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Instructional Leadership Practices of K-12 School Principals Regarding Teachers' Burnout

Lakeva Lajune Winchester
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

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Lakeva Winchester

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Dr. Peter Kiriakidis, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Jerry Collins, Committee Member, Education Faculty
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Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

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Abstract

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by

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EdS, Walden University, 2014

MA, University of Phoenix, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Teachers who experience burnout leave the teaching profession. School principals in a

public school district located in the southern United States are inconsistently

implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience

burnout. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to understand the

instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout. The

conceptual framework was Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development, which

posits that people are more motivated to learn when they are supported and encouraged

and is based on Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy, known as the adult leaning

theory. The research question considered how school principals implement instructional

leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. Purposive sampling was

used to select 15 principals. Data were collected via interviews using Zoom and an

interview protocol. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes. The

emergent themes showed that school principals should: collaborate and foster positive

relationships with teachers, provide feedback, support, offer professional development,

and communicate effectively with teachers. The findings have implications for positive

social change for school principals to better implement their instructional leadership

practices and support teachers experiencing burnout.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my husband, De'Ontay Winchester, whom I love and adore with all my heart. We are soul mates, lovers, and best friends. De'Ontay is my Rock; he always stands by me and encourages me to follow my dreams. He inspires me every day to follow my dreams and believes in me and my desires to make a difference in this world.

This is also dedicated to my mother, Geneve Greene. My mother instilled within me a work ethic that inspired me to always do my very best at every task. While pursuing my bachelor's degree, I promised her that one day I would earn a doctorate in education.

This is also dedicated to my late brother, Keith Greene and my sister, Tennille Greene. They consistently believed in me and encouraged me to continue my studies, although several times I was so overwhelmed that I almost gave up.

Last, but surely not least, I dedicated my doctoral study to my stepson, De'Ondray Winchester, nephew, Amari Grate, and niece, Saige Grate. They gave up many weekends at the movies and park so that I could work on my doctoral studies and make a difference in this world.

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guidance, support, and scholarly suggestions as I drafted my doctoral study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that emerges as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal job stressors. The key dimensions of this response are overwhelming exhaustion and feelings of cynicism detachment, ineffectiveness, and lack of accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Teaching is a stressful and interactive profession highly prone to burnout. The pressure that school administration can put on teachers and their lack of support can contribute to burnout (Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). Teachers often leave the profession due to high levels of stress (Gray et al., 2017). Teachers experience emotional exhaustion (Yorulmaz, Colak, & Altinkurt, 2017) because of principals' inconsistent leadership practices (Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, & Labat, 2015).

Positive social change may occur if school principals better implement their instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. Findings from this study may help them to do so. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, background, problem statement, purpose, research question, conceptual framework, nature, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary of the study.

Background

In the United States, school systems are grappling with the challenge of building and maintaining a high-quality teacher workforce (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019). Teachers leaving the profession contributes to these shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019). While the national attrition rate is 8% annually, there is

considerable variation in attrition rates by region (Sutcher et al., 2019). Thibodeaux et al. (2015) examined perceptions of teachers concerning the contributing factors that led to their decision to remain in the profession. Thibodeaux et al. stated that the working relationships between teachers and principals shall be improved. To better nurture this relationship, teachers must have support from school principals. One problem that exists in education is that many teachers do not stay in the teaching profession. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar (2017) reported that the relationship between teachers' involvement in professional learning activities and their burnout levels seems to be a relatively under researched area. Over the past decades, teacher burnout has attracted teacher education scholars worldwide as regards to its causes, effects, and amelioration (Kulavuz-Onal & Tatar, 2017).

Problem Statement

The research problem was that school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. The research site was a public school district located in the southern United States and included 25 K-12 schools. The mission of the school district was to create schools of academic excellence (senior school district administrator, personal communication, Sept. 22, 2019). Of the 25 public school principals, 15 were novice administrators who inconsistently implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers experiencing burnout, according to the school district superintendent.

According to the District Board Minutes documents, teachers have been complaining that school principals struggle as instructional leaders . According to the

superintendent of schools, although senior district administrators evaluated the leadership capacity of all principals by visiting the school sites to help principals to better implement instructional leadership practices, they found that not all school principals know how to implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers . District administrators reported to the board members that because principals continue to inconsistently implement instructional leadership practices, teachers' absenteeism increased and state scores in reading decreased (superintendent of schools, personal communication, November 1, 2019). Within the school district, teachers who experienced burnout: (a) had limited time for peer collaboration, (b) struggled with student discipline, and (c) had difficulties teaching the curricula (district human resources chairperson, personal communication, June 4, 2019). Moreover, teachers who experienced burnout left the teaching profession (district superintendent, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2019).

The pressure of discipline, time management, extracurricular activities, and standardized testing that school principals can put on teachers can lead to burnout (Gray et al., 2017). Burnout is a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion due to excessive stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Stress is a normal reaction the human body has when changes occur, and is associated with burnout (Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer, & Illic, 2015). Physical stress is also associated with burnout and a feeling of personal or professional inadequacy as well as reduced productivity and coping skills (Salvagioni et al., 2017).

