences of elementary school principals in Virginia.

One of the pioneer researchers in phenomenology, Moustakas (1994), repeatedly encouraged researchers to develop criteria for selecting participants. The PI developed criteria for recruitment and selection were as follows. The criteria included finding participants who had the following experiences:

- An elementary school principal in Virginia for at least one full year.
- An elementary school principal who had experienced at least 10 conflicts with a teacher within a school year.
- An elementary school principal who was English speaking.

In contrast, the PI recruited participants based on criteria who were found ineligible to participate in this study. The PI created ineligible criteria that included:

- An elementary school principal who had been reassigned to another school due to a teacher conflict.
- An elementary school principal who did not have 12 months of consecutive service at the school.
- An elementary school principal who is serving outside the state of Virginia.

The participants were five elementary school principals in Virginia. These five principals reported that overload was a symbol they deal with frequently. These five participants were selected according to the work of Patton (1999), who reported sample
size should be determined by quality of data, as opposed to quantity. Patton encouraged researchers to consider time selected, resources offered, and objectives when selecting participants.

Moustakas (1994) talked extensively about phenomenological approaches designed as question building in nature to give direction and interpretation of a problem. From the selection of five principals, the PI sought to narrow the study to the perceptions of elementary school principals and how these perceptions impact teacher performance and student achievement. In order for the PI to examine the perceptions of principals, developed research questions were used as a guide into investigating the problem.

The PI sought solutions to the phenomenon in elementary schools that stemmed from teacher performance and student achievement indirectly. To find answers to the five research questions, the PI collected data and then analyzed data through an inductive approach (Creswell, 2007). This approach developed categories from data collection of telephone interviews and questionnaires. Due to many categories achieved from the data, the PI collapsed the categories so themes emerged.

After the PI completed an inductive thematic analysis of the data, five themes emerged that clarified the interrelatedness of these categories. Using the constant comparative method throughout the data collection and analysis processes, categories were formed from the first interview. In addition, the PI created more categories based on the second interview. The PI found several more categories from the third interview. From the five research questions, three interviews totaling 777 categories, and five themes emerged.

These five research questions guided the study:
1. How does a principal understand the lived experiences of conflicts among principals and teachers?

2. What explored perceptions of principals impact conflicts among principals and teachers on students?

3. What principal perceptions caused this problem to be overlooked, but achievable to solve with teachers?

4. What negative emotional-based perceptions from the principal affected teacher performance?

5. What knowledge will contribute to addressing conflicts between principals and teachers more effectively?

From these guiding research questions, five themes emerged. The PI determined these five themes relating to principals’ perceptions relating to conflict resolution with teachers in elementary schools:

1. Perceptions Relating to Mindsets towards Teacher Expectations

2. Perceptions Relating to Partiality

3. Perceptions Relating to Priority Exchanging

4. Perceptions Relating to Discipline, and

5. Perceptions Relating to Invisibility.

**Perceptions relating to conceptual mindsets towards teacher expectations.**

The first theme described elements that comprised many sub-themes that were all represented in the statements and scenarios of all participants. From the first major theme, the PI documented several sub-themes that were reoccurring, as it related to RQ1. The major sub-theme was unprofessionalism. The other sub-themes were:
disrespectfulness, lack of instructional training, poor staff development sessions, inadequate mentoring programs, limited incentives, jealousy, school longevity, low student academic performance, culture, climate, teacher morale, and teacher disorganization. Of the five participants, Participant Cna patterned statements that alluded to teacher unprofessionalism, as a factor for teachers having a different mindset towards expectations. The major sub-theme was justified in the literature.

**Unprofessionalism.** Participant Cna had a pattern of challenges from teachers who engaged in unprofessionalism. According to the work of Jarvis (1983), the three competencies of a professional teacher include: accepting the field, implementing procedures, and mindsets. Participant Cna argued that an unprofessional teacher hinders the conflict resolution process in schools; she described teacher who engaged in unprofessionalism:

…A teacher who refuses to admit their wrong in reference to a situation involving a student during recess. Not to admit a wrong is unprofessional.

The PI determined that in order for principals to address teachers from an emotionally healthy perspective, principals provided opportunities for teachers to feel a sense of professionalism, if principals were to hold teachers accountable to expectations. Marzano et al. (2005) summed it up by saying that one teacher engrossed in professionalism had more power to influence student achievement than all school factors united.

