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Teacher Attrition Rates in a Large Urban Elementary School in the Southeastern United States

Yvonne Joy Russ
Nova Southeastern University, yvonneterrace44@gmail.com

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Teacher Attrition Rates in a Large Urban Elementary School in the
Southeastern United States

by
Yvonne Joy Russ

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Yvonne Joy Russ under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Hardwick Smith Johnson, EdD
Committee Chair

Katrina Pann, PhD
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD
Dean

Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

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Yvonne Joy Russ

Name

April 10, 2023

Date

Abstract

Teacher Attrition Rates in a Large Urban Elementary School in the Southeastern United States. Yvonne Joy Russ, 2023: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: teacher attrition, teacher burnout, teacher turnover, self-efficacy, motivation

Educational organizations were experiencing increasing teacher attrition rates, thereby impacting teacher self-efficacy, workplace continuity, and student achievement levels. With this national crisis unfolding, schools struggled to recruit and retain high-quality teachers necessary for organizational success and student mastery of standards-based instruction. The increasing levels of teacher attrition were affecting both novice and veteran schoolteachers. The purpose of this applied dissertation was to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as identify retention strategies to employ. Scholarly research on the topic of teacher attrition highlighted factors and issues related to this dilemma; however, a limited amount of research was available regarding health issues encountered by teachers in the field as a result of other teachers exiting and fewer numbers of replacement teachers entering the classrooms.

The qualitative research approach facilitated the exploration of participant perspectives of experiences related to increasing teacher attrition rates. The study was conducted utilizing a phenomenological research design with in-depth interviews. Research participants included seven teachers and two administrators staffed in an urban Title I elementary school. For Research Question 1, factors emerged that teachers and administrators perceived contributed to the number of teachers who left their positions at the urban elementary school. Examples of factors included teachers no longer felt they were making a difference in educating students, insufficient salaries for working long hours, and coping with paperwork demands from the state.

For Research Question 2, factors emerged that teachers and administrators perceived might decrease the number of teachers who left their positions at the urban elementary school. Some of the factors were positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership, as well as respect and admiration for work and sacrifices of teachers. For Research Question 3, participants reported stress influenced teacher attrition rates in a variety of ways, such as a stressful negative school atmosphere that led to unhappy teachers and trickled down to severe classroom problems with students. Nonschool-related teachers' hobbies and leisure activities alleviated stress with enhancement of the physical health and mental health of teachers.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
The Research Problem	2
Background and Justification.....	3
Deficiencies in the Evidence.....	4
Audience	5
Setting of the Study.....	5
Researcher’s Role	6
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
Introduction.....	8
Theoretical Framework	8
Historical Background	9
Prevalence of Teacher Attrition	11
Factors Contributing to Increased Teacher Attrition Rates	14
Issues Created by Increased Teacher Attrition Rates.....	23
Factors Resulting From Increased Teacher Attrition Rates.....	25
Attempts to Resolve Teacher Attrition	28
Research Questions	38
Chapter 3: Methodology	39
Aim of the Study.....	39
Qualitative Research Approach	39
Participants.....	41
Data Collection and Instruments.....	42
Procedures.....	45
Data Analysis	47
Ethical Considerations	49
Trustworthiness	50
Potential Research Bias.....	50
Chapter 4: Results	52
Introduction.....	52
Participants.....	53
Data Analysis for Research Question 1	54
Data Analysis for Research Question 2	61
Data Analysis for Research Question 3	68
Chapter 5: Discussion	76
Introduction.....	76
Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 1	77
Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 2.....	78
Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 3.....	80

Meaning, Understanding, Relevancy, and Significance	81
Implications.....	83
Recommendations for Change and Future Research Inquiry	87
Limitations	92
Conclusions and Reflections.....	92
References.....	95
Appendices	
A Table of Specifications.....	108
B Interview Protocol.....	111
Tables	
1 Factors That Contribute to Teachers' Attrition.....	56
2 Factors That Decrease Number of Teachers Leaving the Profession	62
3 Influence of Stress on Teachers' Attrition Rate.....	69

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study involved increasing teacher attrition rates in a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States. According to a local school administrator (personal communication, April 20, 2021), teacher retention was becoming a rising concern, as teacher turnover rates were 12% between fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019. The current principal at the research site started leadership duties while teacher turnover was at 34% during fiscal year 2019. Equally important, data from the state department of education revealed that, across a 5-year span ranging from fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2021, the target research site reached a rate of 34% teacher turnover rate in fiscal year 2017 and again in fiscal year 2019.

Further, it was rapidly becoming a global issue causing educational institutions to grapple with the loss of high-quality educators and ever-widening gaps in student achievement gains (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017). At the outset, teachers entered the teaching profession prepared to offer students learning opportunities necessary for advancement in today's ever-changing society. Educational leaders then had a responsibility to nurture and grow teachers as part of the school's organizational mission and vision to reach the highest student achievement (Harris et al., 2019). Nonetheless, teachers were discovering several harsh realities that exist in today's teaching workforce. As such, teachers were encountering difficulties with student motivation, student behavior, administrative support, and building organizational interpersonal relationships (Hanks et al., 2020; Moser & McKim, 2020).

In addition, the number of qualified teachers in the profession was diminishing, with an unequal percentage of teachers entering the workforce as replacements (Hanks et

al., 2020). Kamrath and Bradford (2020) further expressed those teachers encountered insufficient administrative support, low salary, and a lack of proper preparation to successfully perform in the classroom. In recent years, much research had been done to analyze teacher attrition rates and formulate strategic plans to retain quality teachers (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Hammonds, 2017; Reitman & Karge, 2019). However, previous studies did not indicate the source of increasing teacher attrition at the research site. Teacher attrition rates at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States were increasing.

The Research Problem

The success of educational organizations was due to the retention of qualified teachers working collaboratively with a cohesive staff and toward a shared educational mission and vision. Therefore, teacher attrition was a major hindrance to this endeavor (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017). With this, it was imperative to gain research-based insight into this teaching crisis. During the research study, teacher attrition rates at the target research site were addressed. Harris et al. (2019) postulated that teachers experienced elevated levels of dissatisfaction in several areas concerning working conditions. Hence, teachers' perceptions of workplace conditions contributed toward growing numbers of teachers considering leaving the teaching profession (Harris et al., 2019). Likewise, frustration caused by teacher attrition was apportioned by stakeholders involved in the educational scene, as Torenbeek and Peters (2017) revealed that "the loss of experienced teachers was disadvantageous when teachers leave their teaching post" (p. 398).

As such, teachers and students lost continuity during the academic school year, leaving staff members rapidly scrambling to fill in gaps for the loss of qualified exiting teachers. Furthermore, this was an international problem worthy of dedicated research

efforts to help minimize this growing predicament. To illustrate, Torenbeek and Peters (2017) shared that teacher retention and development was vital to enabling countries to compete in economic standings. Highly educated students increased the ability for countries to participate in “top world economics” (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017, p. 397). Teacher impact on high-achieving students had been reported to “impact differences between student learning 20% and 30%” (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017, p. 397). Together with this, teacher retention was critical to ensure the highest student learning potential necessary to compete in top global economic rankings.

Background and Justification

A representative from the human resources department indicated teacher turnover was evident at the research site. Together with this, this researcher intended to conduct research on teacher attrition at a localized public school with teacher turnover rates at 12% spanning between fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019. Moreover, the current principal at the research site started leadership duties while teacher turnover was at 34% during fiscal year 2019. Equally important, state department of education data revealed that, across a 5-year span ranging from fiscal year 2017 to fiscal year 2021, the research site reached a rate of 34% teacher turnover rate in fiscal year 2017 and again in fiscal year 2019.

The study was important to the success and forward momentum of recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers. With this, today’s educational systems needed to retain teachers and strove to find ways to prevent teacher attrition (Beck et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Rasanen et al., 2020; Wronowski, 2018). Notably, the teacher shortage in the United States had been reported to include teacher attrition with inadequate teacher recruitment and increasingly high student enrollment as further setbacks to resolving

teacher shortage (Hanks et al., 2020). Specifically, up-to-date trends indicated that the United States had experienced a 12% decrease in public school teachers spanning from 1999-2000 to 2017-2018 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

Hanks et al. (2020) stated that efforts by state officials and policy makers to raise teacher qualifications and teaching standards had been disadvantageous, leading to “unintended problematic consequences” (p. 116). Likewise, local indications of teacher shortages revealed a differential of 2,129 fewer full-time elementary teachers in local elementary schools spanning across the academic calendar years dating from 2017-2018 to 2020-2021 (Florida Department of Education, 2022). Activity assignments across the localized state indicated 802 fewer total instructional teachers from fiscal year 2018-2019 to fiscal year 2020-2021 (Florida Department of Education, 2022). Furthermore, experienced teachers withdrawing from the teaching profession triggered a loss of “departure years of experience” (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017, p. 398) and a loss to the investment to the overall organization. Hence, today’s educational systems need to retain teachers and strive to find ways to prevent teacher attrition.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

Although much research had been conducted on teacher attrition due to workplace conditions (Ansley et al., 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019; DeMatthews et al., 2022; Shuls & Flores, 2020), there was a gap in the literature that addressed specific health-related issues. Work stress negatively correlated to teacher attrition; thus, teachers performing at low didactical levels had been reported to have perceived control as a personal factor (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017). Together with this, Torenbeek and Peters (2017) shared that there was a gap in scholarly research with a need for more investigation concerning personal resources because this contributed to

teacher attrition by means of the negative impact of job demands and teacher resources. Few studies have focused on stress-related issues. Research from Toropova et al. (2021) highlighted teachers' dissatisfaction with working conditions leading to job-related stress and teacher burnout. With this, Toropova et al. determined that an increase in job satisfaction contributed to a healthier work environment. Unlike Toropova et al., Claffin et al. (2019) found comparable results with stress-related issues, as findings indicated that work interference with family produced elevated levels of stress, leading to potential teacher turnover.

Audience

The study appealed to a range of people, including teachers, administrators, and school board members. As the research study was read, the impact of work conditions and health-related variables enlightened and benefited audience members, providing meaningful insights on this growing critical issue. Although teachers had noble intentions to enter a learning organization with teacher skills and acquired knowledge to foster student learning that provided growth and student advancement, adverse job-related work issues prevented teachers from maximizing their full teaching potential (Dupriez et al., 2016; Hanks et al., 2020; Harris et al., 2019). Administrators benefited from reading this study, as school leaders possessed immense responsibilities to cultivate and maintain high-quality teachers. Herein, school board members found value in reading this research study concerning teachers who were experiencing a range of workplace issues, lack of administrative and emotional support, lack of adequate salary compensation, and increased work expectations.

Setting of the Study

The research site was located within a large urban area hosting a school

community with prekindergarten to Grade 5 students in attendance residing from two local cities. As such, research happened at a local public urban elementary school in the southeastern region of the United States. The learning institution served approximately 948 students in prekindergarten to fifth grade with 65 teachers on staff. Currently, nine teachers were teaching out of field, and eight of those nine were lacking in the out-of-field subject area specified as English as a second language endorsement. This study was conducted with a student population that was racially mixed and socioeconomically disadvantaged, thus earning the designation of a Title I school. The ethnicity breakdown was as follows: (a) White: 51%, (b) Hispanic: 34%, (c) Black: 8%, (d) two or more races: 5%, and (e) Asian: 2%. There was a heavy influx of teacher and administrator turnover as the school was positioned in a challenging school environment.

Researcher's Role

The researcher was a first-grade classroom teacher at a primary educational institution in this district. Classroom teacher responsibilities included standard content-based curriculum delivery, implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy, lesson differentiation for diverse learners, and wide-ranging student success. For this reason, the researcher aimed to create inclusive classroom settings with collaborative student interaction and forward-thinking innovative approaches. Together with this, relationship building within the public education setting was achieved with good decision-making processes and an organizational mission and vision attainment analytical mindset.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as identify retention strategies to employ. Moreover, this researcher aimed to explore ways to give teachers a

voice and provide insights for educational stakeholders involved in remediating the problem of increased teacher attrition in the research site. In a like manner, the research purpose of understanding teacher experiences impacted by teacher attrition was further explored by identifying contributing factors to the problem of teacher attrition. Upon review of empirical scholarly research, this researcher wished to fill in gaps within this landscape by shedding light on stress-related issues that led to teacher attrition and exploring teacher retention strategies necessary to reduce the rate of teacher attrition at the research site.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate increasing teacher attrition rates in a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States. The researcher intended to explore this topic by understanding the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as identifying factors that contributed to the problem. This review was arranged in categorical units establishing relationships with concepts conveyed in the literature. As such, this chapter included a discussion of the historical background of teacher attrition, the prevalence of teacher attrition, factors that contribute to increased teacher attrition rates, and attempts made at resolving teacher attrition. Keywords used for this literature review included the following: teacher attrition, teacher retention, school culture, job satisfaction, beginning teachers, teacher burnout, motivation, teacher turnover, teacher shortage, social support, teacher efficacy, cultural competence, and urban schools. The researcher examined scholarly literature found in both the Education Source and NOVACat databases. Moreover, limitations placed on research included peer-reviewed journal articles within the 2016-2022 date range.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of selecting a theoretical framework to guide this study, this researcher chose to utilize the self-determination theory model (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Teaching is a challenging profession that is best supported by teachers motivated to do the work of quality instruction and dedicated efforts of persevering through challenging times. This theory explains that self-determination is enhanced by social conditions building internalized capacities to flourish by means of high levels of self-autonomy,

competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The topic of increased rates of teacher attrition is the focus of a myriad of empirical studies delineating potential reasons for teacher attrition and plausible solutions to promote teacher retention. This aforementioned theoretical framework sheds light on the relevance of supporting teachers through constructive efforts to build motivation and commitment to the teaching profession with critical underpinnings of teacher autonomy, teacher efficacy, and motivation necessary to continue in the teaching profession.

The self-determination theory posits that social and cultural conditions influence human potential to remain engaged in a task and strive for continual professional growth and state of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). As well, it was put forward by Ryan and Deci (2017) that professionals with adequate administrative support remain engaged in creating supportive classroom environments for student learners. The self-determination theory supports this study on rising teacher attrition, whereby factors contributing to this dilemma are brought on by lack of teacher satisfaction in the field with teacher cooperation and collaborative efforts (Haj-Broussard et al., 2016), autonomy (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021), and teacher self-efficacy (Cooper, 2019). This chapter investigates teacher self-determination and autonomy constructs relating to the retention of teachers.

Historical Background

A search of relevant professional literature revealed that teacher attrition rates began to appear in literature within the last 30 years. With this in mind, teacher attrition rates have become a major concern in the educational scene. Studies have shown that changes in the teacher workforce have been under review dating back to the 1950s with a heavier scope of examination starting in the 1970s (Nguyen & Springer, 2021). Not unlike Nguyen and Springer (2021), Robinson et al. (2019) concluded that teacher

attrition has become a major concern in education with research findings dating back to the 2000s with a shortage of special education teachers experiencing teacher burnout. Teacher shortages and changes in the workforce have been reported to reach elevated levels of concern for the past couple of decades (Claffin et al., 2019; De Jong & Campoli, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ramos & Hughes, 2020; Ray et al., 2020; Sutchter et al., 2019; Toropova et al., 2021). Subsequent to Claffin et al. (2019), comparable results were found, as Ramos and Hughes (2020) mentioned that salary compensation has been a large contender in the rationale for teacher shortages with more recent developments in the areas of working conditions and job satisfaction contributing to the national crisis. Similarly, Ray et al. (2020) revealed that factors contributing toward teachers deciding not to enter or remain in the teaching profession include salary, workload, stress, and teacher expectations. Empirical studies have shown that teachers in their first 5 years contribute significantly toward teacher attrition (Claffin et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Shuls & Flores, 2020). Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) and Shuls and Flores (2020) also shared those teachers working in the high-needs schools are a major part of the declining workforce, and student achievement levels in math and reading levels suffer greatly due to teacher turnover. Wronowski (2018) also mentioned that high-needs schools were experiencing a problem in the area of teacher attrition dating back to the 1980s. Furthermore, Wronowski postulated that filling instructional vacancies in urban school settings has become difficult, and teacher recruitment and preparation programs are declining.