Teachers often leave the teaching profession due to high levels of stress and burnout (Gray et al., 2017). Brok, Wubbels, and Tartwijk (2017) reported that teachers'

burnout is a problem for principals. Teachers experience emotional exhaustion

(Yorulmaz et al., 2017) because principals' leadership impact teachers' intent to remain

in the profession (Thibodeaux et al., 2015). Teaching is a challenging profession (Helou,

Nabhani, & Bahous, 2016) and school principals should support teachers to overcome

burnout (Richards, Levesque-Bristol, Templin, & Graber, 2016). Teacher burnout is

associated with principals' support (Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to examine the

instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout. Helou

et al. (2016) stated that teaching is a challenging profession, which can lead to teachers'

burnout. According to Yorulmaz et al. (2017), teacher burnout is a challenge for school

principals. Teachers leave the teaching profession because of principals' lack of

instructional leadership practices (Thibodeaux et al., 2015) and need support to overcome

burnout (Richards et al., 2016). Qadach, Schechter, and Da'as (2019) asserted that

keeping experienced teachers in schools is becoming an important challenge for school

principals.

Research Question

School principals should implement strategies for improving teacher burnout

(Prilleltensky, Neff, & Bessell, 2016). Prachee, Ranjeet, and Sushanta (2017) explored

the role of collaboration between teachers and school principals. Prachee et al. indicated

that school principals need to emphasize collaboration and leadership to retain teachers.

Qadach et al. (2019) asserted that keeping experienced and competent teachers in schools

is becoming an important challenge for principals' instructional leadership. The research question that guided this study was

How do K-12 school principals implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky believed that people learn and derive meaning from interacting with others in their environment (Barohny, 2019). In the concept of ZPD, Vygotsky advocated for collaboration and suggested that people learn when they are supported. Vygotsky stated that learning in the school setting is applicable to teachers. Vygotsky's theory can apply to K-12 school principals in relation to teacher support. For example, ZPD is an area of learning that occurs when a teacher who experiences burnout is assisted by an instructional leader. Vygotsky's theory is used to explain the findings of this research in relation to teachers' burnout. ZPD is based on the notions of the social origin of mental functions, unity of behavior, and consciousness, mediation, and psychological systems that can help understand the professional growth of teachers in their work (Shabani, 2016).

The conceptual framework of this study was also rooted in Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy known as the adult learning theory. Knowles emphasized that adults are self-directed and expected to take responsibility for their own decisions (Tainsh, 2016). Teachers: (a) need to know how to learn something, (b) need to learn experientially, and (c) need to approach learning as problem-solving (Tainsh, 2016).

Sahoo (2016) suggested that school principals can help reduce teachers' stress by providing them with support and guidance.

Vygotsky's and Knowles' theories were the foundation of my basic qualitative research study. The two theories were used to understand how school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. The theories were also used to develop the interview protocol.

Nature of the Study

The research design was a basic qualitative research study. A basic qualitative research study involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes (Nassaji, 2015). In qualitative research, the researcher is aware of the socially constructed nature of reality and is embedded in the context of the study (Yates & Leggett, 2016).

A basic qualitative research study was appropriate for this study to collect qualitative data regarding principals' instructional leadership practices. School principals' perceptions regarding their instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout were valuable. The phenomenon for this qualitative study were school principals and their instructional leadership practices at the research site, which was a large suburban public school district located in the southern United States. The school district consisted of 25 K-12 schools and served over 20,000 students. Thus, the nature of the qualitative study was an inquiry into the instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout.

For this basic qualitative research study, 15 K-12 principals were interviewed who met the selection criteria. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, which selected principals based on their knowledge about leadership practices relating to teacher burnout (Heather, Claire, & Simon, 2019). Interviews were used to collect qualitative data because the process sets an informal tone to the study. The potential participants were asked researcher generated open-ended interview questions to elicit narrative responses by using an interview protocol.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are defined:

Instructional leadership practices: Involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources, and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth (Bush, 2015).

Stress: A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances (Slavich, 2016).

Teacher attrition: A reduction or decrease in the numbers of teachers who leave the teaching profession (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Teacher burnout: A syndrome of emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment (Helou et al., 2016). Burnout effects range from psychological, physical, and behavioral symptoms that increase turnover(Helou et al., 2016).

Assumptions

An assumption was that the participants were transparent in the interviews. Although professional attempts were used to protect each participant's identity, the protection measures were successful in assuring the participants would respond truthfully and transparently. The assumption that the selection criteria were appropriate to assure that the participants have all experienced the same or similar phenomenon of the research. Another assumption was that the instructional leadership practices of school principals were related to teacher burnout.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of data collected for this research focused on 15 K-12 school principals from one school district located in a large suburban area in southern United States. For this study, 15 principals were selected from the 25 schools in the district. The principals who were selected had administrative experience of more than 2 years. Principals were selected by using the state's annual teacher attrition report posted on the state department of education website (The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020). Criteria for initial selection included schools exhibiting a high teacher attrition rate at the end of the year for the last 3 school years of 15% or higher (The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020). The scope was one school district. A delimit was that data collection was done in about 2 months.

Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

1. The study was limited to those participants who were willing to participate.

2. The study was limited to the qualitative examination of understanding the instructional leadership practices of K-12 school principals regarding teachers' burnout; therefore, the findings of this study may or may not be generalized to other K-12 school principals.

3. The study was limited to the research study. The threats to validity were possible if some K-12 school principals refused to participate.

4. The sample in this study was comprised of approximately 15 K-12 school principals who volunteered to participate; therefore, the findings from this study may or may not be used by other school principals.

5. The study was comprised of K-12 school principals from a suburban school district located in the southern United States; therefore, the finding of this study may or may not be generalized to other school districts.

6. The study was comprised of teachers from a suburban school district located in the southern United States; therefore, the finding of this study may or may not be generalized to teachers from other school districts.

7. The study was limited to a school district in the southern United States that had 25 schools; therefore, the findings of this study may or may not generalize to the entire K-12 population.

8. The school district administrators were not interviewed.

9. Data from students were not collected.

Significance

The findings of this research may be used by school district senior administrators and K-12 school principals to better support teachers who experience burnout. Senior district administrators may use the findings to help school principals better implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. K-12 school principals may use the findings to create a better teaching environment. The findings from this research may provide school district senior administrators and K-12 school principals with new knowledge to better support teachers who experience burnout.

The findings are of importance to community members and researchers to better support these teachers. Implications for positive social change may occur by helping K-12 school principals better implement their instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout.

Summary

Teachers who experience burnout left the teaching profession. The problem was that school principals in a public-school district located in the southern United States were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to understand the instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout. The conceptual framework was Vygotsky's theory of ZPD, which posited that people are more motivated to learn when they are supported and encouraged and was based on Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy known as the adult leaning theory. The research question concerned how school principals implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. Purposive sampling was used to select 15 principals. Data were collected via interviews by using Zoom and an interview protocol. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes. The findings may help school district senior administrators and school principals to better support teachers. Specifically, school principals may use the findings to create a better teaching environment for teachers. In Chapter 2, the literature review is introduced for the basic qualitative study. The focus of the literature review is on the topic of teacher burnout.

The purpose of the literature review is to understand teacher burnout by focusing on the

factors that cause burnout, attrition, and stress.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review focuses on the phenomenon of teacher burnout. The purpose of this literature review is to understand teacher burnout by focusing on the instructional leadership practices of school principals. The review begins with a description of burnout, attrition, stress, and the role of teacher-principal collaboration. The problem of teacher burnout is explored by highlighting the following areas: (a) factors that contribute to teacher burnout, (b) how teacher burnout contributes to teacher attrition, and (c) the stress levels of teachers. Chapter 2 includes the introduction of the literature review for the basic qualitative study, the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, literature review related to key variables and concepts, and a concluding summary.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive and systematic search of current literature was conducted using different electronic online databases through Walden University's Library, including ProQuest, Education Source, ERIC, Google Scholar, and SAGE. Key words helping guide the literature review included *burnout, teacher burnout, teacher retention, teacher shortages due to burnout, stress, physical stress, emotional stress, instructional leadership practices, school principals, principal survey, member checking, interview protocols, research methods, zone of proximal development, Vygotsky, andragogy,* and *Malcolm Knowles.* In addition, available literature related to the conceptual framework of this study was carefully and critically studied, including reading educational books, searching for peer-reviewed articles cited by other articles and journals, accessing references cited in other dissertations, and examining other research published within the

last 5 years at the time of this study. Research and references more than 5 years old had only been included to provide foundational and seminal thinking, theories, and research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was Vygotsky's theory of ZPD. Vygotsky promoted collaboration and suggested that people learn when they are supported. Vygotsky believed that when a person is in ZPD for a task, providing the appropriate assistance will give the person enough of a lift to achieve the task (Barohny, 2019). Vygotsky's theory can apply to school principals supporting teachers. For example, a school principal can use ZPD as a guide to a teacher's development in the classroom. Figland, Blackburn, Stair, and Smith (2019) explained that an ever-changing world of education has led to growing demand for teachers to remain competent educators. Sahoo (2016) recommended that employers help reduce employee stress by providing support and leadership. Vygotsky's ZPD is used as the framework to understand how school principals can provide support to teachers who experience burnout and to create the interview questions.

The conceptual framework of this basic qualitative study was Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy known as the adult learning theory. Malcolm Knowles' adult theory of learning highlights the distinct ways adults respond to learning (Tainsh, 2016). The adult learning theory makes the following assumptions: (a) adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, (b) experiences made by adults provides the basis for their learning activities, and (c) adult learning is not content-oriented but rather problem-centered (Tainsh, 2016). Knowles' theory of andragogy helped

understand how school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout.

Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar (2017) stated that over the past decades, teacher burnout has attracted teacher education scholars worldwide. They reported that the relationship between teachers' support from school principals is related to their involvement in professional learning activities. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar investigated teacher burnout and its relation to teachers' participation in professional activities. Although both individual and organizational factors have been studied in relation to teacher burnout, organizational factors are consistently found in predicting teacher burnout. In a school environment, for example, principals' support could lead to a negative or positive classroom climate, which could affect teachers' exhaustion. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar explained that teachers can experience burnout because they are overwhelmed with the high expectations from school principals and receive little support.

Malcolm Knowles emphasized that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions (Ado 2016). Olaniyi (2015) noted the following:

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed. Adults are likely to direct their own learning, to be actively involved in learning, and to work around their specific interests and personal goals.

- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to their learning.

- Adults are goal oriented. Adults have a target they want to meet, and this influences their decision to join classes for the attainment of that purpose.

- Adults are relevancy oriented. Adults need to see a reason for learning something. When they see the applicability, they also see the value in the experience. Theory needs to be related to practical experiences.

- Adult learners like to be respected. Adults brings considerable life experiences to their work environment. Adults like to be treated as equals, to voice their own opinions, and to have a role in directing their own learning.

Malik and Khaliq (2017) stated that adults have requirements as learners. They examined how adult learning is different, in the light of Knowles' assumptions of andragogy and various learning theories. Malik and Khaliq explored issues embedded in Knowles' assumptions including: (a) important characteristics of an adult learner, (b) learning or teaching strategies for effective learning in adults, and (c) enhancement of learning in adults. ZDP and andragogy theories were the foundation of this basic qualitative research study. The theories were used to understand how school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. The theories were used to develop the interview protocol.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Teacher Burnout

The experience of burnout has been the focus of much research during the past few decades. Maslach and Leiter (2016) claimed that burnout is a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion due to excessive stress. Yorulmaz et al. (2017) noted that burnout affects individuals' personal lives negatively. Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) stated that burnout is a syndrome that results from a form of chronic stress

associated with close contact with school principals. The syndrome is influenced by different issues and in turn can lead to various consequences (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015). Yasar and Ozdemir (2016) suggested that among the concepts of organizational problems, burnout is one of the most common. Burnout is considered both a personal problem and an organizational one. Burnout has been examined in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal achievement (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout affects schools in that it leads to a decrease in the quality of teaching and an increase in teacher turnover rate.

Burnout impairs both the personal and social functioning of teachers. The coining of the term "burnout" in a clinical sense is typically attributed to the psychologist Herbert Freudenberger, who described it as being particularly pertinent to caring professionals (Rajvinder, 2018). Hyman et al. (2017) noted that more than 40 years later, burnout is still conceptualized as uniquely affecting those in emotionally demanding professional roles. However, Perez-Marmol and Brown (2019) explained that one of the first documented reports of workplace burnout referred to people without occupational caring responsibilities. Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, and Yang (2015) stated that burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job. Burnout is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional inefficacy. The decline in the quality of work and in both physical and psychological health can be costly – not just for teachers, but for everyone affected by that person (Rajvinder, 2018). Sahni and Deswal (2015) explained that burnout is the experience of negative attitude, morale, and behavior when faced with work-related stressors. Sahni and Deswal surveyed the burnout

level of teachers and determined the likely factors that are associated with burnout. Sahni and Deswal found that teachers' qualification, years of experience, academic title, and principals' support were significant indicators of burnout. Sahni and Deswal concluded that teacher burnout may harm the quality of teaching, and may also lead to job dissatisfaction, physically and emotional ill-health, and teachers' leaving the teaching profession. School principals should provide interventions to alleviate burnout in teachers and to promote positive relationships that can occur at both school and on personal levels.

More studies are needed regarding teacher burnout. O'Brennan, Pas, Bradshaw, and Reschly (2019) found that previous studies have linked teacher burnout with job performance, satisfaction, and retention; however, there has been limited exploration of individual and school contextual factors that may influence burnout. O'Brennan et al. collected data from 3,225 high school teachers and paraprofessionals in 58 high schools from grades 9–12 across Maryland. Findings from the study indicated that self-efficacy related to experiences of work-related burnout. Cooper (n.d.) stated that teachers experience burnout. Cooper suggested that 3 to 4 years are needed, at minimum, to see the full effect of having school principals use the conscious discipline program to reduce burnout. Brasfield, Lancaster, and Xu (2019) posited that the teaching profession has been ranked historically as one of the highest stress-related careers.

Many teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years of teaching, and approximately one third plan to terminate employment in K-12 schools within the near future (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Brasfield et al. (2019) stated that school principals are challenged to identify factors that contribute to teachers' stress, which may

lead to burnout and attrition. Brasfield et al. provided recommendations for school principals to identify and provide intervention programs to support teacher perseverance due to burnout. Brasfield et al. indicated that school principals should survey teachers at several points during the school year to determine the existence of burnout levels. Future research in teacher burnout should continue to expand the current knowledge concerning school principals' leadership practices and teacher burnout.