**Perceptions relating to partiality.** The second theme described elements that comprised many sub-themes that were all represented in the statements and scenarios of participants. Even though the PI documented several sub-themes, there was one reoccurring sub-theme related to RQ2. The major sub-theme was politics. The other sub-
themes were: favoritism, school committees, divorcees, single teachers, money, education, retirement factor, extra-curricular activities, teacher unions and federations, bi-weekly and quarterly assessment data, personality, principal treats, stubbornness, and absenteeism. Of the five participants, Participant Ana verbalized her understanding of politics in the principal’s realm. The major sub-theme was justified in the literature.

Politics. Participant Ana had ample evidence of politics seen in the role of the principal. The participant narrated her story by showing the power of politics, as a way to succumb to school challenges. According to the work of Yukl (2012), he shared how leadership was a two-fold component: power and influence. Participant Ana had several scenarios that confirmed power and influence as components of a principal. Yukl talked about using both to achieve goals in schools. Through data analysis, the PI understood the role of principal as both administrator and politician. The principal’s perception pertained to a politician was accepted as positive in nature. According to a number of studies (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004; Kolodinsky, Treadway, & Ferris, 2007), political actions in school produced optimal outcomes. Therefore, the PI resolutely stated that in order for principals to address teachers from an emotionally healthy perspective, principals made allowances for teachers based on the political pressures from higher governing authorities within the school district. Pfeffer (1992) reported that a politically driven principal must have skills in school politics to make for a better organization. Participant Ana witnessed politics at school when she narrated this statement:

…When the Superintendent does what is right by the community and does not consider my feelings, this is a sign of politics in action.
Perceptions relating to prioritized exchanging. The third theme described elements that comprised many sub-themes that were all represented in the statements and scenarios of participants. Even though the PI documented several sub-themes, there was one reoccurring sub-theme relating to RQ3. The major sub-theme was immediate demands. The other sub-themes were: student misbehavior, teacher walk outs, disciplinary infractions, parental concerns, central office reports, medical emergencies, teacher absenteeism, staff assaults, student assault, school safety, community violence, parent social needs and concerns, special education needs, conference calls, monitoring instruction, pre and post conferences, and community stakeholders. Of the five participants, Participant Dna had the pattern of statements that alluded to immediate demands so her statement is documented. The major sub-theme was justified in the literature. Participant Dna spoke at length about immediate demands. The following excerpt illustrates it:

…From the time I arrive at work at 8:00 a.m. and the time I leave work at 6:00 p.m. the demands for the job just keep coming in one by one. Seems like it never ends.

Immediate demands. Participant Dna had ongoing statements that spoke to the overload that came with serving as a principal in an elementary school. The study conducted by Sergiovanni (1991) confirmed that statement and claims that a principal’s day is frenetic in nature. If not effectively organized, the principal’s day may easily become out of control due to the burdens, pressure, and anxieties principals confront and contend with during a school day. The PI reported that a principal must know how to juggle the tasks well and not catch the wrong ball at the wrong time. In order for principal
perceptions to be focused on healthy resolution, the PI determined principals must be trained in ranking tasks in importance, as they come simultaneously during the school day at any given time. The principal who places a lowly demanded task over a highly demanded task may suffer even more challenges during the day.

**Perceptions relating to discipline.** The fourth theme described elements that comprised many sub-themes that were all represented in the statements and scenarios of participants. Even though the PI documented several sub-themes, there was one reoccurring sub-theme relating to RQ4. The major sub-theme was teacher empowerment. For example, Participant Ena showed teacher empowerment through these textural statements:

…I am always providing my teachers with options to go and learn more and more as a teacher. If there is a local conference, I encourage my teachers to go. Even if the conference is out of state, I set money aside to allow my teachers to have a few days away from the school to learn best practices. In return, my teachers become empowered.

However, the other sub-themes were: incentive, literacy based training, ongoing staff development sessions, self-esteem, tolerance, forgiveness, patience, longsuffering, sensitivity, understanding medical conditions, empathy, state mandated initiatives, community theft, community vandalism, community robberies, gang development, and job corps. Of the five participants, Participant Ena had the pattern of statements that alluded to teacher empowerment so her statement was documented. The major sub-theme was justified in the literature.
Teacher empowerment. Participant Ena had many scenarios that spoke to teacher empowerment. According to the work of Taylor and Tashakkori (1997), the greatest teacher makes decisions. The PI found the power to make decisions is not as simple as it may seem if the teacher worked with a principal with unregulated and unhealthy emotional intelligence. The principal’s perception was that of teacher empowerment regardless of the emotionality state of the principal. Wu and Short (1996) exclaimed that principals’ role is that of providing professional development opportunities, nurturing, and creating an environment that encouraged competence and ability.