Glazer (2018a) and Torenbeek and Peters (2017) found that beginning teachers who remain in the profession reportedly develop rapidly in didactical skills, thus contributing to high levels of student achievement. In addition, Redding and Henry

(2019) found that teacher attrition contributes to negative effects on student achievement, instructional pace, students' relationships, and collegial interactions. Also, studies have shown that teachers are prone to teacher turnovers due to student characteristics, working conditions, and salary changes (Qin, 2021). Qin (2021) noted that teachers involved in increased attrition are beginning teachers, overqualified teachers, and female teachers with child-rearing responsibilities. Furthermore, Qin shared that schools situated in urban areas and lacking in a collegial environment experience a rate of teachers leaving the workforce. By contrast, Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) found that teachers working in schools with poor working conditions and lack of support have had an increasingly more difficult time with teacher retention as opposed to the location of the school alone.

Moreover, studies revealed that approximately half of public school teachers exit the workforce prior to completion of their fifth year as teacher of record (Glazer, 2018a). By comparison, Torenbeek and Peters (2017) shared those teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience have a greater risk of attrition due to declining levels of didactical teacher performance. Concurring with Torenbeek and Peters, Dupriez et al. (2016) found similar results with teachers leaving the workforce after 20 years of experience, as well as math and science teachers exiting the field (Sutcher et al., 2019). In the final analysis, Torenbeek and Peters shared data trends revealing a U-shaped relationship between experience levels and attrition with beginning teachers and novice teachers leaving the teaching profession, as well as teachers who are "young or nearing retirement" (Han & Hur, 2022, p. 210).

Prevalence of Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition rates appear to be a concern locally, statewide, and nationally. To illustrate, local indicators of teacher shortage reveal a differential of 123 fewer

teachers staffed in local elementary schools across the academic calendar years dating from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 (Florida Department of Education, 2022). Similarly, studies have shown that states in the South experience higher rates of teacher turnover compared to states in the Northeast (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). In fact, empirical studies have indicated that in the United States, on average, there is an 8% teacher attrition rate (Shuls & Flores, 2020; Qin, 2021). Harris et al. (2019) mentioned that an estimated 16% of teacher attrition contributes to growing national crisis with additional concerns of growing numbers in student enrollment and a lack of highly qualified teachers entering the workforce to fill the void. Empirical studies on the prevalence of teacher attrition must be reviewed to better understand the current national teacher shortage issue. Contained within this literature review, this researcher aimed to discover the rate and impact of teacher attrition.

Additionally, Qin (2021) revealed that teacher attrition is impacted by both working conditions and school location, as teachers working in disadvantaged school settings are more likely to leave the teaching post. Similarly, disadvantaged school settings experience teacher turnover at elevated rates (Dupriez et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Redding & Henry, 2019; Redding & Nguyen, 2020; Toropova et al., 2021). For this reason, Jennings et al. (2017) explained that strategic initiatives to retain quality teachers include ways to implement stress management and quality interactions between students and teachers. A review of the prevalence of the problem follows.

United States

Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) and Ramos and Hughes (2020) deemed teacher attrition one of reasons the United States is experiencing a national crisis in teacher shortages. In fact, studies have shown that over one million teachers contribute to teacher

attrition in the United States each year (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Similar to Geiger and Pivovarova, Claffin et al. (2019) concluded that teacher shortage is a nationwide concern with considerable attention needed to address the issue and determine necessary retention strategies. Moreover, nationwide issues such as increasing student enrollment, unsatisfactory teacher compensation, and increased demands on working conditions compound the problematic teacher shortage dilemma (Claffin et al., 2019).

Southeastern Section of the United States

Teacher attrition in the Southeastern section of the United States is a rising concern for public education (Haj-Broussard et al., 2016; Matsuba & Williams, 2020). For this reason, research on teacher attrition in the southeastern states has indicated that teacher preparation programs have had various levels of success contributing to teacher retention. Together with this, Haj-Broussard et al. (2016) found that teachers preparing for a teacher career in education remain in the teaching field with sufficient levels of teaching preparation while enrolled in alternative certification programs. Alternatively, attempts at improving teacher working conditions established the need for a reduction in teacher stress and teacher burnout (Matsuba & Williams, 2020). Together with this, research conducted in the southeastern section of the United States revealed that mindfulness training, self-reflection, yoga, and meditative practices contribute to teacher effectiveness and preservation across the education setting (Matsuba & Williams, 2020).

Local School District

The teaching profession has been considered a temporary job, with teachers electing to leave the teaching post rather than remain in the profession until normal retirement years (Glazer, 2018a). Similarly, novice teachers entering the educational scene depart within the first few years of service (Chiong et al., 2017; De Jong &

Campoli, 2018; Glazer, 2018a, 2018b). Together with this, studies have shown that high rates of teacher turnover nationally necessitate the need for local school districts to recruit and retain teachers (Haj-Broussard et al., 2016). This, in turn, creates added pressure for local school districts to secure highly qualified teachers to fill available teaching positions (Haj-Broussard et al., 2016). This evidence suggests that turnover “could pose a great threat to the industry and a factor that may be considered negative because it could yield high costs for the company” (Ong et al., 2019, p. 28).

Local Elementary School

This researcher intended to fill in gaps on levels of impact on teacher attrition at a local public school with an emphasis on potential solutions of teacher perceived factors. Coupled with perceived factors contributing to probable attrition, studies have shed light on teacher satisfaction with the work environment, compensation, and organizational commitment (Tarigan & Nazaruddin, 2020). To illustrate, Tarigan and Nazaruddin (2020) determined that both a positive work environment and adequate compensation as two existing factors have a significant effect on organizational commitment. Concurring with Tarigan and Nazaruddin, comparable results were found in research conducted by Lestari et al. (2021), as indicated by studies maintaining that job satisfaction positively affects employee loyalty. Together with this, teacher retention in a local public school supports the growth of organizational knowledge and skill attainment with increased levels of quality of work life stakeholders’ perceptions (Ong et al., 2019).

Factors Contributing to Increased Teacher Attrition Rates

Factors that contribute to an increase in teacher attrition rates were examined and reviewed for consideration to the critical shortage of teachers today. Thus far, research has indicated elevated levels of dissatisfaction in several areas of working conditions for

teachers (Harris et al., 2019). According to research findings by Harris et al. (2019), working conditions with which teachers are dissatisfied include (a) low salary, (b) student misconduct, and (c) unreasonable expectations of teachers. Harris et al. revealed that teacher attrition is becoming a bigger problem because fewer qualified teachers enter the profession, student enrollment is climbing, and current workplace conditions cause new and experience teachers to quit. Together with this, disparities between stakeholders and perceptions of workplace conditions contribute toward growing numbers of teachers consistently leaving the teaching profession (Harris et al., 2019).

Studies have also shown that there is a high rate of teacher attrition in schools with high proportions of ethnic minorities and students with disadvantaged backgrounds (Dupriez et al., 2016). Furthermore, Dupriez et al. (2016) shared that socio-demographic physical characteristics are documented with teachers in their early years and teachers in their later years in life leaving the field of teaching. Research has further indicated that there is a high concentration of teacher shortages with new teachers and veteran teachers (Dupriez et al., 2016; Hanks et al., 2020). As such, Dupriez et al. (2016) shared that secondary math and science teachers have been reported to leave the field of teaching (De Jong & Campoli, 2018; Toropova et al., 2021), along with teachers with advanced degrees as they tend to pursue more advanced careers in higher education or various other career paths. Although teacher pay is not a stand-alone factor, studies have shown that the primary factors of teacher attrition are (a) career goals, (b) workplace conditions, and (c) compensation (Hanks et al., 2020).

Teacher Expectations

Teachers working in the educational field today work hard to build and sustain a teaching career. In doing this, teachers build a professional identity (Trent, 2019). The

level at which teachers create professional identities may contribute towards teacher attrition and teacher turnover. According to research by Kamrath and Bradford (2020), teachers working in challenging urban school settings experience higher rates of teacher shortage as teachers decide to leave the profession. Here, low teacher perceptions of job satisfaction have resulted in teacher turnover. Although research by Kamrath and Bradford supported low teacher identities contributing toward teacher turnover, Beck et al. (2020) presented a distinct dichotomy with studies noting that teachers preparing for a successful teaching career have a greater chance of building a lasting career with the support of veteran teachers providing mentorship and assistance of practical experiences in the classroom.

There is a close association between teacher identity construction in beginning teachers leading to factors in teacher attrition (Beck et al., 2020; Trent, 2019). Early career teachers begin to develop professional identities while training for the demands of the teaching profession. Moreover, subsequent to Trent's (2019) research, Fradkin-Hayslip (2021) found comparable results with teacher identity construction, and, as such, empirical results indicated that teacher self-identity is fortified with increased levels of autonomy and teacher perceptions of competence and relatedness. Trent shared that personal identity construction is influenced by building practical experiences in social settings. With this, Trent expanded on factors that contributed toward the loss of teaching staff, accounting for teachers who have completed teacher preparatory course work but eventually deciding to refrain from entering the teaching field due to low perceptions of teaching as a chosen profession.

Similar to Cooper (2019), Beck et al. (2020) shared those expert teachers have ample opportunities to assist early career teachers in building high perceptions of

teaching by sharing teaching experiences and practical suggestions, as such helping to retain teachers in the teaching profession. Studies conducted by Trent (2019) shed light on the struggles of early career teachers making ultimate decisions to continue with teaching as a final career path based on identity discourse experiences. The process of developing teacher identity is important for beginning teachers to firmly understand and gain an appreciation of teaching while setting up high professional expectations and teaching aspirations.

Working Conditions

Job resources provide teachers with a means of completing teacher tasks and work-related goals, thus, a lack of effective administrative support is related to adverse working conditions (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). For this reason, Torenbeek and Peters (2017) shed light on the tendency for teachers to leave the field of teaching due to a lack of job resources and increasing job demands. Moreover, studies have shown teachers leave their teaching post due to insufficient working conditions, including a lack of administrator leadership and support, thus contributing to a mediocre school culture (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Concurring with Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) and Kamrath and Bradford (2020), similar findings were found with research by Ansley et al. (2019), as working conditions directly related to the quality of work experiences of teachers in the workforce. Ansley et al. postulated that higher quality work experiences with workplace relationships and school leadership enabled teachers to find job satisfaction with workplace conditions. In a like manner, teachers experiencing positive work experiences with workplace conditions translated into higher student achievement (Ansley et al., 2019).

Robinson et al. (2019) shared that challenging work environments contributing to

teacher attrition are characteristically found in schools with teachers not feeling supported by school administrators (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Harris et al., 2019); thus, teachers experience difficulties with student behavior (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Shuls & Flores, 2020) and management of excessive paperwork. Unlike Geiger and Pivovarova (2018), Kamrath and Bradford (2020) found that teachers with strong connections to students and the school community have the ability to remain at their teaching post even with unsupportive administration to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Subsequent to research by Geiger and Pivovarova, Harris et al. (2019) found similar results with poor working conditions leading to teacher attrition, and, as such, stakeholder perceptions on this issue influence the decision made by teachers to either remain in the profession or leave. In the same way, Harris et al. and Kamrath and Bradford revealed that poor working conditions, with unreasonable work expectations and poor administrative support in the work environment, along with a lack of adequate compensation are two major influences that attribute toward teacher attrition.

Compensation

While teacher salary is considered important by teachers in the profession, empirical studies have shown that salary is not a top contender for factors contributing to teacher attrition (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Similar to Shuls and Flores (2020), Harris et al. (2019) postulated that some teachers remained in the teaching profession with poor salary compensation, given that working conditions and administrative support are adequate. Furthermore, research conducted by Shuls and Flores indicated that limitations to research studies may consider the inability of increasing or altering pay structures of teachers, as changes in compensation or salary factors are driven by decision making powers from authorities in a higher place. In a like manner, Shuls and Flores noted that a

sizeable percentage of novice teachers were prone to teacher attrition with a lesser degree relative to teacher salary and more heavily relating to issues with student discipline, administrative support, and teacher autonomy.

Specifically, teachers with higher levels of training leave the teaching profession and seek alternative career opportunities (Dupriez et al. 2016; Qin, 2021; Torenbeek & Peters, 2017). Correspondingly, Harris et al. (2019) concurred that teachers' perceptions of adequate professional development adds to the problem of increasing attrition rates. Together with this, research indicates that teachers leave the teaching post due to poor job resources and minimal job development opportunities, hence contributing to job dissatisfaction (Harris et al., 2019).

Job Dissatisfaction

Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) shared that there is a crucial link between job satisfaction and administrator support; as such, teacher attrition corresponds with poor working conditions. Research has indicated that the school climate contributes to job dissatisfaction with a lack of administrative support and collegial backing influencing school working conditions (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Moreover, Geiger and Pivovarova found that school working conditions and school characteristics are components that attribute toward teachers leaving the teaching post. Furthermore, job dissatisfaction is a factor in teacher retention, whereby research reportedly revealed that teacher retention is diminished in schools with high rates of poverty and conflicting percentages of high and low minority (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Concurring with Cooper (2019), similar reasons for increased teacher attrition were found with Eginli's (2021) research, noting that self-efficacy and teacher

commitment to the profession are contributing factors to teacher retention. Self-efficacy is critical to teacher success and daily performance in the classroom setting. Cooper explained that teacher self-efficacy is achieved by professional ability to execute instructional delivery and manage classroom behaviors. Cooper stated further that high levels of teacher self-efficacy prevent teacher burnout, thus contributing less to high levels of teacher attrition. Similar to Cooper, Eginli concluded that high levels of teacher self-efficacy improve teacher retention rates, thereby shedding light on teacher commitment to the profession. Furthermore, Eginli posited that teachers working in a social setting engage in collective efficacy, promoting teacher retention. In contrast, low self-efficacy further complicates teacher perceptions of job satisfaction, burnout, and feelings of teacher effectiveness (Cooper, 2019).

Emotional Exhaustion

Mahfouz (2018) indicated that emotional stability within school cultures is enhanced by school administrators equipped with necessary skills to interact with others with compassion, self-awareness, and self-regulation. With this, educational leaders who recognize the importance of mindfulness, self-reflection, and emotional regulation are instrumental in leading a workforce less likely to experience emotional exhaustion (Mahfouz, 2018). In a like manner, Matsuba and Williams (2020) found that teachers experience emotional stress, along with negative feelings including fear, sadness, and anger, as the pressures of teaching can become difficult to bear. With this, Matsuba and Williams revealed that self-care initiatives have relieved the emotional burdens for teachers. For instance, teachers participating in mindfulness training and yoga workshops have reduced teacher stress and symptoms related to burnout (Matsuba & Williams, 2020).

Health Issues

Empirical studies have indicated that health issues have impacted the rate of teachers leaving the teacher workforce (Claffin et al., 2019; Farrar & Zaidi, 2018; Mahfouz, 2018; Matsuba & Williams, 2020; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). Claffin et al. (2019) determined that health problems may lead to a substantial number of teachers leaving the workforce. Additionally, managing health care and employee well-being is critical to organizational success (Farrar & Zaidi, 2018). As such, an educational organization ought to take direct measures to ensure that stakeholders have adequate means and knowledge of proper self-care measures, including managing stress and exercising self-awareness and resilience (Farrar & Zaidi, 2018). In doing this, Farrar and Zaidi (2018) mentioned that organizations had healthier employees, higher staff productivity, and cost-effective daily operations.

Concurring with Farrar and Zaidi (2018), the same results were found with the research of Matsuba and Williams (2020) regarding health-related issues studied in teachers experiencing high levels of stress. The authors determined that an intervention training on mindfulness and yoga practice reduced “distress tolerance and a reduction in in daily physical systems and diastolic blood pressure” (p. 354). Furthermore, the findings within the study revealed that poor health conditions can be averted through mindfulness training and mediation practices, thereby reducing the numbers of teachers experiencing stress and teacher burnout (Matsuba & Williams, 2020).

Self-care exercised by educational stakeholders can minimize the harmful effects of stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Mahfouz, 2018). With this, self-awareness of occupational stress and socioemotional demands of teaching are pertinent health issues that teachers face today, whereas mindfulness training and self-reflection practice has

proven to be beneficial to teachers working in the field (Mahfouz, 2018). According to Matsuba and Williams (2020), teachers participating in meditative and emotional self-regulation experiences experienced improvements with health issues with both blood pressure and respiratory sinus arrhythmia while completing daily work tasks.