Teacher burnout can have detrimental effects. Subon and Sigie (2016) discovered the burnout level of secondary school teachers as measured by their scores on the emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment surveys. Subon and Sigie randomly selected 50 teachers from two schools. Subon and Sigie indicated that the teachers of the two schools had a moderate level of burnout and that school setting did not have any significant relationship with teacher burnout. Buonomo, Fatigante, and Fiorilli (2017) stated that burnout represents a factual risk for teachers during their career. Buonomo et al. aimed to define different teachers' profiles based on their burnout levels and attitudes towards job satisfaction. Regarding teachers' positive attitudes toward their profession, Buonomo et al. analyzed teachers' engagement with their work as well as their reported positive relationships with their school principals. Buonomo et al. stated that engaged teachers show high motivation in their professional tasks and professional development. Teachers with higher scores in social and emotional competence have more positive relationships with school principals. The detrimental effects of burnout could be decreased if school principals use instructional leadership practices to engage teachers.

School principals should observe teachers that show signs of burnout so that they can provide them with professional support. Cansoy, Parlar, and Cagatay (2017) examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and burnout. Cansoy et al. used Maslach burnout inventory and teachers' sense of efficacy scale to gather data for the study. Cansoy et al. indicated that teachers experienced a certain level of emotional exhaustion and that school principals should plan instructional leadership practices to enable teachers to control their emotions and to cope with stressful situations. School principals should also take up training courses on the struggles of burnout. Cansoy et al. also stated that further studies could be planned at schools at the beginning of every year to enable teachers to gain experience to increase the self-efficacy. School principals should use qualitative research techniques, such as observation or interview, to help with the understanding of burnout and self-efficacy.

Teachers are exposed to burnout more than individuals working at other professions. Work environment acts as a main factor affecting burnout. Bozkus (2018) indicated that reduction of teacher workload, exploration of why teachers experience burnout and generating preventive measures from research findings were suggested. Bozkus (2018) stated that workloads of teachers should be reduced because increased workload may result in increased burnout. Bozkus (2018) articulated that given the fact that almost half of the teachers experience burnout, it is essential to research why teachers experience burnout, and then generate preventive measures to help the problem. Suh (2018) stated the warning signs of teacher burnout include depersonalization (distancing oneself from others), exhaustion or depression, and a lack of confidence in

one's own abilities. Suh (2018) specified that teacher burnout can lead to issues such as a decline in teacher absenteeism and teacher attrition. Suh (2018) articulated that certain factors appeared to put teachers at greater risk. For example, teachers are often isolated from their peers, leading to depersonalization (distancing oneself from others such as students, other teachers or administrators, or parents). Suh (2018) noted that school principals' pressure associated with the teaching profession also contribute to teacher burnout. Suh (2018) stated that schools are often hierarchical, and teachers may have little or no control over their classroom practices or what they teach.

Teachers who do not have control over what goes on in their classrooms, or who do not have the freedom to do what they believe is best for their students still face the pressure made by school principals to succeed through raising test scores. Suh (2018) specified that teachers reported the greatest cause of burnout is to be disregard from their school principals. Suh (2018) found that often, school principals do not realize teachers are experiencing burnout until it is too late. Tsang (2018) noted that teacher burnout has become a crucial phenomenon in the education system, as increasing numbers of teachers have been reported as stressed, exhausted, and depersonalized in their teaching. Tsang (2018) posited that teacher burnout has become a social issue and is not a purely psychological phenomenon. Tsang (2018) stated that it is important to identify the structural causes rather than the psychological causes of teacher burnout, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teacher burnout, and to develop better solutions. Tsang (2018) analyzed how teacher burnout can be caused by certain structural forces, including structural education reforms, the relationship between school principals and teachers, and

the occupational and career structure of teaching. Tsang (2018) survey showed that around 80% of teachers have been stressed or exhausted, more than 40% have been frustrated, and nearly 60% have not enjoyed teaching. Tsang (2018) reported that 50% of teachers feel powerless and stressed in teaching, more than 25% of teachers are depressed and anxious, and between 37% and 56% have considered resigning from the profession. Positive school practices and school principal's support is needed to help reduce burnout in teachers.

A growing number of teachers have high levels of occupational stress. Slavich (2016) noted that life stress is a central construct in many models of human health and disease. Slavich (2016) reviewed research on stress and health, with a focus on how life stress has been conceptualized and measured over time, recent evidence linking stress and disease, and mechanisms that might underlie these effects. Slavich (2016) provided evidence that stress is involved in the development, maintenance, or exacerbation of several mental and physical health conditions, including anxiety disorders, depression, cardiovascular disease, and certain types of cancer.