Invisibility. The fifth theme described elements that comprised many sub-themes that were all represented in the statements and scenarios of participants. Even though the PI documented lived experiences of all five participants, there was one reoccurring sub-theme relating to RQ5 that stood out with Participant Bna. The emerging theme led to a sub-theme named mental mediation. The other sub-themes included, but were not limited to: inconsistency, ineffectiveness, lack of measurement tools, bias towards existing models, innovation, reliability factor, teacher buy in, program verses lifestyle, loopholes, cost effective, politics, hierarchy allegiance, varied school mission, interpretation of discipline data, less alternatives, and limited resources. The major sub-theme was justified in the literature.

Mental mediation. Participant Bna had a pattern of challenges from school principals who faced mediation. All five principals saw themselves in the role of a mediator all day long. Heystek (2007) explained how the principal is a manager of interpersonal relations. The PI collected data that lent itself to a mentally finding solution
to address interpersonal issues, as opposed to a concrete conflict resolution model.

Principals could not mediate based on a physical model. Rather the PI found that the principals thought through an invisible lens model, so thinking “on your feet and on the spot” was the perceived model. The principal’s perception pertaining to mental mediation was characteristic of principals’ performance without leaning towards a concrete model for direction. Literature supported principals serving as mediators. There was a clear alignment between the literature and the statements and scenarios of all participants (5/5). Ample attention and training was given to mediation just as equally as instruction in order for principals to succeed in conflict resolution. Spillane, White, and Stephan (2009) spoke unequivocally that principals on the job did not fix or pass blame for mistakes that teachers made, but principals capitalized on finding solutions to the problems.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study used two primary theories. The first theory was systems. The second theory was social constructionism. There were two secondary theories used to justify the statements and scenarios of the participants. The secondary theories used were symbolic interactionism and functionalism. Each theory was used to confirm and understand the phenomenon more explicitly that was generated from the problem in elementary schools involving student achievement.

These two primary theories were designed to shape mindsets and to give participants and the PI guidance. According to King and Frich (2000), schools could not redesign without the input of systems theory. During all stages of data analysis, the PI used systems theory to comprehend the challenges associated with understanding principals’ perceptions. The systems theory gave redesigning options to provide
regulation in overcoming the challenge of principal performance that affects academic performance indirectly. From the findings, it was deep-rooted that principals looked at issues with teachers in isolation, but principals bridge the isolated problems with a picture of the whole. Systems theory was the catalyst to help principals accomplish the task.

Social constructionism was a well-matched theory with this study because it allowed the PI to put information from the participants into categories. With at least four hours of interviews per participant, the PI gathered a minimum of 20 hours of textural transcriptions. The PI determined the necessary data to remove because some of the data were not needed to better interpret the phenomenon. However, the PI included the social and communication aspects of the data. In this study, this theory credited the belief system in how important communication from the participants is to data collection. Gibson and Brown (2009) reported how the PI concentrated on special features in the statements shared by participants. The social aspect of the participants created large portions of the data to create categories.

Symbolic interactionism was used in data collection when finding a theory to confirm the behavior of the participants. The main reason for selecting this theory was to bring awareness to the overlooked symbols that principals show as forms of communication but are overlooked. These symbols are the true intent and reality of the heart. For example, the participants shared several symbols, such as but not limited to: pressure, headache, stress, weight loss, and weight gain. These were all symbols of which communication was obtained. This theory gave revelation of what spoken words could not reveal in the data.
Symbolic interactionism. Mead (1938) shared how people connected meanings to symbols. Pressure, mental overload, and exhaustion were symbols cited by participants. From these symbols meaning evolved. This meaning impacted the perceptions principals brought to conflict resolution development. Applying the theory of symbolic interactionism in elementary schools by principals created healthy resolution systems between principals and teachers.

Each participant gave an excerpt addressing symbolic interactionism. Both their symbols and textural words were narrated below in the transcriptions. Participant Ana labeled one of her principal symbols as stress. She narrated:

…There is a lot to do in so little time. I am the type of principal that I do not turn in any reports late. I handle every situation that comes my way with a sense of urgency. By doing so, it leads to stress. My staff is all women this year and a lot of schools seek males in their elementary schools to be able to handle the challenging male student behaviors. At one time, I use to stress about that, but not now. I use to stress about substitutes not showing up, but now I cover classes, just like a substitute would do. This position has taught me how to adapt my leadership to whatever the need is for the day. In so doing, it can become very stressful as the principal.