Fatigue. Teachers face a multitude of daily stressors that contribute to low teacher performance (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017), thus leading to increased teacher attrition rates. Empirical studies have found that teacher stress is a key factor in self-preservation, student motivation, and teacher autonomy (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). Wolgast and Fischer (2017) explained that stress levels influence teacher physical and mental well-being, work productivity, and interpersonal relationships. According to Mahfouz (2018), studies have shown that mindfulness practices can help teachers with attending to tasks, improved working memories, lowered levels of stress, and a reduction in teacher burnout.

Burnout. Teachers endure elevated levels of stress in the daily operations of running a classroom (Zhu et al., 2018). For this reason, Zhu et al. (2018) brought to light that teachers are prone to burnout systems while working in a profession that involves self-reflection and interpersonal relationship building. Equally important, mindfulness training has been proven to combat the negative effects of teacher burnout (Mahfouz, 2018). Matsuba and Williams (2020) found that mindfulness-based interventions utilized by teachers reduced symptoms of burnout, thus contributing to improved physical and mental well-being. Matsuba and Williams shared that mindfulness-based interventions proven to be helpful include (a) mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, (b) group-based meditation training, and (c) emotional regulation training. Moreover, burnout symptoms were elevated with mindfulness-based interventions, as per evidence of

increased time on task, teacher organization, compassion, and self-reflection. Unlike Matsuba and Williams, Zhu et al. indicated that teachers experience burnout systems, as a health-related issue, contributing towards emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low self-efficacy. Another contrasting study by Li et al. (2021) found that teacher burnout is an issue that creates potential turnover intention in beginning teachers, as such teacher achievement goal orientation is critical for teacher retention.

Issues Created by Increased Teacher Attrition Rates

Teacher attrition rates are impacted by diminishing school cultures and job-related dissatisfaction (Al-Mahdy & Alazmi, 2021). For this reason, researchers have found that issues compounding poor working conditions and high teacher turnover rates have intensified greatly (Al-Mahdy & Alazmi, 2021). Similar to Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2021), Bressman et al. (2018) determined that teacher burnout is an issue that is created as a result of emotional exhaustion and teacher dissatisfaction. In addition, studies have indicated that students are affected by the loss of high-quality teachers, wherein students are subject to a continuous flow of sub-par teacher replacements (Bressman et al., 2018).

High Teacher Turnover Rates

This literature review highlighted current knowledge on teacher attrition comparing similarities on investigated teacher retention in public education schools, whereby strategies are implemented to avoid work stress and teacher shortage (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Hammonds, 2017). Similar to Fradkin-Hayslip (2021), Hammonds (2017) concluded that there is a high rate of teacher turnover in schools today, noting that schools in urban settings experience teacher shortage due to withdrawing from the teaching post, migrating to fewer challenging schools, and potentially leaving the teaching profession to work in a different career all together. Another contrasting study

by Rasanen et al. (2020) indicated that the longer a novice teacher contemplates leaving the field, research findings have shown that teacher turnover is more likely to occur. Furthermore, teacher low achievement goals, stress at work, and turnover intentions contribute to teacher turnover rates (Li et al., 2021).

Diminished School Culture

Negative school climate issues lead to a diminished school culture, whereby teachers feel unsupported with supervisory concerns (Chiong et al., 2017), teacher autonomy, and relationships with school organizational stakeholders (Li et al., 2021). As a result, teacher retention becomes an issue for school organizations, with this research indicates that protecting the school culture and reinforcing teacher perceptions with satisfactory school climate is essential (Chiong et al., 2017; Li et al., 2021). Moreover, Glazer (2018a) postulated that financial costs incurred to school organizations contribute to overall unsteady management practices and instability challenges resulting in negative effects on the entire school culture.

Financial Burden

Issues created by teacher attrition include a financial strain to the organization (De Jong & Campoli, 2018; Glazer, 2018b; Ramos & Hughes, 2020; Toropova et al., 2021), along with the need for securing additional job resources creating a burden to the institution (Rasanen et al., 2020). Not unlike Rasanen et al. (2020), Claffin et al. (2019) concluded that learning institutions absorb the brunt of financial burdens through multiple areas to include (a) costs related to declining student achievement, (b) direct financial costs related to school operations, and (c) costs related to recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers. In addition, as teachers continue to leave the workforce, the school community feels the strain of institutional cohesiveness, thereby

creating additional work for remaining teachers and administrators to fill in the gaps recruiting and retaining new teachers (Ramos & Hughes, 2020).

Teacher Burnout

Studies have shown that teacher burnout is compounded by work stress and low levels of self-esteem contributing to teacher attrition (Li et al., 2021). To illustrate, Li et al. (2021) determined that high teacher achievement goals and high failure avoidance goals permitted teachers to avoid feelings of teacher burnout. Likewise, teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion are problematic for teacher retention (Bressman et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021; Toropova et al., 2021).

Factors Resulting From Increased Teacher Attrition Rates

According to Adnot et al. (2017), Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2021), and Toropova et al. (2021), increased teacher attrition has detrimental results for student performance, student achievement, and school quality. With this, Adnot et al. determined that urban schools struggle with retaining high-quality teachers, hence contributing to low performing school outcomes. Moreover, studies have shown that recruitment and retainment of minority teachers has been problematic with minority teachers hired and leaving the workforce due to poor work conditions (Ingersoll et al., 2019). With this, Ingersoll et al. (2019) shed light on the need for additional research in the area of teacher turnover for minority teachers.

Effect on Teachers

According to Rasanen et al. (2020), teacher turnover resulting in teachers leaving the workforce leaves teachers feeling overcome by low self-esteem, lack of professional development, and subsequent health issues. Together with this, prolonged turnover intentions lead to ineffective teaching and decreased job satisfaction (Rasanen et al.,

2020). Additionally, researchers have found that minority teacher recruitment policies have brought to light the dire need to fill teacher vacancies with minority teachers in urban school settings where students are both economically challenged and belong to minority subgroups (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Together with this, minority teacher entering the pipeline have had some overall success with teacher placement benefiting the classroom and school learning environment, as well as some minority teachers have had difficulties adjusting to the certification processes and subpar working conditions (Ingersoll et al., 2019). As well, findings indicated within the study indicated that minority teachers endure higher teacher turnover rates as compared to general teacher population (Ingersoll et al., 2019). As a result, minority student achievement gaps widen and qualified minority teacher role models are depleted (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

Effect on Students

Research has shown that teacher attrition leads to students experiencing profound consequences, resulting in low achievement and substandard learning environments (Ramos & Hughes, 2020; Rasanen et al., 2020; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Toropova et al., 2021). Specifically, Ramos and Hughes (2020) determined that the continuous cycle of replacement and training of new teachers has impeded the rate of student learning (Bressman et al., 2018), raised the financial costs of teacher turnover, and undermined the belief from parents that students are getting a quality education. In addition, Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) shared that continual teacher turnover impacts teacher effectiveness, as well as contributes to deficits in students' mathematics and reading achievement levels.

Another contrasting study by Ingersoll et al. (2019) indicated that a decline in minority student enrollment in postsecondary school and a reduction in minority student graduation rates are a result of minority student underachievement. With this, Ingersoll et

al. postulated that fewer minority teachers present in the school system can have a profound effect on minority student achievement. Another key fact brought to light in research conducted by Li and Konstantopoulos (2017) postulated that policy on class size reduction aims to elevate low student academic performance and student achievement gaps; thus, increasing teacher attrition widens the problematic state of students affected by larger class sizes due to reduction of the teaching force. Li and Konstantopoulos shared those students in the primary age groups and socioeconomically challenged subgroups are greatly affected by larger class sizes.

Effect on School

Research findings from Toropova et al. (2021) and Zhu et al. (2018) established that increasing teacher attrition rates due to high levels of stress and impending teacher burnout contribute to detrimental effects on an educational organization. For this reason, Zhu et al. shared that research on teacher attrition, based on decreased levels of self-efficacy and teacher self-concept, sheds light on the negative effects of teacher burnout on a school learning system. Subsequently, Zhu et al. determined that teachers are more productive and experience elevated levels of self-concept and personal effectiveness in school settings where teachers collectively focus on student achievement and teacher efficacy, thereby eliminating the detrimental effects of teacher burnout (Toropova et al., 2021) impacting the school community. Moreover, according to Ramos and Hughes (2020), an adverse effect of teacher attrition at the school level is shown by the continuous financial strain of replacing high quality teachers; therefore, research has indicated that schools would be better served with opportunities to put financial resources into continuous professional development for existing teachers.

Effect on School Community

Factors resulting from teacher attrition at the school community level indicate that adequate highly qualified minority teachers are entering the pipeline at a reduced rate (Ingersoll et al., 2019). For this reason, policy makers have made considerable efforts to increase teacher recruitment and retainment of both male teachers and minority teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Within the study, Ingersoll et al. (2019) mentioned that school communities have increased the number of teacher preparation educational programs, along with systemic professional development opportunities for minority teachers once hired and working in the field. According to Glazer (2018b), teacher attrition has become a systematic issue that effects the workforce continuity within a school setting, as well studies have shown that the outlook of a teaching career has changed from long term to short term profession. With this in mind, Toropova et al. (2021) concurred that “teacher turnover negatively affects faculty collegiality and trust and leads to a loss of institutional knowledge” (p. 72).

Attempts to Resolve Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition has been recognized as problematic, with many efforts put forth to resolve the issue. Thus, empirical research on this research problem points to strategic supports of teacher retention implemented by stakeholders in the educational scene (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2020; Hammonds, 2017; Matsuba & Williams, 2020; Reitman & Karge, 2019). There is a critical link between strategic support in social context and teacher-created autonomy (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2020; Hammonds, 2017; Reitman & Karge, 2019). According to Gonzales et al. (2020), strategic support with peer support climate structures and supervisory support climates are factors in teacher retention. With strategic support, teachers experience various levels

of job satisfaction and self-efficacy, leading to teacher autonomy. Similar to Gonzales et al., Reitman and Karge (2019) concluded that there is a significant factor in retaining teachers there are supported by administrators and peers. Furthermore, according to Hammonds (2017), strategic teacher retention strategies in urban setting elementary schools are vital, so strategies aimed to decrease teacher attrition were implemented to minimize avoid work stress and teacher shortage.

Ongoing Professional Development

Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) shared that there is a crucial link between job satisfaction and administrator support, and, as such, teacher attrition corresponds with poor working conditions. Together with this, Geiger and Pivovarova determined that satisfactory working conditions serve as a relevant factor for teachers who elect to leave or stay in the classroom learning environment. Moreover, ongoing professional development has been cited for job satisfaction (Lestari et al., 2021) in the work environment leading to increased teacher retention (Toropova et al., 2021). In the same manner, research from Santoso and Sidik (2020), Sihombing and Berlianto (2018), and Yuliyanti et al. (2020) made known that career progression positively affects job satisfaction. This evidence, in turn, suggests that continuous professional development contributes to greater levels of teacher efficacy and job satisfaction (Bressman et al., 2018; Toropova et al., 2021).

Mentor Systems. Research from Bressman et al. (2018), Dupriez et al. (2016), Reitman and Karge (2019), and Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) indicated that teacher retention is improved with mentor programs designed to support new teachers in the classroom. Ronfeldt and McQueen indicated that peer coaching and peer observation cycles also had positive results with teacher self-confidence and pedagogical approaches

to unit design and teaching didactical skills. Moreover, Dupriez et al. postulated that mentor programs and new teacher support is crucial to the retention of teachers new to the profession, given that teachers may lack adequate professional training and preparedness. Not unlike Dupriez et al., Reitman and Karge and Ronfeldt and McQueen concluded that, through deliberate efforts, educational policy makers have put forth initiatives to bolster teacher retention through the implementation of mentorship for novice teachers, thereby combating the detrimental effects of teacher turnover.

New Hire/Induction Programs. Gaps that existed in scholarly literature included implications for further research expanding future studies surveying and collecting research data from a broader range of teacher preparation programs (Beck et al., 2020; Cooper, 2019). According to Reitman and Karge (2019) and Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017), teachers receiving support from induction programs are less likely to leave the teaching post, thereby reducing the likelihood of teacher attrition. In addition, Ronfeldt and McQueen determined that induction programs are consistently offered to teachers across the educational scene with positive effects on teacher retention for early career teachers.

Aspiring Administrator Programs. Strategic efforts to implement action applicable and job embedded leadership opportunities aimed to increase teacher retention have been implemented at a local school district. With this, upon speaking to a professional development coordinator at a local school district findings indicate that teachers have many opportunities to aspire to administrative positions and leadership opportunities within the school-based setting (D. Sanon, personal communication, June 15, 2022). Specifically, participation in the Teacher Career Bridge and the Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development offers pipeline opportunities for learning

organizational stakeholders. Professional development offered in the Teacher Career Bridge program has been identified as an avenue for aspiring administrators to experience leadership opportunities (D. Sanon, personal communication, June 15, 2022) via participation in one of the following instructional leadership roles: (a) Peer Collaborative Teacher, (b) Learning and Leadership Teacher, (c) Transformation Teacher, and (d) Professional Development Course Facilitator (School District of Lee County, 2017a, 2017c). As well, the Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development program has been created for aspiring administrative leaders. Together with this, participants dedicate on average 6 hours a month completing online coursework through school-based learning platforms and 2 hours a month with in-person training sessions localized at the district office and off-site campuses (D. Sanon, personal communication, June 15, 2022).

Coupled with professional development opportunities, the Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development program seeks to provide support to aspiring administrative leaders (School District of Lee County, 2017a) with applicable job mentorship, as well as job-embedded experiences shadowing sitting assistant principals within a real time work setting (D. Sanon, personal communication, June 15, 2022). To date, Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development is near completion of the first 10-month cycle of participation with Cohort 1 consisting of 38 aspiring administrators (D. Sanon, personal communication, June 15, 2022). Moreover, according to the School District of Lee County (2017a), Cohort 2 of the Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development program was projected to start beginning in September 2022. Equally important, the Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Development program with training topics include (a) vision and mission, (b) student learning and continuous improvement, and (c) operations and school management aims to prepare aspiring administrators to

become equitable instructional leaders (School District of Lee County, 2017a).

Administrator Support

Also, empirical research by Eginli (2021) and Reitman and Karge (2019) concluded that leadership support is beneficial to teacher retention as it provides necessary components in competence and relationship building within the social context. In the same manner, administrative support contributes to teacher retention (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). For this reason, “there are many kinds of support an administration can provide to teachers, including material resources, emotional support, support regarding disciplinary issues, or pedagogical support” (Glazer, 2018a, p. 66). In addition, Glazer (2018a) found teachers receiving high levels of administrative support were successfully promoted to leadership roles within the school setting. This evidence suggests that highly qualified teachers decide to remain the teaching field with high levels of administrator support and teacher-developed autonomy (Glazer, 2018a).

Increase Compensation Packages

According to scholarly research, attempts to resolve teacher attrition and increase teacher attitudes centered on teacher status have considered salary variation with better compensation packages offered to teachers worldwide (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). For example, Ramos and Hughes (2020) indicated that teachers with turnover intentions have been offered salary increase rates to encourage teacher retention. Conversely, Ramos and Hughes found that teachers decline salary increase offers with an intent to exit from a challenging school setting to secure alternate work opportunities. To illustrate the matter of teacher compensation, salary increase efforts across the globe have shown that various countries have had success with boosting teacher satisfaction and teacher status by better payment for the teaching profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-

Hammond, 2019). With this, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) determined that salary increase was beneficial to retaining teachers. However, findings indicated that increasing teacher salary has had various effects on teacher attrition, as school location, social contexts, and school climate drive such teacher retention factors.

Sign-On Bonus. Research has indicated that an adequate compensation system promotes workplace commitment to organizational life (Sulistiasih & Widodo, 2021). Moreover, organizational commitment, mediated by compensation systems, has shown positive effects in quality work life, as well as shows that employees “have a strong emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the school organization” (Sulistiasih & Widodo, 2021, p. 147). For this reason, employees have been offered additional compensation in the form of supplemental payments built into the salary schedule or one-time bonus payments. In speaking to a payroll representative at a local school district, findings revealed that the sign-on bonus has been used in the past; however, it is not currently being offered to recruit and retain classroom teachers (School District of Lee County, 2017b). Specifically, the local school district payroll representative maintained that recruitment bonuses designed for this purpose included a possible relocation bonus used to encourage relocation of potential teachers transferring in from different states, as well as a partnership bonus used to enable students from local colleges to secure a teaching position in the district. Equally important, findings from the district personnel payroll representative indicated that teachers in seven schools received a turnaround supplement, as well as teachers in six schools received a transition supplement the upcoming school year 2022-2023 allowable by contract upon negotiations with a local school district.