The effects of stress have been studied most using self-report checklist measures of life stress exposure, although interview-based approaches provide a more comprehensive assessment of individuals' exposure to stress (Slavich, 2016). Most recently, online systems like the Stress and Adversity Inventory (STRAIN) have been developed for assessing lifetime stress exposure, and such systems may provide important new information to help advance our understanding of how stressors occurring over the life course get embedded in the brain and body to affect lifespan health (Slavich,

2016). Jennings et al. (2017) noted the cultivating awareness and resilience in education (CARE) for teachers' program. CARE is a mindfulness-based professional development program designed to promote teachers' social and emotional competence and improve the quality of classroom interactions. The efficacy of CARE was assessed using a cluster randomized trial design involving 36 urban elementary schools and 224 teachers. CARE involved numerous of hours of in-person training in addition to intersession phone coaching. At both preintervention and postintervention, teachers completed self-report measures and assessments. Finding showed that CARE had statistically significant direct positive effects on adaptive emotion regulation, mindfulness, psychological distress, and time urgency. CARE also had a statistically significant positive effect on the emotional support domain of the classroom assessment scoring system. CARE for teachers was found to be an effective professional development program both for promoting teachers' social and emotional competence and for increasing the quality of their classroom interactions. Teachers who have high levels of occupational stress can have a negative impact on education quality.

Teaching is a highly stressful profession and can be associated with burnout. Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, and VanVeen (2018) explained that experiencing a high level of stress is detrimental for teachers. Stress seems to influence teachers' intension of leaving the profession/attrition, their decision to leave teaching and their teaching quality. Although the current knowledge on teacher stress gives an indication about the role of stress factors for outcomes such as attrition, the relationship between teacher stress and attrition remains inconclusive due to the fragmented nature of research

in studying the mentioned variables (Harmsen et al., 2018). Cetin and Dede (2018) stated that the teaching profession is seen as one of the professions experiencing intense stress. Teachers who are faced with unhappy situations such as anxiety, tension, anger, and depression can become stressful and could lead to teacher burnout.

School principals should support teachers who experience stress and burnout. Bottiani, Duran, Pas, and Bradshaw (2019) reported that both stress and burnout are pervasive among public school teachers and amplified in suburban schools. Bottiani et al. (2019) stated that relatively little is known about the factors contributing to stress and burnout among suburban schoolteachers. Bottiani et al. examined teachers who experienced burnout. Bottiani et al. used a sample of 255 teachers in 33 suburban middle schools. Bottiani et al. indicated that teachers reported higher stress and burnout.

Goddard, Goddard, and Miller (2015) articulated that school principals' instructional leadership practices contribute to teacher burnout. Goddard et al. stated that leadership and collaboration predicted burnout. Karimi and Adam (2018) examined the perceived occupational stress of teachers and the role of school principals with teachers who experienced burnout. Karimi and Adam results showed that lack of school principal's support as a dimension of teaching context can affect teachers' occupational stress more than other dimensions. Significant positive relationships were found between teachers' occupational stress and their burnout level. Johnson (2015) stated that the teaching profession is emotionally and physically demanding for teachers. Johnson articulated that teachers felt isolated from working alone in the classroom, have a sense of powerlessness, and have stress due to both physical and mental exhaustion. Johnson

indicated that stress for teachers could lead to burnout. Johnson examined the

relationship between stress and the coping strategies of teachers who experienced

burnout. Johnson defined coping as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts

to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or

exceeding the resources of the person. School principals who support teachers by using

instructional leadership practices can help reduce stress and burnout in teachers.

In the teaching profession prolonged stress can cause teacher burnout and could

influence the work performance of a teacher. Sneha and Maheswari (2020) stated that

occupational stress is a common contributor of inefficiency in teaching, degradation in

teaching quality, teachers' turnover, absenteeism, less job-satisfaction, and burnout.

Sneha and Maheswari (2020) investigated the relationship as well as level of

occupational stress and burnout with its effect on work performance of teachers. Over

145 teachers were interviewed within the survey. Occupational stress index, Maslach

burnout inventory and performance appraisal techniques were used to investigate the

relationship and level of occupational stress and burnout with its effect on work

performance. Sneha and Maheswari (2020) indicated that there is a positive correlation

between occupational stress and burnout, and work performance of the teachers Sneha

and Maheswari (2020) stated that teachers are the foremost valuable assets of a school.

A teacher with sensible work performance can help himself or herself as well as

to their students to realize success in future. Haydon (2018) stated that the effect of

occupational stress and its relationship to teachers leaving the profession is a concern.

Haydon (2018) noted that stress in teachers could significantly impact teachers' sense of

efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout, attrition, and physical health. Haydon (2018) indicated

that the lack of school principal's support could be a source of stress for teachers. Haydon

(2018) stated that high stress levels are noted as one of the main reasons why 25% to

50% of teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years of teaching. Teachers'

stress also affects their physical health and wellbeing.

Chronic stress among teachers is associated with exhaustion and negative changes

in biological indicators of stress. For example, chronically stressed teachers show

atypical daily patterns of stress reactivity and cortisol levels. Haydon (2018) noted that

sources of stress experienced by a teacher are unique and depend on the precise

interaction between the teacher's personality, values, skills, and circumstances. Haydon

(2018) indicated that there is reason to expand research in teacher stress, so it reflects a

variety of contexts and individuals. School principals should properly manage stress and

burnout in teachers to positively influence the work performance of a teacher.

Challenges of Teacher Burnout

Burnout effects range from psychological, physical, and behavioral symptoms to

increased turnover, which affects students and schools. Helou et al. (2016) stated that

teaching is a challenging profession sometimes leading to teachers' burnout, which is a

syndrome of emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. Helou et al.