Participant Bna identified one of her principal symbols as regret. She narrated:

…There was a time when a faculty member wanted to call for a staff prayer. But, before I could get to the faculty member who was leading the prayer, the prayer had already happened. I did not want to pull the dignity away from what the teachers wanted to do. But, I had to remember there were one Jehovah Witness
teacher present and one Jewish teacher present. Based on previous spirituality conversations with these two teachers, I knew they would not feel comfortable being a part of the faculty prayer. However, those two teachers joined in the prayer so they would not feel isolated. As the principal, I carried the regret around for a while because I felt I failed in my allegiance to those teachers who had different spiritual persuasions from the majority of the staff. I regretted that I could not get to the prayer initiator and I regretted I allowed that prayer vigil to happen on my watch as the principal. I still have foreshadowing thoughts about that today.

Participant Cna identified one of her principal symbols as insecurity. She narrated:

…I always need my boss to affirm what I am doing is right. Because wisdom is a big part of leadership, I want to make sure that I am making the right wisdom decision when dealing with teachers. I did not bring every situation to my boss because I did not want to be a pest so I ranked in importance those items I needed to run by my boss to ensure that I was making the best wisdom call as principal.

Participant Dna talked about secrecy as her principal symbol. She narrated:

…I put out a lot of small fires concerning teachers that no one knows about but me and the teacher. I really work hard not to allow another teacher to find out what has happened. I handle the “small fires” before they become a big school-wide issue. For instance, some teachers become offended when I say something to them in terms of not holding up best practices. Instead of the teacher coming to me, the teacher goes and shares the offense with another teacher. Then, the other teacher comes to me. Afterwards, I have to reverse and turn the offense around so
that it will not spread and affect other teachers in the building. This is all done without people knowing what is going on in the school.

Participant Ena referred to “stage fear” as her principal symbol. She narrated:

...I spend my day when a conflict happens or is about to happen fearing what might happen if I do not intercept in time so I get the teacher away from where the situation may become a scene. In essence, I call it, “getting the teacher off stage.” This is a hidden characteristic that no one knows I deal with but me. Neither have I received training on how to deal with these situations. No one knows the stress that comes along with keeping teachers off stage. But, I believe this is a good stress investment to not cause a conflict to escalate and other teachers to become emotionally wounded. Through trial and error, I learned how not to allow the hidden symbols associated with the principal’s role affect my interactions and perspective concerning teachers in my school.

A principal’s interactions in schools come with many different symbols. Principals, at times, violate teachers in the process due to the symbols of: pressure from assessments, mental overload stemming from multi-issues of parents, students, and teachers, and exhaustion from extended work hours and weekend responsibilities. From these symbols principals must develop a system of priority exchanging. In order for teachers to obtain buy-in, teachers must feel that their time in the classroom with students will not be robbed and/or taken away for mere fact of an unforeseen situation that occurred. Blumer (1969) shares how people respond towards symbols.

**Functionalism.** Functionalism theory was unequivocally important too. This theory showed how each part of a principal’s performance was interdependent upon it
being made a whole in relation to the overall productivity of a school. This theory allowed the participants to see how their livelihood as principal was dependent upon the performance of teachers. A teacher with poor teacher performance affected the overall productivity of the principal.

According to Merton (1934), each part of a person’s life is interdependent upon it being used as a whole. The PI echoed the words of Merton by providing at least 25 hours per month encouraging and inspiring teachers. One major duty of the PI was to enforce teacher empowerment among teachers. For example, while serving as principal and the general overseer for instruction, the PI observed teacher strengths and weakness in the classroom. One instance the PI recalled was when a third grade teacher was teaching communication skills to a group of eight year olds and the PI observed the teacher needed assistance. As principal, the PI provided the following: 1:1 support, staff development, ongoing workshops, mentorship, and teacher modeling. In essence the teacher was dependent upon the principal and the principal was dependent upon the teacher. During functionalism, the PI served as a catalyst to provide instructional resources, strategies, and techniques to support teachers with all student learning modalities. The principal provided staff development for teacher weaknesses, and in return the teacher provided better instruction for students to increase achievement. Principals held the quality of instruction as top priority by guiding teachers. The effect would be teachers who made contributions as a whole to society. The functionalism state of principals impacted many areas, such as: ongoing quality instruction, better teacher performance, high school climate sustainability, decreased daily discipline referrals, and parent complaints.
Participant Ena narrated how she implemented functionalism in her school on a daily basis. The narration is shared below with a teacher who dealt with priority exchanging through functionalism:

Principal had a very aggressive teacher and was goal oriented. The teacher did not like meeting the objectives stated in the lesson plan. Normally, if the teacher could not meet objectives, the teacher would become very impatient with students and become very picky as a teacher. The teacher priority was teaching the lesson and student behavior was secondary. The student caused the teacher to exchange his priorities. Instead the teacher had to focus on student behavior first and instruction secondly. The teacher became furious with the student and the teacher eventually lost control and yelled at the student and said, “Get out!” The student left and roamed the hallways. I ran into the student asked why he was on the hall. The student shared the scenario. I encouraged the teacher not to put a child out without another adult transferring the student to the appropriate place. I provided the teacher with options for his aggression. Additionally, I coached the teacher in pacing himself better to ensure fulfillment of his lessons. In essence, this is what occurred: the teacher provided instruction, but did not respond to the student’s behavioral needs appropriately. The principal provided one to one coaching on dealing with students with discipline concerns. In return the teacher was able to keep his job, not have parent complaints, not have to contact Social Services for a missing child, and allow the student to maximize instructional time in class.

These theories were well-suited for this study. These theories assisted in understanding the phenomenon. The two primary theories and two secondary theories all
were congruent for the type of study that was completed. Based on the data generated from this study, the PI did not suggest using other theories, as alternatives to these theories used in this study.

**Methodology Implications**

This study presented a few implications from the phenomenological methodology concerning principal perceptions. Of the many different methodologies, the qualitative approach worked best because the PI not only enumerated the data, but also fractured the data (Moustakas, 1994). Secondly, through the phenomenological methodology, the participants shared their experiences and ranked those experiences in significance. Then, from enumerating the data, the participants classified their real life experiences with teachers into parts and isolated incidents.

Another benefit to using the phenomenological methodology was the constant comparison component. Due to the vast number of scenarios and experiences that often happened with the participants, the PI read, interpreted, and reread textural transcriptions to get a clear and accurate account of what the participant experienced during the time of the phenomenon. The more the participants shared about their experiences, the more new and surprising information was revealed. For example, Participant Dna shared a scenario and from her initial collection of data; she shared these statements:

…Looking for conflict resolution models was a difficult task for me. We do not talk about these in our leadership meetings.

These statements led the PI to further extend the ideology of the phenomenon revealed through data collection. As the PI added the new data to the data collection system, new categories developed from the new information.
A third benefit to the PI selecting the phenomenological study was the ability to cross-validate findings (Moustakas, 1994). The participants gave multiple accounts of experiences they endured. The PI was able to collect information, but the PI was also able to gain a new perspective about the problem from added statements in data collection. Through cross-validation, the PI was able to consider data omission for collected information that was irrelevant, and the PI was able to detect inconsistencies from the statements, which caused gaps in the data. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2001), secondary analysis is ideal for the PI. Therefore, by the PI engaging in cross-validation, the PI was able to detect early at the onset any data that were not substantial to include in analysis for emerging themes.

In addition, the qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach was the most suitable approach because the PI selected a small sample size. The small population size was encouraged by Polkinghorne (1989) who reported phenomenological approaches may have a participant range of 5-25. This small size allowed the PI to have more personal dialogue with the participants. Furthermore, the PI used the small sample size to engage in telephone interviewing as a mechanism for data collection. In-depth telephone interviewing was used to capture valuable statements and scenarios for data collection.

The PI affirmed that five major themes emerged from examining the problem from a qualitative approach and phenomenological methodology. Even though there are quantitative and mixed method approaches for studies, the qualitative method approaches studies from an empirical perspective (Eco, 1994). The findings of this study were not only confirmed by four theories, but also by the verifiable experiences of the five
participants. To summarize, the four theories along with the lived experiences of five participants validated and made this study credible.

**Recommendations**

From a dual perspective as conflict analyst and school principal, the PI made the following recommendations in the area of social science based on this study per each research question:

1. It would be beneficial for principals to create a revolving system for teachers. The purpose would be to eliminate the possibility of teacher longevity, which was one of the factors of teacher insubordination. This revolving system for teachers would allow a teacher not to remain in one school or grade level for more than five years. (RQ1)

2. Due to the political aspect of serving as principal, it would be advantageous to train principals in how to reverse their unhealthy emotions when they sense a school bias or power struggle in the resolution process. The purpose would be to dissolve a principal’s mental stronghold pertaining to responding unfavorably to teachers or other stakeholders. Training for principals would allow a principal to learn options, as alternatives to emotional regulation, as opposed to acting aggressively towards teachers. (RQ2)