Longevity. Ramos and Hughes (2020) stated that teachers make a decision to

leave their teaching each year in the United States. For instance, Glazer (2018b) indicated that nearly half of the nation's public education schoolteachers decide to leave the teaching profession during their first 5 years. As a result, school districts make considerable efforts to retain teachers using longevity compensation. According to a local school district representative, longevity compensation is currently being offered and is awarded to teachers incrementally beginning at 10 to 14 years of service extending to 30 plus years of service in the district in the form of a supplemental payment (Teachers Association of Lee County, 2021). With this, supplemental payments are scheduled for disbursement throughout the school year.

In a like manner, Hendrawijaya et al. (2018) concurred those teachers establishing emotional maturity, thus reaching high levels of emotional intelligence, have higher success rates of bridging the gap between work motivation and compensation systems as indicator of workplace satisfaction. Concurring with Hendrawijaya et al., similar results were found with the research of Tarigan and Nazaruddin (2020), indicating that employee compensation combined with a productive work environment leads to positive organizational commitment. Furthermore, Grego-Planer (2019) determined that personal will and affective dimensions of organizational commitment are influenced by compensation and job satisfaction in organizational vision and goal attainment.

Shared Decision Making

Research studies conducted on shared decision making in the educational scene determined that teacher retention is reinforced with opportunities to work together and promote teacher effectiveness (Toropova et al., 2021). According to Toropova et al. (2021), teacher effectiveness and teacher efficacy are key indicators for resolving teacher turnover. Glazer (2018a) also put forward that teachers have less turnover intentions with

increased opportunities to contribute to shared decision-making utilizing pedagogical judgment in the classroom. For this reason, researchers have studied the various attempts to resolve teacher attrition through the lens of shared decision making among educational stakeholders (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Glazer, 2018a, 2018b; Toropova et al., 2021).

Teacher Voice. According to empirical research, studies have shown that teachers exit the teaching profession as a result of a lack of teacher input in daily operations (Glazer, 2018a, 2018b). With this, teacher voice allows educators to conduct student learning opportunities with authority (Glazer, 2018b). As such, teacher interview outcomes reveal that experienced confident teachers leave the teaching post due to inadequate opportunities to continue teaching practices that include teacher voice and autonomy (Glazer, 2018b). With this, attempts to resolve teacher attrition may be beneficial with teacher empowerment to “practice what they saw as good teaching” (Glazer, 2018b, p. 58), as an increase in teacher voice would change the mindset of teachers feeling as if personal visions and feelings of teacher success were being depleted.

Collaboration. Empirical research on teacher collaboration brings to light the advantages of teacher cooperation in conjunction with collaborative efforts between organizational stakeholders to achieve elevated levels of teacher effectiveness (Matsuba & Williams, 2020; Toropova et al., 2021). For instance, Toropova et al. (2021) determined that student discipline coupled with teacher cooperation were key factors contributing to teachers’ perceptions of satisfactory working environments. In addition, research by Matsuba and Williams (2020) indicated that teachers working collectively in reflective and meditative practices experienced greater job contentment. The findings

within this study indicated that “there were greater increases in emotional support, friendship, and body awareness” (Matsuba & Williams, 2020, p. 361). This evidence, in turn, suggests that work stress is a top indicator of discontent and job-related health challenges, as such attempts to resolve teacher stress have shown that mindfulness training and mediation practices improve working conditions producing elevated levels of teacher effectiveness and overall well-being (Matsuba & Williams, 2020).

Teacher Autonomy

According to Fradkin-Hayslip (2021), teacher autonomy is created with positive experiences working in the classroom connecting competence, self-motivation, and self-efficacy. With this, teachers become confident and self-determined to learn and grow in the teaching profession. Fradkin-Hayslip described specific areas of teacher autonomy relating it to motivation to teach with daily intrinsic motivation contributing to long term professional success. Likewise, Fradkin-Hayslip concluded that strategic supports of teacher retention include school policy reform and effective school leadership. In addition, to reach elevated levels of teacher autonomy, teachers need to be recognized as professionals, thus making their daily tasks effective teachers (Reitman & Karge, 2019). Together with this, teachers need to feel like they have control over decisions they make within their classroom and feel like they can be part of decision-making efforts within the school (Reitman & Karge, 2019). Together with this, teachers need to feel competent in using the materials and their instructional methods, as all of this brings competence and relatedness (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

Social Supports

Gonzales et al. (2020) investigated support factors given to new teachers and efforts to increase teacher retention. Here, new teachers were supported by veteran

teachers in hopes of providing social support necessary for their new chosen teaching career profession. In addition, Haj-Broussard et al. (2016) determined that teacher retention is enhanced with social support available to teachers with similar work responsibilities in the field. Furthermore, Reitman and Karge (2019) recognized that administrators should support new teachers building supportive relationships throughout new teacher growth stages, as such social supports ought to be implemented with fidelity.

Bolster Collegial Climate

Studies have shown that teachers favor support from colleagues as a retention factor in the teacher workforce (Haj-Broussard et al., 2016; Toropova et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2018). To illustrate the need for an increase in the collegial climate, Haj-Broussard et al. (2016) found that teacher retention is supported by teachers establishing collaborative relationships with teachers at various levels of work experience, thereby creating a school climate of job-supported teachers. Similar to Haj-Broussard (2016), Mahfouz (2018) shared that effective school administrators have the potential to create school climates with enhanced working relationships and healthy collegial school environments. As a result, studies indicated that school administrators, exercising mindfulness and sympathy for others, put forth working conditions that promote respectful and compassionate relationships with the school climate.

A review of literature shows that teacher expectations, working conditions, job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and teacher burnout are, but a few, contributing factors to teachers deciding to leave the teaching post (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Li et al., 2021; Matsuba & Williams, 2020; Torenbeek & Peters, 2017). Together with this, Bressman et al. (2018) concurred that issues created the aforementioned factors contributing to teacher attrition have devastating effects on

teacher retention and student achievement. In a like manner, empirical research brought to light that learning organizations have experienced problematic issues resulting from rising teacher attrition (Adnot et al., 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ramos & Hughes, 2020; Toropova et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2018). Specifically, Ramos and Hughes (2020) determined that teacher turnover results in financial burden and reduced capacities for student achievement.

Efforts to resolve teacher attrition are evident with studies indicating that strategic supports in professional development, administrative feedback, and bolstered collegial environments have positive effects on teachers and the overall school community (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2020; Reitman & Karge, 2019). This researcher aimed to shed light on the experiences of teachers impacted by the increased teacher attrition. In summary, this researcher intended to fill in gaps on the educational scene relating to health issues resulting from teacher turnover, as well as necessary actionable steps that are worthy of implementing to promote teacher retention.

Research Questions

The following research questions were established to guide this study:

1. What factors do teachers and administrators believe contribute to the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States?
2. What factors do teachers and administrators believe could decrease the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States?
3. How do teachers believe stress impacts teacher attrition rates at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The purpose of the research study was to add to the body of scholarly literature by way of gaining a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences impacted by increasing teacher attrition, as well as identify retention strategies to employ. Moreover, this researcher aimed to contribute to the educational field by providing insights for teachers, administrators, and policy makers involved in addressing the problem of increased teacher attrition. Qualitative research finding solutions to this research problem centered on teacher attrition and allowed this researcher to find deeper levels of understanding and explore teacher perceptions of teachers impacted by the problem. Moreover, this researcher intended to add to empirical scholarly research by investigating this research problem, as well as by adding scholarly insight to fill any existing gaps related to the understandings of stress-related issues that lead to teacher attrition.

Qualitative Research Approach

This researcher conducted a descriptive qualitative design for this research study. Accordingly, scholarly qualitative research provides researchers with a deeper understanding of problematic issues worthy of exploration (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, descriptive qualitative design, as the selected research approach, provided an opportunity to investigate and explore evoking rich data from individual lived experiences (Marshall et al., 2022). This qualitative approach utilized for scholarly research studies brought to light the philosophical assumptions that were be put together by way of insightful data collection and trustworthy data analysis providing pragmatic worldview approaches to common themes in participants' responses (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The aim of this descriptive qualitative design with qualitative data

collection and analysis was to examine participant stories and rich data collection pertinent to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019), as well as provide a descriptive thematic analysis of describing a phenomenon (Marshall et al., 2022).

A clear research question is important because it is the launching point for the research study (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). This researcher first developed and validated a qualitative research instrument based upon the following central research question: Which factors contribute to teachers leaving their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Together with this, the study utilized research questions focused on a particular population, as this researcher intended to explore concepts relative to participant responses and experiences (Marshall et al., 2022). As well, research from Marshall et al. (2022) found that research questions in qualitative methodology should be central to the purpose of the research study. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) determined that purposeful qualitative research questions provided rich data revealing participant point of view on a research topic, in which the researcher was equipped with a workable lens for taking a deeper dive into the available resources on the research topic.

This researcher provided alignment between the qualitative research questions and the indepth interview questions by utilizing a table of specifications, thereby selecting precise wording and clarity of questions addressing the research topic (see Appendix A). Norbraten (2020) postulated that a table of specifications was a useful tool to assemble research ideas and central elements, and, as such, the table of specifications ensured alignment between the research purpose and the central phenomenon. Specifically, a table of specifications provided trustworthiness and was beneficial in

providing alignment between the research purpose and semistructured interview questions that were central to the research questions (Norbraten, 2020). The aim of this researcher was to develop worthiness and credibility by developing a clear alignment between the research questions and the interview questions contained within the table of specifications, thereby ensuring that there were no gaps or holes in the indepth interview protocol.

Participants

The research participants included teachers and administrators currently working at the research site, which was a Title I public prekindergarten to Grade 5 school in an urban area of a southeastern state in the United States. The research site enrolled approximately 948 students in prekindergarten through Grade 5. U.S. News and World Report (2022) indicated that the intended research site currently had 51 full-time equivalent teachers on faculty, whereas the total number of potential participants in the participant pool was 40 to 50.

Moreover, the participants represented a wide range of years of teaching experience spanning from less than 5 years to 20-plus years. A recent interview with administration indicated that, at this time, approximately 10 teachers had less than 5 years of teaching experience and approximately 11 teachers had more than 20 years of teaching experience (K. Rendon, personal communication, November 2, 2022). Moreover, the participants were representative of recipients of college degrees in the bachelor's and master's level status. Specifically, the administrator noted that approximately eight teachers at this time had a master's degree or higher (K. Rendon, personal communication, November 2, 2022). According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2018), qualitative research utilizing an indepth interview protocol was best suited for

a range of 10 to 15 participants. With this, the participants included were members recruited from the target school. Purposeful sampling was used to cultivate relevant rich data from participants central to the research site (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, this researcher was working alongside the participants as a classroom teacher at the same learning institution.

Data Collection and Instruments

According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), data collection survey instruments containing a set of closed-ended questions provide a restricted range of participant responses, thereby limiting the participants in sharing personal experiences relative to the phenomenon of interest. In short, the aim of this research study was geared toward credible data collection, whereby participants' responses brought to light lived experiences detailing individual understandings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Therefore, credible and trustworthy data collection was dependent on the researcher as the principal investigator gleaning insight from participants' lived experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Credible qualitative research was suitably supported by trustworthy data collection (Amatea & Clark, 2005). As a qualitative researcher, the opportunity to develop a valid qualitative instrument presented itself with a well-constructed indepth interview protocol (see Appendix B) addressing research questions contained within a qualitative study (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each indepth interview session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and the length of time was extended if the respondent chose to continue with additional information. Upon interviewing, both teachers and administrators were asked the same set of questions on the indepth interview protocol. This indepth interview protocol had 15 questions total

with five questions in alignment to support three different research questions. With this, the development of an indepth interview protocol by an expert panel provided validation and credibility. In addition, a revised indepth interview protocol was utilized, after university approval was granted, in a pilot study to address any final clarifications or revisions needed in the interview protocol.

Qualitative research conducted with an indepth interview protocol was suitable for this study because the purpose of the research was to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as to identify retention strategies to employ. In contrast, this researcher chose to not use a survey instrument with closed-ended questions but rather data collection gathered from a qualitative design that was better suited for detailed rich information (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Fink, 2003). In addition, determining the type of qualitative interview questions was important.

According to Marshall et al. (2022), the semistructured type of indepth interview allowed each participant to have a unique experience reporting on individual perceptions of the open-ended question format. Moreover, semistructured interview questions allowed the interviewer to ask probing questions to each interviewee based upon individual responses (Marshall et al., 2022). Conversely, this researcher chose not to use the informal conversation with impromptu nonscripted interview questions as it would not be suitable for participant-rich data collection. Alternatively, this researcher used the semistructured type of indepth interview using open-ended questions.

This researcher ensured validation of an original protocol instrument to be utilized in the indepth interview process; thus, the influencing literature that focused on teacher attrition included (a) teacher turnover intentions (Beck et al., 2020; Claffin et al., 2019; Li

et al., 2021), (b) teacher workplace conditions (Glazer, 2018b; Qin, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021), and (c) teacher burnout (Mahfouz, 2018; Matsuba & Williams, 2020; Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). According to Marshall et al. (2022), peer support was vital for efficient and reliable data collection; as such, expert panel review of the table of specifications and the indepth interview protocol allowed this researcher to ensure accuracy and alignment between the research questions and the indepth interview questions.

In addition, the expert panel was utilized to ensure clear smooth coverage with questioning devoid of holes or gaps addressing the research questions (Marshall et al., 2022). To illustrate, the expert panel reviewed the initial interview protocol that contained the research questions and indepth semistructured questions. Moreover, this researcher aimed to develop and validate trustworthy and credible data collection tools with an expert panel conducted with both a formative and a summative committee. From here, the formative committee validated the table of specifications and the indepth interview protocol to ensure accuracy in alignment and the overall quality of interview questions. This revised interview protocol instrument was reviewed in the summative committee to further ensure alignment, credibility, and efficiency for the interview process.

With this, the expert panel provided a relevant degree of expertise to ensure alignment of research questions and the indepth interview questions. The formative committee consisted of one dissertation chair member working for Nova Southeastern University, a fellow colleague in the educational leadership program who served as a school principal currently, and the researcher as a doctoral student in the educational leadership program at Nova Southeastern University and a public educator for over 30 years. The summative committee consisted of a dissertation member for Nova

Southeastern University, one college professor from Nova Southeastern University working in the educational leadership program, and one college professor who served as a director of dissertation services for Nova Southeastern University.

This researcher aimed to utilize the indepth interview protocol after gaining university approval. According to Fink (2003), when pilot testing potential participants ought to be utilized, targeting similar participants is needed for actual data collection. This validation process ensured trustworthiness and credibility to qualitative data collection. Furthermore, pilot testing provided valuable respondent perspectives, herein this researcher intended to elicit feedback from participants agreeing that the indepth interview questions were in alignment with the overall research question and purpose for the study. This researcher aimed to abide by ethical standards and university approval stipulations before conducting a pilot test utilizing indepth interviews with open-ended questions with probing question stems to gather rich data collection: According to Fink, instruments used in a pilot test ought to be administered with relative ease and in a friendly and comfortable setting. Finally, the credibility of an indepth interview process was attained by validation of the development of the indepth interview protocol qualitative instrument.

Procedures

This researcher intended to seek and secure approval through the university's Institutional Review Board before the onset of data collection (Fink, 2003). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), Institutional Review Board approval provided proper adherence to ethical guidelines protecting the well-being of human participants. After Institutional Review Board approval, pilot testing was conducted with two potential participants to provide a final preview of usability of the indepth interview protocol.

According to Fink (2003), the researcher ought to review outcomes of participant response and protocol usability and make any necessary changes to enhance use of the survey instrument. If modifications needed to be made to the interview protocol, this researcher submitted a revised copy of the indepth interview protocol for final Institutional Review Board approval before data collection takes place.