(2016) identified levels of and factors causing Lebanese teachers' burnout by eliciting

their perspectives about the matter. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar (2017) stated that over the

past decades, teacher burnout has attracted teacher education scholars worldwide as

regards to its causes, effects, and amelioration. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar reported that the

relationship between teachers' involvement in professional activities and their burnout levels seems to be a relatively under researched area. Kulavuz-Onal and Tatar investigated teacher burnout and its relation to teachers' participation in professional activities in 2 relatively different context of state versus private schools. In a school environment, school principals' support and teacher workload could lead to a negative or positive classroom climate, which could affect teachers' exhaustion. School principals need to use positive instructional leadership practices to reduce teachers' exhaustion and burnout levels.

Factors Affecting Teacher Burnout

Burnout means an individual becoming insensitive to other people's work, feeling exhausted and feeling less successful. Okcu and Cetin (2017) stated that burnout is a main factor affecting the job stress levels of employees; this and the accompanying loss of productivity are among the unfavorable conditions commonly in many social organizations. Burnout has a negative effect on occupational performance. Even if the individual does not leave their job, occupational performance reflects the unfavorable experiences of their work.

Rapid change of expectations concerning the organization, and the individual's inability to keep up with this rapid change, enhances the feeling of burnout (Okcu & Cetin, 2017). Thibodeaux et al. (2015) examined teachers' concerns regarding the contributing factors that led to their intent to remain in the teaching profession. Thibodeaux et al. stated that to better nurture teacher-principal relationships, teachers in

schools must have support from stakeholders such as parents, school principals, communities, school board members, and students.

For learning and quality instruction to occur, the school principals must make themselves available to identify problems in schools and work to resolve them (Okcu & Cetin, 2017). Teachers do not stay in the profession long enough to build collaborative relationships with school principals to be considered effective in their daily endeavors (Okcu & Cetin, 2017). Gray et al. (2017) posited that teachers are in a profession with high demands as they work to meet the needs of school principals. Gray et al. (2017) stated that teachers' mental health may contribute to the resilience of teachers who choose to stay in the profession. Richards et al. (2016) explained that the role of a teacher is becoming increasingly complex, and that teachers are more prone to burnout. According to Yilmaz, Altinkurt, and Güner (2015), teachers are prone to burnout. In addition, teachers are not in collaboration with school principals to fulfill the many roles (Richards et al., 2016). Anomneze, Ugwu, Enwereuzor, and Ugwu (2016) argued that globally, teachers occupy a central role in the delivery of quality education to students. Anomneze et al. (2016) reported that the highest levels of burnout are found among teachers with higher education. Anomneze et al. (2016) considered burnout as a significant workplace problem and found that it is associated with stress of teachers. Zhang and Zeller (2016) asserted that teacher burnout is a chronic phenomenon that causes high percentage of attrition in the education profession. Burnout can increase absenteeism and counterproductive instruction, which negatively impacts quality of

learning for students. Many teachers experience high levels of stress contributing to burnout, and unfortunately many leave the profession.

Teacher attrition costs school districts billions of dollars per year across the United States. According to Dassa and Derose (2017), teacher attrition has been a global concern for many decades, with teachers leaving the profession at a higher rate than those entering. The largest group effected by this attrition issue is the beginning teacher. In fact, in the United States between 30% and 50% of new teachers leave the teaching profession within the first 5 years. Many studies have been conducted to find out how this is occurring year after year (Dassa & Derose, 2017).

The thoughts of teachers need to be investigated to determine if they impact the final decision to leave the teaching profession (Dassa & Derose, 2017). Stewart (2015) explored the relationship between burnout dimensions (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of personal accomplishment) and specific job demands. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015) stated that trust is important in schools to reduce teacher burnout. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015) indicated that school-level trust of school principals' influences teacher burnout. Rumschlag (2017) stated that teacher burnout is a chronic phenomenon that causes high percentage of attrition in the education profession. Burnout can increase absenteeism and counterproductive instruction which negatively impacts quality of learning for students. Data were collected from 162 rural Ohio schoolteachers and measured teachers 'sense of personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization as three identified components of burnout. Results showed that burnout experience significantly varied by gender regardless of

teaching experience. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) explored work-related stress, consequences of stress, and coping strategies among Norwegian teachers. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) used interviews with 30 teachers and 4 retired teachers. The teachers reported high levels of stress and exhaustion. Teacher stress is strongly related to teachers' working conditions. School principals need to explore the phenomenon of teacher burnout, which is the biggest contributor to teacher attrition.

Teacher attrition is an ongoing problem in schools. Hughes et al. (2015) examined the relationship between principal support and attrition of teachers in hard-to-staff schools. Hughes et al.(2015) focused on how to: (a) determine the relationship between teacher attrition and principal support, (b) examine the perception of support between teachers and principals and how these perceptions affect teacher attrition in hard-to-staff schools, and (c) discover if there is a problem between the principal's supports and teacher attrition. Teachers who participated in Hughes' et al. (2015) study provided insight as to which forms of support, they valued most from their principals. Hughes' et al. (2015) findings demonstrated that principals and teachers have different perceptions of teachers' support.