3. While principals have a set of ongoing, immediate demands, it may be valuable to implement a “principal buddy” system. The point of this system would be to have a second person of equal authority to assist the principal. This buddy system is designed so the principal may relinquish immediate demands or rotate serious demands during the day to another principal with
equal accountability to prevent mental overload, which leads to priority exchanging. Due to the fact the teachers do not see the assistant principal or vice principal as the administrator of equal authority, it would be beneficial to develop a principal buddy system to reduce the daily operating and teacher demands in an elementary school. (RQ3)

4. A useful idea may be to develop a daily incentive-based program for teachers. As principals work with teachers who instruct students in high risk school populations, teachers tend to become less tolerable, patient, and longsuffering with students, as the day progresses. These intolerance teacher behaviors are manifested towards the building principal. As a result of teacher overload during the day, at times, teachers’ self-esteem and self-worth diminishes because of students’ disrespect and failure to comply with school rules and regulations. Therefore, principals must re-empower teachers with tangible incentive ideas, such as gift cards, gas cards, lunch vouchers, out of town professional development opportunities, etc., to decrease teacher resignation, burn-out, and teacher retaliation towards the principal. The option of yearly and monthly incentives is not frequent enough in nature. With the stress that comes along with teaching at risk students daily, a teacher incentive-based program is ideal. (RQ4)

5. Even though principals mediate using an imperceptible model for conflict resolution, it may be profitable to invest in a principal beeper device. The rationale behind purchasing a beeper device would be to allow each principal to have the beeper either in the pocket or attached to clothing. Periodically,
the principal’s beeper would go off silently every 30 minutes during the work
day. Every 30 minutes the principal would be alarmed to adhere to a concrete
model for conflict resolution, if a possible conflict originates. Even though
principals use invisible resolution and mediation systems with minimal
success, the principals should consider using research based conflict models to
help decrease negative principal emotions that arise from poor principal to
teacher interactions. Additionally, a beeper system would devise an
accountability system for leaders in any organizational sector world-wide for
emotional intelligence monitoring. (RQ5)

**Recommendations for Improving Future Research for this Study**

1. The Principal Investigator recommended not having only one gender
   represented as participants in data collection, as this study focused only on
   woman as the participants.

2. The Principal Investigator recommends using former principals in addition to
current principals, as this study solely analyzed data perspectives from current
principals. This limited the data collection in terms of hearing different
perspectives.

3. The Principal Investigator recommends including varied forms of data for
collection, such as: observations, documents, and audiovisual materials, as
opposed to the data source of this study, which were questionnaires and
telephone interviews.

4. The Principal Investigator recommends using cross tabulations through a table
to count the frequency of categorical conflicts happening involving principal
and teacher, as opposed to this study using mainly textural and structural statements (Creswell, 2007) and scenarios as the primary source of data collection without sighting frequencies of conflicting situations.

5. The Principal Investigator recommends incorporating a peer review validation strategy instead of solely using triangulation, as a validation source. The peer review would enable the PI to have his work honestly judged for methodology, meanings, interpretations, and emotional intelligence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

6. The Principal Investigator recommends initiating an external audit, as this study solely relied on the PI examination of the process for assessing accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of all data collection.

7. The Principal Investigator recommends implemented action research as a futuristic study. Masters (1995) speaks about four fold plans for studying a phenomenon to include: reflecting, planning, acting, and observing. The PI suggests participants not only reflect, plan, and act upon strategies to improve and fix the problem, but also have time to observe the strategies with the participants together to see any optimal effects of the plan.

Conclusion

As the Principal Investigator, the textural descriptions of the narrations based on experiences containing all possibilities within the reach of the five participants led to a greater sense of the phenomenon. This study gave awareness to the hidden problem that occurs in elementary schools governing principal and teacher interactions in the conflict resolution process. Furthermore, this research study accented the phenomenon as it
related to: 1) the origin of conflicts with principals and teachers, 2) the challenges faced by principals, 3) the overlooked factors linked to a principal’s problems, 4) the regulation of the principal’s emotional intelligence that impacts teacher performance, and 5) the evaluation of existing models for principal usage in working through the conflict process with teachers.