Once Institutional Review Board approval was final, research participants were recruited with research study invitations sent on the school email system.at the intended research site. Staff email addresses were obtained utilizing the address book on the Outlook online platform district email system. As such, research approval was secured from both the school site and the school district. To begin, upon speaking to the school principal, permission was granted for this researcher to conduct research at the school site. In addition, this researcher followed the research guidelines issued by the local school district to ensure valid and credible research results.

The school district's research guidelines required that a research permission request form be filled out and submitted within a specific calendar date range. Herewith the school district puts forth that all intended research must be ethical, non-intrusive, and gainful to the school district working mission and core values. Together with this, participant informed consent forms were presented to potential participants. The recruitment process was conducted in the following manner: (a) email was sent to staff notifying teachers and administrators of intended research and potential consideration to participate; (b) a week later, this researcher reached out to responders to preview informed consent forms and ask informed questions pertaining to the intended research; (c) during the course of 2 weeks, informed consent forms were reviewed and signed; and (d) interviews were set up with responders with a convenient time for interviews. Fink

(2003) determined that informed consent allows the research participant to be willing to participate in the research study with an understanding that participation in the study may come to an end as deemed necessary by the participant's freedom of choice.

Correspondingly, research participants approved of the invitation and the consent form and were scheduled to meet for an indepth interview.

The interview sessions were conducted at a secure meeting location within the school campus after contractual hours. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes and was audio recorded to provide this researcher an opportunity to produce an interview audio transcription. Member checking was applied to the interview process to provide opportunities to check for accuracy in participant response (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). As part of the member checking process, each participant received a transcription of the interview conducted to ensure accuracy and clarity in interview question responses. From here, interview participants were encouraged to verify interview material for meaning making and portrayal of personal experiences. Member checking was used to ensure validity of the interview transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Research data were extrapolated from respondents participating in indepth interviews with open-ended questions with the intent to gather knowledge of participants' thoughts and experiences (Marshall et al., 2022). In a like manner, Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) determined that data analysis conducted within the interview inquiry should involve analysis of participant responses and clarification of what was said by the participant, so data analysis of meaning and language was conducted in interview settings. Together with this, the steps for data analysis included multiple reads of interview transcripts for the purpose of detecting common themes and conclusive

findings on the research study.

This researcher intended to conduct interviews with audio recordings for transcription data analysis. The transcription process was completed with a text-to-speech-enabled word processing application. Following this, this researcher aimed to read the transcriptions while reflecting and summarizing handwritten notes, coding transcriptions into reoccurring themes, and beginning the process of analyzing findings through multiple reads of interview transcripts and analysis of thematic trends (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Moreover, a reflexive thematic analysis data process was used to analyze interview data, thereby enabling this researcher to gain a robust understanding of research participant perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). To begin, this researcher utilized six steps described by Braun and Clarke (2022) in reflexive thematic analysis. To conduct reflexive thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke shared that the onset of qualitative data analysis was initiated by reading all interview data content presented in interview transcripts with consideration to each participant and the entire data collection process. Next, this researcher coded the complete set of data collected producing general labels.

To continue this reflexive thematic analysis process, according to Braun and Clarke (2022), the researcher generated initial themes pertaining to the interview data, thereby creating initial themes according to each participant perspective. As well, Braun and Clarke advanced that the next step involved creating themes reflexive of each participant in the whole data set. To further initiate reflexive thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke, the researcher thoroughly examined themes within the entire data set by reviewing, refining, and naming each theme, thereby creating meaning of the participants' perspectives. In short, the final reflexive thematic analysis step was

finalizing a written account of the findings according to participant narratives, entire data set collected, cohesiveness to literature review, and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Ethical Considerations

Research participants had the ability to withdraw at any time without penalty based on voluntary participation. Additionally, the use of pseudonyms involved steps that were taken to preserve participant anonymity. Also, interview transcriptions and all study records were kept in a password-protected database to protect confidentiality and to ensure ethical considerations. Contained within this qualitative research study, ethical considerations also included the importance of preserving the nature of the relationship between the researcher and participant.

According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2018), establishing a relationship with the interviewee to ensure a comfortable setting for conversation was vital to secure rich data. Thus, creating a friendly environment was important. For this reason, establishing rapport with the participant created a relationship bond that ensured a willingness to continue with the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, the participant felt welcome to contribute knowledge and experiences based on firsthand experiences; however, it was important to not cross the line during the interview session by offering feedback to the participant while answering questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Not unlike Brinkmann and Kvale, Marshall et al. (2022) indicated that indepth interviews created a safe space to co-construct knowledge, as well as provide opportunities for the researcher to establish the role of a traveler during an interview process. By contrast, the researcher assumed the role of a miner during the indepth interview process; as such, the participants had opportunities to share rich details in response to personal thoughts,

feelings, and experiences (Marshall et al., 2022).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthy and credible data collection were dependent on skilled indepth interviews (Amatea & Clark, 2005). The researcher was keenly aware that she should determine the path of the interview by gauging the nature of the questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). This researcher practiced development of the following skills: (a) establishing factual and implied meanings, (b) maintaining observations of the interviewee with visual cues of body language, and (c) taking note of the level of interest in the topic during the interview. This skill practice allowed this researcher to be present in the interview gathering insightful data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). For this reason, a thorough development of the indepth interview protocol facilitated trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research studies (Amatea & Clark, 2005).

Marshall et al. (2022) determined that trustworthy and credible findings were ensured with efficient management of the data collection, transcription, and data analysis. Steps taken by this researcher to check the accuracy of the data collected and the interpretation could include (a) making handwritten notes throughout the entire research process to document thinking and decision-making, (b) immediate transcription of interview audio recording, and (c) member checking confirming with participant to check the accuracy of the data collection. Likewise, Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) determined that the qualitative researcher served as a critical determiner of trustworthiness conducting indepth interviews, so the qualitative researcher was the primary research instrument for obtaining knowledge.

Potential Research Bias

This researcher was a 30-year veteran public school teacher working in a

southeastern state of the United States. Throughout the 30-year span, this researcher worked at the elementary level working as a classroom teacher and as a teacher of English to speakers of other languages. Professional experience, working in five different school districts, focused light on the inner workings of teacher-led standards-based instruction and student achievement proficiency across grades ranging from kindergarten to Grade 5. Subsequently, this researcher had practical knowledge of and experience with the research topic, thereby managing personal beliefs through a bracketing process was adhered to prevent researcher biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In short, this researcher eliminated potential biases to arrive at a deeper level of understanding from research participants that have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The problem addressed in this study was that educational organizations were experiencing increased teacher attrition rates, thereby impacting teacher self-efficacy, workplace continuity, and student achievement levels. The increasing levels of teacher attrition were affecting both novice and veteran teachers. Beginning teachers were experiencing high turnover rates due to minimal support from colleagues and administration. Moreover, veteran teachers were increasingly leaving the teaching post prematurely, exiting the field of teaching and entering different career paths or early retirement.

The purpose of this applied research was to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as to identify retention strategies to employ to reduce attrition. Scholarly research on the topic of teacher attrition highlighted factors and issues related to this problematic dilemma; however, a limited amount of research was available regarding health issues encountered by teachers in the field as a result of other teachers exiting and fewer numbers of replacement teachers entering the classrooms. Study participants included eight teachers and two administrators currently working at the research site, which was a Title I public prekindergarten to Grade 5 school in an urban area of a southeastern state in the United States. Data were collected with a valid qualitative interview protocol developed by this researcher with 15 interview questions aligned with three research questions. Each in-depth interview session lasted 45 to 60 minutes.

Chapter 4 includes a presentation of the analyzed data from the interview protocol and responses to each of the three research questions. Guided by the phenomenological

research design, data were analyzed by following the Braun and Clarke (2022) thematic analysis data analysis procedure. Three or more similar statements from the interview responses formed a theme (Friedman & Berkovich, 2021). Themes were organized into three tables that represented the number of interview statements that formed the themes. A summary of themes from the analysis was used to answer the study's three research questions.

Participants

Ten participants (eight teachers and two administrators) were scheduled for the interviews, but one teacher participant canceled the interview session because of illness. To ensure confidentiality of data, only pseudonyms (Olivia, Heather, Suzie, Sam, Krystle, Sophia, Melissa, Amelia, and Mia) were used for the nine interviewees. All participants except Olivia identified with Caucasian ethnicity. Olivia, a certified elementary school teacher, had a master's degree. Olivia had 19 years of teaching experience and had worked in the school district for 19 years.

Heather had a master's degree in kindergarten to Grade 12 reading. She had certifications in gifted education, English for speakers of other languages, exceptional student education, and reading for kindergarten to Grade 12. Heather had 13 years of teaching experience and had worked in the school district for each of the 13 years. Suzie had a master's degree and certifications in English for speakers of other languages and reading for kindergarten to Grade 12. She had 16 years of experience as a teacher and had worked in the school district for each of the 16 years. Sam was an administrator with a master's degree in educational leadership. He had certifications in exceptional student education, reading for kindergarten to Grade 12, and school principalship. Sam was a teacher for about 5 years and had worked in the research setting school district for 28

years with 24 years in educational leadership and 18 years as an elementary school principal.

Krystle, a school administrator, had a master's degree in educational leadership and 11 years of experience as a teacher. She had worked in the research setting school for 11 years and in the school district for 19 years. Sophia's highest degree was a bachelor's degree with a certification in elementary education. She had 17 years of experience as a teacher and had worked in the school district for each of the 17 years. Melissa's highest degree was an educational specialist's degree with certifications in kindergarten to Grade 12 reading, exceptional student education, English for speakers of other languages, and educational leadership. She had 19 years of experience as a teacher and had worked in the school district for 4 years. Amelia's highest degree was a bachelor's degree with a certification in elementary education. She had 19 years of experience as a teacher and had worked in the school district for 5 years. Mia's highest degree was a master's degree. Mia was a certified autism specialist. She had 13 years of experience as a teacher and had worked in the school district for each of the 13 years.

Data Analysis for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following: What factors do teachers and administrators believe contribute to the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Interview Questions 1 to 5 were asked to collect data for the first research question:

1. Based on your experience, how do you believe teachers may arrive at a decision to leave the teaching profession?
2. How have you responded to teachers that may have expressed turnover intentions?

3. How have your daily responsibilities been affected by teachers leaving their teaching post?

4. What are your personal expectations for teacher retention?

5. Please describe your thoughts on teachers leaving their teaching post.

The category that resulted from the five interview questions involved factors that contribute to teachers' attrition, and 11 themes emerged from the category. Table 1 presents the 11 themes and the frequency of occurrence of statements suggestive of the 11 themes. These themes emerged from statements in the interview responses for the nine participants. Selected statements of participants suggestive of Themes 1 to 7 follow.

Krystle believed teachers became unhappy and wanted to leave the teaching profession when teachers perceived they were not making a difference in educating children and contributing positively to shaping the futures of children as adults. Aligned with Theme 1 (no longer feel making difference in educating students), Krystle responded as follows:

I found some teachers entered the teaching profession to make a positive difference in the lives of our children and became disenchanted when they felt incapable of making a positive difference. Now, in the classrooms, teachers encountered a lot of administrative and testing work that consumed many long hours. There were numerous curriculum and instruction changes that required continual and numerous hours of professional development for teachers. Without a doubt, when teachers perceived they were not making a difference in the education of children, they sought a different profession or a different school. Some teachers had challenges in teaching specific populations and grade levels of students, and the challenges contributed to their departure from the school. (Y.

Russ, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

Table 1

Factors That Contribute to Teachers' Attrition

Theme	No. statements suggesting theme
1. No longer feel making difference in educating students	7
2. Insufficient salaries for working long work hours and coping with paperwork demands from state	7
3. Frustration with covering classes for teachers who suddenly leave the school (working two jobs for one salary)	6
4. Personal and family reasons (retirement, family relocation to another state, and spouse receives job in another district)	5
5. Teachers leave principal (dictator) and not leave school.	5
6. Teaching is not a profession for everybody.	4
7. Immature young generation of teachers do not last too long in the profession.	4
8. Toxic teachers leave the school who are always unhappy about everything; their departure brightens school environment for other teachers.	3
9. Administrators say <i>my way or the highway</i> forces teachers to leave the school.	3
10. Leave school to run family business	3
11. Teachers not positively <i>vibing</i> with administrators and colleagues.	3

Susie suggested more teachers may remain in the profession with a substantial increase in salary. Susie wanted all teachers to be properly compensated for the many hours devoted to planning lessons, teaching lessons, testing, and grading assignments. Consistent with Theme 2 (Insufficient salaries for working long work hours and coping with paperwork demands from state), Susie responded as follows during the interview session:

Right now, I think a lot in a teacher's decision to depart the teaching profession

has to do with money and not being sufficiently paid. A teacher does not feel the current pay scale is equivalent to the work accomplished by the teacher. There is a lot of overwhelming new legislation and stuff coming down from the state level. I go on social media and follow a couple of people who are teachers. They are highly paid social media influencers. They actually say how much more is earned from work on social media. There is a girl I follow from Ohio who was a high school teacher and now she is making a lot of money, and people keep asking her when she is going back to teach in high school. The girl informs them she makes more money as a social media influencer than as a high school teacher. Therefore, the amount of money a teacher receives has a lot to do with teacher attrition. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Additionally, Susie was concerned about teachers being frustrated when they were assigned extra responsibilities with no additional pay or benefits. Sometimes, the extra responsibilities were assigned on short notice and required a significant amount of work and planning. Commenting on the extra responsibilities and reflecting Theme 3 (frustration with covering classes for teachers who suddenly leave the school (working two jobs for one salary), Susie stated the following:

I have a friend who was hired as the school's literacy coach, and the friend could not devote her total attention to being a literacy coach for the first half of the year. The reason was my friend had to cover for a Grade 2 teacher who unexpectedly left the school. My friend became upset and angry because she was hired to do one job and now unexpectedly was assigned another completely different job. Often, administrators may not know when someone was going to leave so another job assignment may be a last-minute thing and that left a teacher scrambling to get

things organized and ready to go. Obviously in any assigned job, a teacher wants to be able to do a good job. These extra responsibilities contribute to frustration and consideration of leaving the teaching profession or the school. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Similarly, Amelia echoed Theme 3 by stating the following:

Well, we have an example this year. We had a teacher who decided not to return, and it left our post open right when school started. So, we have to fill it in and oftentimes when we are filling in those empty spaces it is with a less qualified teacher or a long-term substitute. The other teachers have to help with the lesson plans and take personal time to train teachers. (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 5, 2023)

Like the comments of Susie and Amelia, Mia's statement reflected Theme 3:

A lot of us are picking up jobs for other people and covering classes. Today, I am going to go get another teacher's lunch cart at 11:30 a.m. because we do not have enough teachers. I am in special education, and we are extremely short-staffed. We are doing all kinds of things for each other. We all try to support each other. Yet, with daily responsibilities, I do my job, and then I try to help others or at least delegate. I sent two emails this morning to ask others to cover for some teachers. It took me a lot of years to get there, but now I am all about delegating.

Sam perceived teacher attrition as related to some non-school and family factors. Some of these family factors were not in the control of school and district administrators as suggested in Theme 4 (personal and family reasons such as retirement, family relocation to another state, and spouse receives job in another district). Accordingly, the response of Sam was as follows:

There may be varied ways a teacher arrives at a decision to leave the school or school district. A teacher may retire. Someone in the family of the teacher may have plans to relocate from the school area to a different state or country. Spouses may have job transfers to a different area in the state. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Additionally, suggestive of Theme 5 (teachers leave principal [dictator] but not leave school), Sam provided the following comment:

A teacher might leave the school or district because of burnout or frustration with top-down management or the state dictating everything done by the school. A prolific amount of documentation regarding curriculum and instruction follows the dictates of the state. My experiences show a teacher will not leave a school, but a teacher will leave a principal. The teacher may not get along well with the administrator. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Sophia's comments suggested Theme 6 (teaching is not a profession for everybody). Sophia reported that some people were not suited to be teachers. There may be teachers who entered the profession for a second career and needed to rethink the idea of teaching as a second career. There might be a tendency for some veteran teachers to become complacent and seek a change in occupations. Sophia stated the following:

The biggest thing I talked to teachers about is just asking what the motivation is to teach. I discovered for some people; teaching is just not their thing. It may be their second career. They enter the teaching profession and say this is different than I thought it would be. This is not me. But when you see somebody in their first career, and this is what they thought would be their vocation. Sometimes they are the ones that are getting burnout. They are the ones who are leaving the field.

What is going on here? The solution is they just need a change of scenery. They may be complacent. I do not like being complacent. I start getting itchy and then say, “What do I need to do differently”? (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 3, 2023)

Aligned with Theme 7 (immature young generation of teachers do not last too long in the profession), Melissa had concerns about some young teachers. Some young teachers were excellent teachers. Other young teachers became disenchanted and did not last too long in the teaching profession. Melissa responded as follows:

I feel like some young teachers are weak and unprofessional. These teachers are from an immature generation. I mean I have a daughter at the age of some young teachers, and these teachers do not see the reality of adulthood and careers. They look at things more like a job rather than as a career. Teaching is not just a job. Teaching is a calling. One of the things that I was thinking about is the need for more preparation in teaching careers. I think that some young teachers do not realize what they are getting themselves into. (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 3, 2023)

To answer Research Question 1 with the analyzed data, factors emerged from the findings that teachers and administrators perceived contributed to the number of teachers who left their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States. Examples of the factors are (a) teachers no longer feel they are making difference in educating students, (b) insufficient salaries for working long work hours and coping with paperwork demands from the state, (c) frustration with covering classes for teachers who suddenly leave the school, (d) personal and family reasons, (e) leave principal (dictator), (f) teaching is not a profession for everybody, and (g) immature young

generation of teachers do not last too long in the profession because of an inclination to progress too quickly up the pay scale with little or no training and teaching experiences.

Data Analysis for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following: What factors do teachers and administrators believe could decrease the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Interview Questions 6 to 10 were asked to collect data for the second research question:

6. What are your perceptions of teacher attrition?
7. What teacher skills do you think are necessary for teacher retention?
8. Please explain teacher retention strategies that are necessary.
9. What types of teacher retention strategies do you feel are the most beneficial?
10. Please describe how significant change in the school climate may have helped

with teacher turnover at your workplace.

The category that resulted from the five interview questions involved factors that decrease the number of teachers leaving the teaching position, and 13 themes emerged from the category. Table 2 presents the 13 themes and the frequency of occurrence of statements suggestive of the 13 themes. These themes emerged from statements in the interview responses for the nine participants. Selected statements of participants suggestive of Themes 1 to 7 follow.

A belief of Olivia was reflected in Theme 1 (positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership). Olivia believed a positive school climate might decrease the number of teachers who leave positions at the urban Title I school. Her thinking was a positive school climate was characterized by professionalism, trust among colleagues, and good leadership from administrators. Olivia responded as

follows:

I think teachers may be retained at the school if teachers are treated like professionals and real people. Some people view teachers as *throwaways*.

Teachers are real people. You cannot view teachers as people who you can tell what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. You cannot rationalize this leadership style because you are in charge of teachers. People must realize that teachers have their own minds and can think for themselves.

Table 2

Factors That Decrease Number of Teachers Leaving the Profession

Theme	No. statements suggesting theme
1. Positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership	7
2. Respect and admiration for work and sacrifices of teachers in the school	6
3. Make teachers feel welcome, supported, and listen to their ideas	6
4. Positivity and compliments given in hallways and classrooms to teachers and students	6
5. Mentorship for all teachers who need it, not just for novice teachers	5
6. Help teachers to understand school changes and facilitate their input to changes	5
7. District becomes more open to negotiations with the teachers' union.	4
8. School leaders identify strengths of teachers and get them in correct position in school to use strengths.	3
9. An extra day off to plan and lessen burnout	3
10. Hire interns at the school who learned school routine, teachers, and students	3
11. Good classroom management skills	3
12. Administrators employ good people skills with staff.	3
13. Teaching less theory in college and more application of instructional strategies in classrooms	3

Olivia continued by adding the following statement:

At some point, there must be a realization, you are leaving the kids with trained and responsible teachers. Thus, the community and others should not micromanage teachers. These negative situations are detrimental to the school climate. The negative situations contribute to the community of teachers not cohesively working together. Teachers do not want to stay in an unfavorable school climate where they are not happy. To illustrate, a previous principal created an unfavorable school climate when I was teaching Grade 2, the Grade 2 team became our own little family. Our family did everything possible to avoid the principal in the main hallways and to quickly make it to our Grade 2 hallway. We made our Grade 2 hallway our safe zone. However, we are happy at the current school. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Like Olivia, Mia's comments focused on Theme 1 (positive school climate). Mia responded as follows:

I do think that a positive school climate is a key factor. I think if the climate improves in places, there will be less turnover in the workplace. I have seen it in the past. At my previous school, I worked for a different administrator and the climate was not a welcoming place nor a happy place. A new principal came to the school. I saw a total shift in personalities and work ethics. The school became a happy place to be. We became a family.

Heather's comments were aligned with Theme 2 (respect and admiration for work and sacrifices of teachers in the school). Heather perceived critical factors in retaining teachers at urban Title I elementary schools were respect and admiration for the work of teachers. Illustrating her premise, Heather stated the following:

Additional pay and benefits are always an issue for teachers. But I think respect and admiration need to be returned to the teaching profession. Because on the outside, in public, we are not looked at with respect and admiration as teachers in our classrooms. Teachers need to be able to be the professionals that they are trained to be, and distrust of teachers has not and will not work. Teachers need to be allowed to teach children the way they were professionally trained to instruct children. Of course, I always want more pay, but I feel that allowing teachers to have more freedom to do what they need to do for instruction in their classrooms is important. Teachers know what they need to teach and simply want the freedom to teach, or they may leave the school and go elsewhere. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Sam was an administrator, and his comments echoed Theme 3 (make teachers feel welcome, supported, and listen to their ideas). To retain teachers at the school, Sam focused on the school leadership team ensuring teachers were made to feel welcome and supported. Their ideas might be heard in the decision-making process. Input may be solicited from teachers at all opportunities. There can be shared leadership, team building, and constant praise to retain teachers at urban Title I elementary schools. Sam stated the following:

Well, I think that staff must feel welcome and supported with materials and resources at the school. Further, all staff should feel heard and know their input is wanted and valued. It is best to begin the year with wonderful welcome back activities such as barbecues and scavenger hunts. You may remind teachers they are welcome, and we are a family. Important are constant team building, constant praise, frequent reinforcements, and shout outs. Like I said, sometimes teachers

get in a rut, and then it is best to say, we got to step back a little then get back into our routines. I think it is best to constantly think about ways to motivate and inspire teachers while also setting the expectations of important instructional and testing tasks that still need to be done. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

The premise of Susie was suggestive of Theme 4 (positivity and compliments given in hallways and classrooms to teachers and students). Susie's experiences conveyed teachers' and school leaders' demonstration of positivity supported retention efforts of teachers at the school. Susie replied as follows:

I think positivity will go a long way in keeping teachers from leaving school. I think everyone should just find at least one thing while in the classrooms and hallways and compliment teachers and students on these important discoveries. Just one compliment may truly change and enhance the day of teachers. You never know what teachers are feeling on the inside. They might have a happy face and feel terrible on the inside; one simple act of kindness may help make a better day for teachers and for the kids. Teachers have a lot of things going on. When teachers are doing good things, these situations should receive compliments. No teachers want to be miserable all day. Miserable teachers will not remain at the school. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

The interview responses of Krystle were suggestive of Theme 5 (mentorship for all teachers who need it, not just for novice teachers). She perceived mentorship to be a critical component in retaining teachers at the school. In her mind, mentorship was not only useful for novice teachers but useful for any teachers that required this type of support. Krystle responded as follows:

Mentorship is huge. I really think that the one year of mentorship our district offers is not enough. Teachers move from school to school, district to district, and state to state. These teachers require mentors to adapt to the unique environment and to keep them happy and comfortable in the new environment for a long time. Teachers require mentors because there is a different culture from school to school, and teachers need to feel aware of and connected to the culture of the current school. They need other teachers to support them before becoming discouraged and leaving the new situation. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

Amelia's comments were similar to the comments of Krystle on mentorship. Amelia reported that teachers were more effective with buddies in the school helping, listening, and refraining from criticism. Amelia said the following:

I think all teachers should have buddies they feel comfortable checking in with. Teachers need other teachers with which to collaborate, work together, share feelings, and validate their feelings without criticism. It definitely helps to converse with a buddy when you feel frustrated or really stuck on something. Teachers may bounce and trust the buddies to just validate and say, "I hear what you are saying and I can see where you are coming from." Additionally, a lot of new teachers need validation because there is the idolization of the more tenured teachers. Tenured teachers have been at this a long time. These tenured teachers continue to feel a certain way which validates the feelings and thinking of novice teachers. (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 5, 2023)

Additionally, consistent with Theme 6 (help teachers to understand school change and facilitate their input to changes occurring in the school), Krystle believed teachers had a

need to understand school changes and a voice in changes at the school that affected them and the students. Understanding the changes facilitated them to remain at the school as productive teachers. Suggestive of this premise, Krystle's interview response was as follows:

Teachers need to have input into changes at the school. We have an environment right now where teachers want to be a part of the changes. They want to have a significant voice in the changes. Therefore, teachers are reporting to work early on Friday mornings on their own times. At the Friday morning meetings, teachers give us their suggestions. They like venting about things that they may not agree with or understand. Administrators are opening their office doors and opening their ears to hear the ideas and suggestions from teachers. The ideas and suggestions help us move in a positive direction for the school and the children. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

Sophia showed much enthusiasm in the interview session. She was pleased that, finally, the district was working more collaboratively with the union. Echoing Theme 7 (district becomes more open to negotiations with the teachers' union), Sophia offered the following comment:

I will say that our district, I think, has been making small measurable steps with the teachers' union to improve teacher retention. I think the small steps helped with the contracts. I mean when you have many openings in the beginning of the year, there is something wrong here. Teachers leaving mid-year should not occur. Well, there is a reason for leaving mid-year. I do think that our district is starting to get a little more open to negotiations with our union. The district is doing what is needed to keep the teachers. (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 3, 2023)

To answer Research Question 2 with the results, factors emerged from the findings that teachers and administrators perceived might decrease the number of teachers who left their positions at the urban elementary school. Some of the factors were (a) positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership; (b) respect and admiration for work and sacrifices of teachers in the school; (c) make teachers feel welcome, supported, and listen to their ideas; (d) positivity and compliments given in hallways and classrooms to teachers and students; (e) mentorship for all teachers who need it, not just for novice teachers; (f) help teachers to understand school changes and facilitate their input to changes, and (g) district become more open to negotiations with the teachers' union.

Data Analysis for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked the following: How do teachers believe stress impacts teacher attrition rates at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Interview Questions 11 to 15 were asked to collect data for the third research question:

11. Based on your experience, what are your perceptions of teacher self-care?
12. What are your personal expectations for maintaining a healthy workplace?
13. Please describe any changes in working conditions that may have impacted teacher stress.
14. Please explain your thoughts on possible teacher retention strategies that are necessary from a school learning environment to ensure a healthy workplace.
15. How have you responded to teachers that may have experienced work stress related issues?

The category that resulted from the five interview questions involved the influence of

stress on teacher attrition rate, and 13 themes emerged from the category. Table 3 presents the 13 themes and the frequency of occurrence of statements suggestive of the 13 themes. These themes emerged from statements in the interview responses for the nine participants. Selected statements of participants suggestive of Themes 1 to 8 follow.

Table 3

Influence of Stress on Teachers' Attrition Rate

Theme	No. statements suggesting theme
1. Stress from micromanagement of teachers creates high teachers' anxiety, leading to higher attrition rate.	6
2. Stressful negative school atmosphere contributes to unhappy teachers, trickling down to problems with students and a higher teachers' attrition rate.	6
3. Non-school-related teachers' hobbies and leisure activities alleviate stress with enhancement of physical health, mental health, and attrition rate.	5
4. Use of personal leave days by teachers helps recovery from stressful teaching and improves their emotional health and classroom success with students.	4
5. COVID pandemic and hurricane disasters increased state legislation mandates and paperwork for teachers, leading to more stress and attrition.	4
6. Stress detracts from good time management skills and abilities to balance school and home lives and augments attrition.	4
7. Stressful COVID pandemic and increased technology use by students decreased parental school involvement and increased students' classroom misbehaviors.	4
8. Instructional coaches relieve stress, improve self-efficacy, and enhance retention.	4
9. Stress lowers immune system and negatively affect organs and breathing; teachers seek less stressful jobs.	3
10. Less stressful teachers when teachers know administrators are there for them	3
11. Use of district-free counselors lessens stress on teachers.	3
12. Stress of teachers is reduced when administrators simply <i>lend an ear</i> to teachers who just want to talk and remain at the school.	3
13. Different standards and curriculum from state and district each year contribute to stress and teacher attrition.	3

Olivia's statements were reflective of Theme 1 (stress from micromanagement of teachers creates high teachers' anxiety leading to higher attrition rate). She indicated that micromanagement of teachers contributed to stress and a high teacher attrition rate. Her belief was every teacher was different with different but effective teaching styles. She thought the differences in teachers were not necessarily a bad thing. Echoing this premise, Olivia stated the following:

You want teachers to teach kids in a certain way because you tell teachers every child learns differently. Therefore, teachers must find a way to differentiate the classroom instruction to reach every child. Yet, when administrators look at teachers, they do not differentiate between the teachers. When they walk into the classrooms, the expectations are that all teachers meet the same benchmarks and the same everything. Yet, I cannot copy my neighbor's pedagogy, because I do not teach like my neighbor. When administrators walk into classrooms, teachers become more stressed. One of the best times of the year for me is when I know my targeted administrator walkthrough is done, so that I can breathe again. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Further, consistent with Theme 2 (stressful negative school atmosphere contributes to unhappy teachers, trickling down to problems with students and a higher teachers' attrition rate), Olivia believed that administrators who are stressed create an atmosphere of stress for teachers conducive to increasing the attrition rate of teachers. Reflective of this premise, Olivia said the following:

If administrators keep the school atmosphere positive and happy, teachers will be positive and happy, which will trickle down to the kids. If I say to an administrator, I need help, the administrator should trust me enough to know I

tried every trick. I asked my questions to all teachers on my grade level. Why do you think I am coming to you as an administrator? You are my last resort. I really do not appreciate it when administrators tell me to reassess and reevaluate myself because these statements make me feel less than a professional. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Heather comments echoed Theme 3 (non-school-related teachers' hobbies and leisure activities alleviate stress with enhancement of physical health, mental health, and attrition rate). Heather is a strong advocate of teacher self-care to help reduce teacher stress and to reduce teacher attrition rates. She perceived hobbies and activities (vacation travel and socialization with friends and family members) not related to the activities in the school such were forms of self-care. In the interview session, Heather responded as follows:

Taking care of ourselves as teachers is important to reduce stress. I am not a good one at self-care management because I stay late at work on school functions many times. Yet, I think teacher self-care is particularly important. I believe in the importance of finding something that you are passionate about outside of education, and I think it is easy to find something you enjoy. It is good to do things with your friends at school, but teachers need to have outside interests to reduce stress. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 31, 2023)

Similar to Heather, Sam was a strong advocate of teacher self-care. Sam believed self-care supports the good health of teachers and reduces the stress on teachers. Sam knew that teachers who are constantly stressed may seek to leave the school for less stressful positions. Teacher self-care is vital for teachers to be effective as classroom teachers. Reflective of Theme 4 (use of personal leave days by teachers helps recovery

from stressful teaching and improves their emotional health, classroom success with students, and attrition rate), Sam responded as follows:

I think we, as educators, forget about ourselves, and we cannot forget about ourselves. If a teacher feels a little bit sick or run down, the teacher should not push himself or herself to come to work but take a personal day off from school. After the personal day, the teacher can return to work stronger and refreshed than before the personal day of leave. The teacher may be more effective in the role of a classroom teacher who ensures kids are getting everything they need. If a teacher is not taking care of himself or herself, how can the teacher take care of students? Therefore, I am definitely an advocate of teacher self-care. If a teacher phones me or texts me for a day off, I say go ahead take care of you. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Like Sam, Mia advocated teachers taking days off for mental self-care. Her interview responses suggested Theme 4. Mia stated the following:

Recently, we responded to stress-related situations in my department. Teachers needed to take time off work for themselves. We let some teachers go home for a couple of days. They took a couple days off. The days off were for mental health self-care. My theory is you have to take care of you. You got to put your oxygen mask on before you put it on somebody else. If you go down, you cannot help anybody else. So, you have to take care of yourself. I learned that very well a year ago. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

Suggestive of Theme 5 (COVID pandemic and hurricane disasters increased state legislation mandates and paperwork for teachers, leading to more stress and attrition), Susie thought the COVID pandemic and devastation from numerous hurricanes changed

education to be more stressful for teachers. During her interview, she said the following:

The COVID pandemic and disasters from hurricanes resulted in more new legislation for the schools from the state. I feel the additional legislation on how to operate the school contributes to extra paperwork for teachers, extra e-mails for teachers to view, and extra e-mails teachers have to send to parents and educational agencies. Sometimes it is a lot of little ones but when all those little ones add up, the accumulation does cause a lot of stress for teachers. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 29, 2023)

For Theme 6 (stress detracts from suitable time management skills and abilities to balance school and home lives and augments attrition), Krystle reported teachers' stress was correlated with teachers' time management skills and their abilities to balance work and home activities. Krystle reported the following:

Excellent time management skills are critical to stress reduction. If a teacher uses the time wisely throughout the work week of the school, the teacher may not have to take a lot of work home. The teacher might devote more time to the spouse, children in the house, and friends in the communities and churches. Balance is also critical to stress reduction. A teacher has to be able to balance the school workload with the personal life of the teacher. Balance is hard to do for any teacher. I have to practice balancing my schoolwork and home life. I know most teachers want to go above and beyond the call of duty to create authentic classrooms and build warm and supportive relationships with students.