Through the five guided research questions mentioned by every facet of the study, the PI obtained a wealth of documented experiences from the five principals. From each research question, the root of the problem was uncovered by the participants. To this resolve, the PI cited recommendations for each research question for futuristic contributions to both the field of conflict resolution, as well as principals who lead elementary schools in Virginia. Ultimately, this study created a picture of the lived experiences of five principals. From these documented lived experiences of five principals, the pursuit of healthier teacher performance hopefully was formulated to impact student learning.
References


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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Consent Form

Adult/General Informed Consent

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled: “Elementary Principals’ Perceptions on Conflict with Teachers in Virginia: A Phenomenological Study.”

Funding Source: None
IRB Protocol #

Principal Investigator
Daryl C. Roselle, Ph.D. Candidate
Post Office Box 12
Carson, Virginia 23830
757-241-0268

Co-Investigator
Jason J. Campbell, Ph.D.
3301 College Avenue
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33314
800-541-6682

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369 or Toll Free (866) 499-0790

What is the study about?
The purpose of this study is to examine whether elementary principals in Virginia, who lead by their negative emotions, while addressing conflicts, has a direct correlation to teacher performance in the classroom with children. If so, then teacher performance in the classroom links itself to student achievement in a school. One major effect from this problem is the indirect negative impact teacher performance has on student achievement. A new theory will be created to teach and train elementary principals in how to overcome their negative emotions when dealing with school conflict, so that a principal’s behavior will not impact teacher performance, which ultimately affects student achievement in Virginia.

Why are you asking me?
The PI is asking the participant to participate because you are an elementary principal in Virginia with at least 12 months of experience as an administrator. Also, within your span as an elementary principal you have experienced at least 10 teacher/principal conflicts. There are five other elementary principals who are participating in this study as well. However, the participants will not in any wise meet, converse, or meet with the other participants, neither will the other participants know of your experiences as it relates to this topic.

What will I be doing, if I select to participate in this study?
The PI will guide the participant through every step of the process. The PI will not pressure or make the participant feel threaten to complete the complete study. At any time, if the participant feels led to withdraw from the study, the participant can do so freely. If the participant selects to complete the study, he or she will:
Step 1: Opt to take the questionnaire individually and personally or with me in interview format. The questionnaire or survey will not exceed 90 minutes. The information must be returned to the investigator within 14 days of receiving the document. Responses may be emailed to the investigator.

Step 2: Engage in a conference call to explain the questionnaire if the participant desires clarity.

Step 3: Participate in a scheduled interview. The PI will conduct the interview, and the PI will transcribe the interview.

Step 4: Read the data notes printed in hard copy form and given to the participant to verify its validity and accuracy of his or her statements.

Step 5: Wait for the PI to collect the data and review the data to determine if the questionnaire has been completed in its entirety and that no questions were unanswered. If questions were unanswered by the participant, then a justifiable reason was given by the participant as to his or her rationale.

Step 6: Give the PI time to analyze the data.

Step 7: Participate in a follow-up meeting with the PI to further explain any statements that may need additional information or deem confusing when PI begins transcribing.

Step 8: Read the finalized hard copy printout of the participant responses. The participant will initial the finalized copy as to their agreement with the responses.

Is there any audio or video recording?
Your responses as a participant will not be videoed or recorded by the PI or anyone else. A disclaimer will be given to the participant as to the PI not recording any aspect of the study.

What are the dangers to me?
This study is not different from any other study conducted. There is a very minimal amount of risk involved as a participant. Yet, the small risk is not reckoned to cause embarrassment, discomfort or harm. There may be unknown or unforeseen risk to this study that I am aware of as the PI. Yet, as the PI, I am determined to monitor and oversee the duration of the study to ensure that a breach in the participant's confidentiality or privacy is not leaked, whereby an irresponsible risk is witnessed by the participant on behalf of the PI. To this resolve, the PI will secure and protect the participant with fidelity by the following:

Confidentiality: The use of pseudonyms will be used to protect the participants throughout the duration of the study. Documents will be kept in a secured locked cabinet. Only the PI will have access to the cabinet. Even though, the participants data will remain active for three years, the PI will secure all documents within 30 days of the completion of the study.

Privacy: If at any time a participant does not feel led to share a response to a question, he or she will not be pressured into a response. Neither will the participant be made to feel guilty or ashamed. The participant will at no time feel compelled to reveal information that is dear to the heart of the participant. While information is being shared at the follow-up session on Conference Call, the PI will be in a closed room so that the risk of eavesdropping will not occur. If the session is held is at the Petersburg Public Library, a secured room will be used to
converse. This will be an enclosed you for the participant and the PI.