Additionally, all of the planning for successful classroom activities take away from the home life of a teacher. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

Krystle had interview responses aligned with Theme 7 (stressful COVID pandemic and increased technology use by students decreased parental school involvement and increased students' classroom misbehaviors). She believed the COVID pandemic and increased technology usage may have unfavorably changed some parents and students. There seems to be less involvement from some parents in the education of the children. Some children have more mental and behavioral issues they bring into the classrooms. Interacting with these parents and students contributes to the stress of some teachers. Conveying this premise, Krystle responded with the following statement:

I think lack of parental support is huge; however, some parents just let educators do all the work to educate their children. These parents really do not feel they have to support the children's education in the home. Additionally, I think students are coming to school with more mental health issues and significant behavior problems than ever before. Additionally, the stress of state testing really puts significant stress on teachers, students, and parents. I think we really need to look at how we may reform education because our world is different now. (Y. Russ, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

Melissa's comments conveyed Theme 8 (coaching relieves stress, improves self-efficacy, and enhances retention). Melissa felt coaching increases the self-efficacy of teachers to manage their classrooms. Some teachers were excited to receive model lessons. Teaching strategies learned in coaching sessions helped teachers to feel more supported. Melissa posited the following:

I genuinely believe in coaching to increase the self-efficacy of teachers in their classroom instruction. I believe teachers need support with their classroom activities and lessons. Each teacher requires something different. Some teachers

may need you just to help them think of ideas. Other teachers may need you to come in and show them the way. Some teachers may need modeled lessons. In my opinion, with coaching, the teachers feel more supported. They feel less overwhelmed because somebody is there and available to help them. You know, all of us, who have been here as teachers for a long time never turned learning off. I will be in a classroom one day, and I will say what a great idea that teacher had. I will use the idea in another classroom. People do not realize the little tweaks make your life so much easier. We can all learn from each other, become less overwhelmed, and retain our teachers. (Y. Russ, personal communication, April 3, 2023)

To answer Research Question 3 with the findings, participants reported stress influenced teacher attrition rates in a variety of ways at the urban elementary school. Teachers perceived (a) stressful negative school atmosphere contributed to unhappy teachers, trickling down to severe problems with students; (b) non-school-related teachers' hobbies and leisure activities alleviated stress with enhancement of physical health and mental health; (c) use of personal leave days by teachers helped recovery from stressful teaching and improved their emotional health and classroom success with students; (d) COVID pandemic and hurricane disasters increased state legislation mandates and paperwork for teachers, leading to more stress and attrition, (e) stress detracted from good time management skills and abilities to balance school and home lives and augmented attrition; (f) stressful COVID pandemic and increased technology use by students decreased parental school involvement and increased students' classroom misbehaviors; and (g) instructional coaches relieve stress, improve self-efficacy, and enhance retention.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The problem addressed in this study was that educational organizations were experiencing increasing teacher attrition rates, thereby impacting teacher self-efficacy, workplace continuity, and student achievement levels. The increasing levels of teacher attrition were affecting both novice and veteran schoolteachers. Beginning teachers were experiencing high turnover rates due to minimal support from colleagues and administration. Moreover, veteran teachers were increasingly leaving the teaching post prematurely, exiting the field of teaching and entering different career paths or early retirement. The purpose of this applied research was to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as to identify retention strategies to employ to reduce the ill effects of teacher attrition. Scholarly research on the topic of teacher attrition highlighted factors and issues related to this problematic dilemma; however, a limited amount of research was available regarding health issues encountered by teachers in the field as a result of other teachers exiting and fewer numbers of replacement teachers entering the classrooms.

In Chapter 5, interview responses from the seven teachers and two administrators are summarized and interpreted with mostly current literature. Themes used to answer the three research questions are elaborated for meaning, relevancy, and significance to the research study. Implications from the analyzed data are presented, which are critical to the study. Suggestions are delineated for novice and veteran researchers who plan to extend the present study and add contributions the literature that are relevant to urban elementary Title I schools experiencing increasing teacher attrition rates. In the closing section of Chapter 5, the researcher offers conclusions and reflections.

Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked the following: What factors do teachers and administrators believe contribute to the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Factors emerged from the findings that teachers and administrators perceived contributed to the number of teachers who left their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States. Examples of the factors are (a) teachers no longer feel they are making difference in educating students, (b) insufficient salaries for working long work hours and coping with paperwork demands from the state, (c) frustration with covering classes for teachers who suddenly leave the school, (d) personal and family reasons, (e) teachers leave principal (dictator) but not leave school, (f) teaching is not a profession for everybody, and (g) immature young generation of teachers do not last too long in the profession.

Findings for Research Question 1 are supported by literature. For instance, Mendez (2019) suggested the salary of teachers is lower than the salaries of less educated professionals with no bachelor's or master's degree such as plumbers, electricians, and brick masons. Mendez advocated for more pay and benefits for teachers because of the many long hours in instructional planning and the inundation with administrative tasks and paperwork mandated by state and district policies. An increase in salary may support the retention of teachers in the education profession, according to Kalman (2020). Kalman advocated for increased teachers' salaries to support retention in the schools and school districts. The researcher explained that school leaders need to be cognizant that teachers are highly educated professionals who require support acquiring resources and best practices sufficient to educate children.

Nguyen et al. (2020) advocated for teacher input into the decision-making in elementary schools. Teachers might be guided to fill leadership positions and given autonomy regarding classroom instructional pedagogy. The rationale may be because of their advanced education and extensive professional development experiences. Nguyen et al. suggested that teacher education programs at universities should screen students to determine if teaching is the best profession for them to enter and to use as long-term career opportunities. Preservice teachers need to possess an intense desire to instruct children and a proclivity to have influence in the future lives of children in their care. Preservice teachers can be equipped with excellent teaching strategies through course work, field experiences, student teaching, and internships.

Once in the teaching profession, Hill-Jackson (2020) posited teachers should be valued by school administrators as competent professionals. Administrators may ensure teachers possess the self-efficacy and training required to manage their classrooms. Teachers need to acquire the training to employ research-based instructional practices through school and district-professional development sessions (Jayaweera et al., 2021). These teachers must be supported with resources to assure the classrooms operate smoothly and to reach and teach all students. Jennings et al. (2019) was concerned about the mental and physical health of teachers. School leaders should be cognizant that stress of teachers from conflicts with students, parents, community leaders, and administrators may affect teachers in many ways. Stress may negatively affect the organs of teacher, breathing, and weight of teachers. Stress leads to absences from the classrooms and an inability to competently manage and teach students (Jimerson & Fuentes, 2021).

Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked the following: What factors do teachers and

administrators believe could decrease the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Factors emerged from the findings that teachers and administrators perceived might decrease the number of teachers who left their positions at the urban elementary. Some of the factors were (a) positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership; (b) respect and admiration for work and sacrifices of teachers in the school, (c) make teachers feel welcome, supported, and listen to their ideas; (d) positivity and compliments given in hallways and classrooms to teachers and students; (e) mentorship for all teachers who need it, not just for novice teachers; (f) help teachers to understand school change and facilitate their input to changes occurring in the school, and (g) district become more open to negotiations with the teachers' union.

Findings for Research Question 2 are supported by literature. Kutsyuruba et al. (2020) explained that transformational and servant leaders tend to have teachers in the schools with high morale and high expectations for the academic success of students in the classrooms. The teachers demonstrate little inclination to relocate to a different district or profession. The reason is the teachers enjoy teaching and working in an environment with school leaders who respect professionalism. They enjoy a working environment where school leaders solicit and value their opinions. These transformational and servant leaders support teachers to reach their full potential through the use of mentorships and instructional coaches (Friedman & Berkovich, 2021). Teachers' self-efficacy with classroom instructional strategies is augmented leading to school leaders praising teachers for their classroom accomplishments and successes of their students on standardized tests (Gore & Rickards, 2021).

Critique and Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked the following: How do teachers believe stress impacts teacher attrition rates at a large urban elementary school in the southeastern United States? Teacher perceived (a) stressful negative school atmosphere contributed to unhappy teachers, trickling down to severe problems with students and a higher teachers' attrition rate; (b) non-school-related teachers' hobbies and leisure activities alleviated stress with enhancement of physical health, mental health, and attrition rate; (c) use of personal leave days by teachers helped recovery from stressful teaching and improved their emotional health, classroom success with students, and attrition rate; (d) COVID pandemic and hurricane disasters increased state legislation mandates and paperwork for teachers, leading to more stress and attrition, (e) stress detracted from good time management skills and abilities to balance school and home lives and augmented attrition; (f) stressful COVID pandemic and increased technology use by students decreased parental school involvement and increased students' classroom misbehaviors; and (g) coaching relieves stress, improves self-efficacy, and enhances retention.

Kim et al. (2020) was concerned with the prolific amount of stress on teachers in urban Title I elementary schools. The stress resulted in teachers taking personal leave days to try to refresh themselves so they may effectively teach their students and collaborate with colleagues in the professional learning communities. Knight (2019) noted the stress level of teachers was augmented because of major national and world events that changed the way we educate children. The elevated levels of stress changed parents in a negative way as well as confused students and contributed to behavior and mental issues for students.

Meaning, Understanding, Relevancy, and Significance

Findings from the three research questions have meaning, relevancy, and significance. Findings identify the problem with teacher attrition. Findings provide practical solutions for teacher retention in urban Title I elementary schools. Urban teachers and school leaders may easily identify with the problems associated with teacher attrition. The aim of the present study is for them to use practical solution strategies in the urban elementary school environment. In the present study, the investigation involved urban elementary schools experiencing increasing teacher attrition rates. These augmented attrition rates negatively affect teacher self-efficacy, workplace continuity, and student achievement levels. Students in the urban schools tended to have lower standardized test scores and a higher count of discipline referrals (Acton, 2021). They mostly reside in poverty neighborhoods. There is minimum involvement in school affairs by the parents (Acton, 2021). These unfavorable situational factors for young students augmented the meaning, relevance, and significance of findings in the present study.

Findings in the study convey teacher attrition is manifested when teachers no longer feel they are making a difference in the future lives of children. Teachers become stressed and their health suffers when they are inundated with paperwork and do not have a voice in the constantly changing curriculum and instruction practices. Findings conveyed relevant and significant practical solutions include the urban school leadership team shaping a positive school climate with professionalism, trust, and good school leadership; listening to the ideas of teachers, and widely implementing mentorships and instructional coaches. The experiences of the researcher as a veteran primary grade teacher shows the importance for these practical solutions to be discussed in professional learning communities, shared with parents, and disseminated widely in the local

communities.

Findings in the study are relevant and significant because these findings provide support for critical principles in the self-determination theory. The present study's research questions, problem statement, and purpose statement were framed by the principles in the self-determination theory. The theory postulates the teaching profession is best supported by teachers with minimum stress who are motivated to teach and manage the behaviors of young urban students even during tough times. The study's findings provide important solutions, confirmed by the literature, that facilitate the school leadership team to work more effectively with teachers during difficult times. In these difficult times, some teachers simply want a leader to lend an ear and hear the teacher talk about what is on their minds. Results in the present study show transitioning through challenging times become easier for teachers when the urban elementary school environment is characterized by cohesive relationships between school leaders and teachers and cohesive relationships between teachers and their colleagues in the urban schools (Daniels et al., 2020). Findings in the present study are meaningful and important in that the findings may help to shape the positive relationships.

A principle of the self-determination theory involves the need of urban elementary school teachers for high levels of self-autonomy to flourish and remain at the school (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The analyzed data in the study provide school leaders the tools to enhance their teachers' self-autonomy. Professional growth opportunities uncovered in the findings and implemented by school leaders such as the use of coaches and mentorships build self-autonomy. The use of coaches and mentorships are aligned with tenets in the self-determination theory. Ryan and Deci (2017) posited that teachers with ample leadership support and professional growth opportunities desired to stay as

teachers in their urban Title I schools. These teachers had supportive classroom environments for student learners (Albert, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Findings in the present study are meaningful and significant because exposure to the findings is critical to support the good mental, emotional, and physical health of urban teachers. Unfavorable mental, emotional, and physical health issues are elevated with challenging students in the classrooms and challenging and micromanaging principals in the school environment. Consequently, this researcher plans to broadly share the present study's findings. Results may be shared at school and district professional development sessions and presentations at state and national professional education conferences. The focus of the researcher's distribution of knowledge is to improve the health of teachers and enhance the retention of teachers, as suggested by Claffin et al. (2019). Claffin et al. determined that health problems may lead to a substantial number of teachers exiting the teaching profession. Additionally, managing teachers' health care and well-being is critical to the success of students in urban Title I elementary school classrooms (Farrar & Zaidi, 2018).

Implications

Seven implications came from the study's findings and the relevant literature. An implication is school principals may positively change the urban elementary school environment to facilitate retention of teachers in the schools, particularly teachers in schools located in poverty-stricken neighborhoods (Al-Mahdy et al., 2021). To accomplish this positive change, the principals, as discovered in the findings for Research Question 2, must shape a school environment characterized by professionalism, trust, good school leadership, positivity, and constant sincere compliments for teachers for their hard work and sacrifices. Administrators may foster school environments that nurture

teachers and promote retention by ensuring teachers feel important and welcome teachers each day in the school year (Education Week, 2021).

To feel important, as noted in the findings in the present study, the opinions and input of teachers in the normal school operations must be solicited and valued by school leaders. Al-Mahdy et al. (2021) reported principals who significantly invested in their urban elementary school teachers contributed to teachers feeling comfortable and desiring to come to work. These principals provided teachers with sorely needed resources and material support which teachers did not have to purchase with these teachers' personal funds. The principals considered the opinions of teachers (Al-Mahdy et al., 2021).

A second implication relates to school leaders' support for the mental health, physical health, and emotional health of teachers. Findings from Research Questions 1 and 2 show this support may be facilitated with leaders who treat teachers as professionals and do not micromanage teachers and their classrooms. Principals might encourage teachers to take a personal day off when teachers are overly stressed. These leaders may provide teachers with time off from work to take care of family issues. Teachers can be encouraged to pursue social and leisure activities after normal school hours with families and friends to alleviate stress (Bailey et al., 2020). Most importantly, the principals might aim to make teachers feel like an important part of the urban elementary school family (Garcia-Torres, 2019).

The third implication is that attrition is decreased and retention increased when school leaders focus on hiring teachers who are qualified and talented at teaching the subject matter and managing the classrooms. Attrition is decreased and retention increased when teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for teaching and convey a love for teaching urban, low-income, and disadvantaged minority young children. Zhu et al.

(2018) reported that word of mouth, use of networks, and use of talented interns enhanced the successful hire of qualified and talented teachers. Further, Zhu et al. contended principals must constantly remind teachers why they chose the teaching profession when teachers feel they are no longer making a difference in the future lives of their students. Principals may remind teachers of the importance of positively shaping the future lives of young children and the past successes of teachers and the school (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Principals can be a listening ear for teachers.