**How will you keep my information private?**
The PI will do all within his power not to make careless mistakes to leak the participant information for simply negligence. Therefore, maintaining the participant’s confidentiality will be of most importance to the study. The PI will not use his participants name unless given permission to do, except on consenting information with the permissive signature of the participant. The PI will not use any information that is or may be linked to the information. Only pseudonyms will be used in place of a real name to protect the identity of the person. All information in this study is of uttermost confidential unless exposed and required by the federal law. As a student at Nova Southeastern University, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may at any time review in records pertaining to the intent of this study.

**What if I want to leave the study?**
This study is strictly voluntarily done. If at any time during the study, the participants would like to withdraw him or herself from the study, he or she can do so. There will not be any adverse affects due to the participant withdrawing from the study. Additionally, there will not be any loss of benefits to the participants. At the point the participant withdraws from the study, the participant’s information will not in any way be used in the findings of the dissertation. However, as with participants who complete the study, the participant who does not complete the study information collected will be kept in the secured place for three years, in addition to the time it takes the PI to complete the data collection or any other process of what the dissertation will entail. Even though the participant has withdrawn from the study, the PI will communicate via email or telephone conversation the completion of the study.

**Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?**
There are not any direct benefits from this study.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**
Participants will be given a $25 gift card from Wal-mart for completing the study. If the participant’s does not complete the study, then he or she will not be given the $25 gift card. Reimbursement will not be given to participants. The participant will not have to pay any money up front or initially to complete the study.

**Voluntary Consent by the Participant:**

Your signature below means that you agree to:
- This study has been explained to you as the participant.
- The participant has read this document or this document has been read to you.
- The participant questions, if any, about this research study has been answered.
- As the participant been told you may ask the PI any study related questions in the future or contact the PI in the event of a research-related injury.
- Having the right to ask the IRB any questions or concerns you have concerning the participants’ participation rights.
- Having a copy of all the forms the participants have signed.
- Participant voluntary desires to participate in the study titled, “Elementary Principals’ Perceptions on Conflict with Teachers in Virginia: A Phenomenological Study.”
Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date __________

Participant’s Printed Name ____________________________ Date __________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: ____________________________

Date: ____________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Section I: The Origin of Conflict (Addressing RQ1)
A. Name a specific location in a school where a conflict started due to a negative emotion.
B. In a school setting, name a specific time when a conflict started from a negative emotion outbreak.
C. Describe a specific situation during the school day when a dispute evolved.
D. In a conflicting situation whereby the issue was not resolved and the outcome of the parties talking led to negative emotions during the conflict resolution process, what caused the conflict from either de-escalating or reaching resolution?
E. If the conflict was not resolved, how was the unresolved conflict handled?

Section II: Conflict and the Negative Emotion Variable (Addressing RQ2)
A. Have you faced a conflict whereby you showed negative emotions in the conflict resolution process? If so, name each specific emotion.
B. Describe a situation when a conflict started and positive emotions were expressed in the conflict resolution process.
C. Explain a conflict situation that led you to act out anger, however, you overcame the anger emotion and acted in the opposite disposition of what the other participants were expecting.
D. Name a moment, if a time existed, when you expressed anger in the conflict resolution process, but had justifiable reason for your anger.
E. How did the negative emotion initially enter the conflict resolution process?
Section III: Conflict and the Interactions with Others (Addressing RQ3)
A. Describe a situation when anger or another negative emotion was the main variable in a teacher/principal conflict or dispute.
B. Tell a time when a conflict started between teacher/principal and positive emotions were a part of the conflict resolution process.
C. Talk about a time when others thought your anger or any negative emotions in the conflict resolution process was not accepted by other personnel in the school or community.
D. Describe your preferred approach when dealing with party members who enter the conflict resolution process at the beginning with negative emotions.

Section IV: Conflict and Outcomes (Addressing RQ4)
A. When anger or negative emotions appeared in the conflict resolution process, discuss the specific outcome: resolution, de-escalation, or no resolution reached?
B. What were the next steps when resolution was not reached in the process?
C. After party members conversed about a situation and resolution was not reached, did any retaliation ideas enter your mind? If so, name and discuss each retaliation idea.
D. List obstacles that prevented resolution.
E. How did anger or any other negative emotion ruin the conflict resolution process?

Section V: Conflict Resolution Options (Addressing RQ5)
A. What did you do to fix the negative emotion variable in the conflict resolution process?
B. What new emotions, negative or positive, evolved from not reaching resolution?
C. When negative emotions, anger, sadness, and frustration became a part of the conflict resolution process, what plan did you put in place not to repeat these negative emotions from entering the next conflict?