The fourth implication relates to the functions of the superintendent and district-level administrators. Effective urban Title I schools require that district-level leaders focus on hiring principals who possess superior transformational leadership traits (Education Week, 2021). The principals must demonstrate love and compassion for collaborating with educated professionals (Yuliyanti et al., 2020). Principals must be cognizant, as indicated in the findings for Research Question 1, that teaching is not a profession for just anyone one. Teaching urban elementary school children is a calling for teachers. District-level leaders must go beyond simply looking at resumes and prior educational accomplishments. They must go beyond focusing only on accolades potential principals received in the past.

Fifth, an implication pertains to the functions of universities' educational leadership and principal preparation programs. Findings in Research Question 3 suggested the COVID pandemic, hurricane disasters, and increased technology use by children changed education, parents, children, teachers, and school leaders. These changes must be addressed in the course work for preservice teachers and aspiring school leaders. Additionally, universities' course work and field experiences must prepare potential principals on the attributes that teachers and other educated professionals desire

in leaders (Wronoski, 2018). There must be information provided on traits that teachers value in leaders. The traits exclude administrators with the philosophy of my way or the highway, as discovered in the findings in the present study. University professors might be proactive in ensuring course work and field experiences in the principal preparation programs provide potential principals knowledge and practices on how to engender favorable and collegial working conditions in the urban elementary schools. Favorable working conditions result in teachers desiring to daily report to work and remain a part of the family at the urban elementary schools. The universities' course work and field experiences may encourage aspiring principals to view teachers as part of an extended family capable of helping all students achieve academic success (Beck et al., 2020).

Another implication is principals can identify novice and struggling teachers who require additional support and practice on their classroom management and pedagogical skills. These teachers may be guided to be an active part of the schools' professional learning communities. The teachers might be supported to seek help from their professional learning communities throughout the school day in a nonthreatening manner (Beck et al., 2020). There should be subject-matter specialists connected with some novice and struggling teachers (Gonzales et al., 2020). The subject-matter specialists might be available and willing to collaborate with the teachers during and after the school days.

Seventh, an implication is for the urban elementary school teachers to feel safe in the schools to facilitate their longevity at the schools. Principals may work to foster a culture of students and teachers feeling safe while at the urban schools. Important to these efforts are administrative support systems for incidents of students' and parents' violence directed against teachers (Bressman et al., 2018). The support systems might be

structured such that teachers become assured of receiving adequate and timely support from their principals regarding misbehaviors from students, parents, and community members. Positive and initiative-taking support systems will allow teachers to focus more on curriculum and instruction implementation instead of coping with and reporting incidents of violence against elementary school teachers. Bressman et al. (2018) posited that teachers required emotional and physical support from principals to cope with students' and parents' physical and verbal abuse of the teachers.

A final implication is to frequently employ mentorship programs and instructional coaches to accelerate teacher effectiveness and student academic learning as indicated in findings for Research Questions 2 and 3. Mentorships and instructional coaches reduce teacher attrition (Trent, 2019). To implement effective mentorships, there must exist a mentor selection criterion, common teaching assignments, and opportunities to plan with other teachers. Mentorships and instructional coaches for novice teachers might be structured to address specific instructional and classroom management skills needed for a successful first 3 years of teaching. Mentorships and instructional coaches may allow for self-directed learning and content learning opportunities that consider teachers' unique entry points and educational backgrounds. Targeted should be foundational learning opportunities to include classroom management, social-emotional learning, lesson planning and internalization, and pedagogy strategies (Toropova et al., 2021).

Recommendations for Change and Future Research Inquiry

The present study offers 10 recommendations. A recommendation for future research is to transition to a different qualitative research design than the phenomenological design in the present study. Suggestions for different qualitative designs include grounded theory and narrative designs with slightly different research

questions. A different qualitative design will unfold a unique point of view of teachers' and school administrators' views and perceptions on the topics of teachers' attrition and retention in urban elementary Title I schools (Braun & Clarke, 2022). With the innovative design, the qualitative researcher will also need to adjust the sample size consistent with data saturation. Braun and Clarke (2022) explained that sample sizes should be large enough to achieve data saturation and aligned with the identified research design and research questions. In the present study, the sample size of nine participants was sufficient to achieve data saturation.

Another recommendation is to change the study from a qualitative approach to data collection and data analysis to a quantitative approach to data collection and data analysis. Instead of focusing on one school district, as occurred in the present study, there may be a focus on several urban school districts and several urban elementary schools (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Quantitative studies tend to be generalizable to large populations. Quantitative researchers may quantitatively compare many urban elementary schools on teacher attrition and retention variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The third recommendation is for a future study to investigate teacher attrition and retention at different schools than the urban elementary school located in the Southeastern part of the United States in the present study. The schools may be rural, urban, and suburban schools. Schools might be middle and high schools. Schools might be Title I and non-Title I schools. Schools with the highest retention rates and lowest attrition rates may be highlighted and the best practices delineated in a plan for action (model of best practices) distributed widely to the research setting schools (Bressman et al., 2018).

Another recommendation is to investigate how principals' communication styles

with teachers influence teacher attrition and teacher retention. There might be an exploration of the preferred communication styles of principals that are best suited to use with urban elementary schoolteachers. Further, there should be several qualitative research questions planned to collect data on the relationships between principals' communication styles and teachers' attrition and retention rates for varied grade levels (i.e., kindergarten to Grade 5). These data may be quantitatively and qualitatively compared to determine if findings are similar or dissimilar.

Fifth, the present study collected only basic demographic data on participants who were urban school administrators and teachers. Pseudonyms were used for confidentiality of data. Additionally, no comparisons were made on critical demographic variables. Further studies may target more critical demographics of urban school administrators and teachers (Toropova et al., 2021). These demographics might include gender, ethnicity, highest degree earned, number and type of professional development sessions attended, university grade point average, certifications, age, and years of teaching experience. The focus of the investigation may be on the influence of the demographic variables regarding teachers' attrition and retention (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

A recommendation is for the present study to be replicated in an urban public-school district in which the researcher of the present study is not employed by the school district. Teachers who left the school, the district, or left teaching completely should be identified, located, and interviewed. Findings might be compared with those in the present study for differences and similarities.

Seventh, future research may compare novice teachers' experiences, successes, and failures with mentorships and instructional coaches with the similar experiences of veteran teachers with mentorships and instructional coaches. The additional research may

help provide more evidence for principals and school districts to standardize the implementation of mentorships and instructional coaches across the district (Yuliyanti et al., 2020).

Eighth, De Jong and Campoli (2018) noted the importance of counseling services for teachers who experienced mental health, physical health, and emotional health issues because of stress in the school environment. The aim of the counseling might be to enhance teacher retention and reduce stress. Therefore, a recommendation is to develop and quantitatively and qualitatively investigate school-based support programs that provide ongoing counseling services to teachers involved in unfavorable and stressful teacher colleague, school administrator, student, and parent encounters. The teachers who experienced mental health, physical health, and emotional health issues may be discontented and dissatisfied at the urban elementary schools. The reason for the discontentment may be the teachers expected to work and teach in a safe, nonthreatening, and stress-free school with their safety and mental health supported by the principals (De Jong & Campoli, 2018).

Ninth, a similar recommendation is for district administrators of urban kindergarten to Grade 12 schools to collaborate with teachers and school administrators to create policies that protect teachers who are susceptible to student and parent violence. Once implemented, the policies may undergo formative and summative evaluations by knowledgeable outside evaluators from nearby universities using a credible evaluation model. A recommended approach is the context-input-process-product model of program evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2000). The creation and evaluation of the policies might support teacher retention and decrease teacher attrition (Cooper, 2019). The policies may increase the knowledge of school districts and school administrators on the influence of violence

directed toward urban elementary school teachers. The policies must address long- and short-term effects of student violence on teachers (Claffin et al., 2019).

A final recommendation relates to the optimum time in the school year to collect interview data based on this researcher's experiences. The optimum time will reduce the stress on the researcher and ensure the collection of quality interview data. This researcher commenced data collection in the April and May 2023 period. Based upon these experiences, October is an ideal time frame to interview participants in the public school system for those researchers wanting to duplicate the present study. The researcher's rationale is classroom teachers have had an opportunity to settle in and develop a bond with each other. During October, teachers are getting a handle on time management within the classroom necessary for the classroom learning environment. Teachers and administrators have an opportunity to visualize and reflect on individual classrooms' daily operations and the overall functioning of the school learning environment. As such, teaching staff and school leaders can interpret and analyze teacher retention efforts to maintain a healthy workplace.

During October, participants would have an ample amount of time to schedule and participate substantively in quality interviews. Together with this, both interviewees and interviewer can consider more time slots available to choose from prior to the close of the first school semester in the school. In October, typically school leaders will have had ample opportunities to promote a supportive family atmosphere among staff and faculty members. As such, potential participants may have an opportunity to reflect on experiences participating and being engaged in school climate building opportunities. Participants may have an opportunity to reflect on impactful meaning making experiences leading to teacher retention.

Limitations

During this research study, research limitations occurred that affected the dissertation outcome. One limitation was recruiting participants for the study. Because of the nature of the study and the questions involved on the sensitive topics of attrition and retention, some teachers and administrators hesitated to participate, even though they were assured in writing using a Nova Southeastern University informed consent form that their answers would remain confidential. Some teachers and administrators suggested they might participate in the study during the recruitment process and were emailed the study's consent forms but did sign and return the consent forms. The aim of this researcher was to interview 10 participants. One participant became ill and canceled her interview. However, it was discovered that nine interviews were sufficient to achieve data saturation. This limitation prolonged the time necessary to recruit participants and collect the necessary data.

A second limitation is the nine participants were not a diverse group. All participants were from the Caucasian ethnicity except one participant. There was only one male participant and eight female participants. There were two administrators and seven teachers. Another limitation was some potential participants thought the research study may impede their responsibilities at work. Together with this, some research participants dropped out during the study due to the time-intensive process of the interview sessions and member checking, yet a sufficient number of participants (nine) remained in the study for saturation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall et al., 2022).

Conclusions and Reflections

The present study contributed to national and international literature because it

was an indepth phenomenological qualitative study of urban elementary school Title I teachers' attrition and retention. Interviews were conducted with nine administrators and teachers. Some researchers (Dizon-Ross, 2020; Han & Hur, 2022) explained researchers mostly approached teacher retention from a deficit approach, using exit surveys after teachers left the school, district, or teaching profession. The aim of the exit surveys in these quantitative studies was to discover reasons for leaving from these teachers. However, the present phenomenological qualitative study investigated reasons for teachers' departure and solutions to prevent the departure of future teachers. School and district administrators may use the findings in their schools' policies and procedures to support for retaining teachers in the schools.

As a teacher for 30-plus years, upon reflection, the researcher's personal and professional experiences mirror those reported in the present study's findings guided by three qualitative research questions and nine participants. For instance, she had experiences with a decrease in pay as a teacher due to relocating to a different school district within the same state. The new school district would not honor or provide proper compensation for all her years of experience working in the same public state educational system. This was a source of significant frustration for the researcher, which may lead other teachers with similar experiences to permanently leave the teaching profession. Additionally, trusted colleagues informed the researcher they felt a lack of respect and appreciation, so her colleagues left the teaching field and found alternate careers.

Further reflections on the researcher's life convey the school administration can either make or break a teacher's decision to leave their teaching post indefinitely. The researcher has had substandard administrators, which led to lateral transfers. She experienced the negative actions and behaviors of educational leaders forcing her

excellent teacher colleagues to quit teaching.

The researcher was a teacher during Hurricane Ian, a natural disaster occurring in September 2022. She and her colleagues felt the stress of interruption in both school responsibilities and personal life responsibilities dealing with the aftermath of the hurricane. Specifically, the hurricane lasted 15 hours with high excessive winds and debilitating storm surges that produced terrifying moments threatening both the safety and livelihood of our school staff members.

Currently, the researcher sees high inflationary prices having a stressful impact on her colleagues, and some colleagues are making continual sacrifices by working multiple jobs to pay bills. The researcher's colleagues are willing to accept lower pay wages as compensation. Yet, with all the challenges encountered by teachers (e.g., aftermath of hurricanes, low pay, and substandard school leadership), it is the researcher's sincere belief that most teachers want to make a difference in the lives of students, and happy teachers want to work in a positive, caring, and nonthreatening workplace.

Last, the knowledge acquired from findings for the three research questions may lead to positive social change in urban elementary Title I schools through enhancing teachers' working environment. Findings may help to maintain and elevate a positive school culture. The elevated positive school culture might increase teacher retention, reduce teacher attrition, and ensure that kindergarten to Grade 5 students at the research site will be adequately prepared for the future.

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109

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Appendix A

Table of Specifications

Table of Specifications

Interview Questions	Research Question 1: What factors do teachers and administrators believe contribute to the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeast United States?	Research Question 2: What factors do teachers and administrators believe could decrease the number of teachers who leave their positions at a large urban elementary school in the southeast United States?	Research Question 3: How does stress impact teacher attrition rates at a large urban elementary school in the southeast United States?
IQ1 Based on your experience, how do you believe teachers may arrive at a decision to leave the teaching profession?	X		
IQ2 How have you responded to teachers that may have expressed turnover intentions?	X		
IQ3 How have your daily responsibilities been affected by teachers leaving their teaching post?	X		
IQ4 What are your personal expectations for teacher retention?	X		
IQ5 Please describe your thoughts on teachers leaving their teaching post.	X		
IQ6 What are your perceptions of teacher attrition?		X	
IQ7 What teacher skills do you think are necessary for teacher retention?		X	
IQ8 Please explain possible teacher retention strategies that are necessary.		X	
IQ9 What types of			

teacher retention strategies do you feel are the most beneficial?		X	
IQ10 Please describe how significant change in the school climate may have helped with teacher turnover at your workplace.		X	
IQ11 Based on your experience, what are your perceptions of teacher self-care?			X
IQ12 What are your personal expectations for maintaining a healthy workplace?			X
IQ13 Please describe any changes in working conditions that may have impacted teacher stress.			X
IQ14 Please explain your thoughts on possible teacher retention strategies that are necessary from a school learning environment to ensure a healthy workplace.			X
IQ15 How have you responded to teachers that may have experienced work stress related issues?			X

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of teachers impacted by the problem of increasing teacher attrition, as well as identify retention strategies to employ.

Consent to interview: _____

Consent to record interview: _____

Educational Background/Degrees:

Certifications:

Years of experience as a teacher: _____

Years working for the county: _____

Subject/Educational Role:

Ethnicity: _____

Questions:

1. Based upon your experience, how do you believe teachers may arrive at a decision to leave the teaching profession?
 - a. Please explain a little bit more about this.
2. How have you responded to teachers that may have expressed turnover intentions?
 - a. Please describe your thoughts on this.
3. How have your daily responsibilities been affected by teachers leaving their teaching post?
 - a. How do you feel about this?
4. What are your personal expectations for teacher retention?
 - a. Please explain some issues that you have experienced with teacher turnover.
5. Please describe your thoughts on teachers leaving their teaching post.
 - a. How does this impact the school climate?

6. What are your perceptions of teacher attrition?
 - a. How does this impact teacher retention efforts?
7. What teacher skills do you think are necessary for teacher retention?
 - a. How do you feel about this?
8. Please explain teacher retention strategies that are necessary.
 - a. How does this impact teacher work conditions?
9. What types of teacher retention strategies do you feel are the most beneficial?
 - a. Please describe your thoughts on this.
10. Please describe how meaningful change in the school climate may have helped with teacher turnover at your workplace.
 - a. How do you feel about this?
11. Based on your experience, what are your perceptions of teacher self-care?
 - a. Please explain some issues that you have experienced with maintaining self-care.
12. What are your personal expectations for maintaining a healthy workplace?
 - a. Please describe your thoughts on this.
13. Please describe any changes in working conditions that may have impacted on teacher stress.
 - a. How do you feel about this?
14. Please explain your thoughts on teacher retention strategies that are necessary from a school learning environment to ensure a healthy workplace.
 - a. How does this impact health issue that teachers may experience?
15. How have you responded to teachers that may have experienced work stress related issues?
 - a. How does this impact the rate of teacher turnover?