Principals perceived their support for teachers was greater than the support the teachers felt they received. Ford, Urick, and Wilson (n.d.) specified that teacher satisfaction is a key affective reaction to working conditions and an important predictor of teacher attrition. Teacher evaluation as a tool for measuring teacher quality has been one source of teacher stress in recent years in the United States. Ford et al. (n.d.) explored that the relationship between supportive teacher evaluation experiences and United States

teachers' overall job satisfaction. Ford et al. (n.d.) employed a multilevel regression analysis to multiply-imputed data on United States lower-secondary teachers' experiences. Ford et al. (n.d.) found a small, positive relationship between the perceptions of supportive teacher evaluation experiences and United States secondary teachers' satisfaction after controlling for other important teacher and school characteristics and working conditions. Further findings indicated that teachers who felt their evaluation led to positive changes in their practice had higher job satisfaction. Ford et al. (n.d.) discussed the implications of these findings for school principals.

Teacher attrition has caused increasing concerns in the past decades for both policymakers and school principals. Gui (2019) examined the responses of over 300 teachers from Western and Southeast Michigan that was gathered from a 24-questions survey. Gui (2019) indicated that school principal's practices, leadership, and support significantly negatively affected teacher satisfaction and attrition. School principal's practices, leadership, and support of teachers has an impact on teacher attrition and is an ongoing problem in schools.

School principal's support during early years of teaching is critical for teachers. Cross and Thomas (2017) articulated that most teachers leave within their first 5 years in the teaching field. Cross and Thomas (2017) described steps taken to design a cross-institutional, collaborative three-year residency program for K-8 educators, and explains the importance of reimagined co-teaching, critical, and cross-institutional partnerships in middle grades teacher education. Cross and Thomas (2017) urged readers to consider how to implement similar modifications in their own spaces to create powerful,

collaborative middle grades teacher education and induction. Although there is debate about teacher attrition rates, Cross and Thomas (2017) suggested that anywhere from 17-50% of new teachers leave the field within the first 5 years of their career. Cross and Thomas (2017) stated that limited training in teaching methods and pedagogy seems to be related to high teacher attrition. School principal's support is needed during early years of teaching for teachers. Teachers with limited practice of teaching and the lack of feedback from school principals are more likely to leave the profession within their first 5 years.

Teacher attrition has become a challenge in many educational systems worldwide. Elyashiv (2019) indicated that the main reasons that motivate teachers' decision to leave the profession are related to the stressful working environment and poor job conditions. Elyashiv (2019) claimed that the use of the language of emotions is a significant leadership resource that can be used by school principals to reduce teacher attrition. Language of emotions used by school principals builds collaboration and support, and thus increases teachers' sense of belonging. Language of emotions used by school principals builds collaboration and support, and thus increases teachers' sense of belonging. Player, Youngs, Perrone, and Grogan (2017) found that school principal's support strongly predicted attrition in one's school. Player et al. (2017) findings indicated that school districts should attend to school principal's support in schools and teaching applicants' match with the demands of the profession to increase the likelihood that teachers are retained over time. Player et al. (2017) posited that strong principal's support can promote teacher attrition even in contexts where student and teacher characteristics

predict that turnover is likely. Teachers who have the principal's support are less likely to leave the teaching profession.

Teacher attrition is high among teachers across the nation and is one of the most serious causes of teacher shortage. Zhang and Zeller (2016) explained that teacher attrition is important because teacher turnover creates instability and costs and negatively impacts teaching quality, especially in school that most need stability. Between 40% and 50% of teachers will leave the classroom within the first 5 years. The percentage of teachers leaving the classroom includes the 9.5% who leave before the end of their first year. Richards, Hemphill, and Templin (2018) stated that teaching has been characterized as a stressful profession that is prone to burnout. Richards et al. (2018) indicated that: (a) low-burnout teachers perceived nurturing teaching environments, (b) high-burnout teachers perceived combative and constraining teaching environments, and (c) all teachers had to manage workplace stress. Building from the findings, a model for understanding how the school environment influences teacher burnout was created (Richards et al., 2018), which highlighted the importance of developing optimal working conditions that nurture teacher development. Nguyen (2020) stated that teacher attrition is a key contributor to teacher shortages in many states, particularly those with large geographically rural areas. Nguyen (2020) used a school and staffing survey and Kansas to examine the teacher labor force. Nguyen's (2020) study described the teacher mobility patterns for Kansas and compared them against the national average, the Midwest states, and the Great Plains states. Nguyen (2020) examined whether first year teachers, teachers with graduate degrees, special education teachers, and high school teachers in Kansas are

likely to leave the teaching profession. Nguyen (2020) found that the teacher labor force and school conditions in Kansas have changed over time and how Kansas teachers are more at risk of leaving the teaching profession, even in comparison with nearby states with large geographically rural areas. Nguyen (2020) results suggested school districts and administrators need to diversify the teacher workforce to match that of the students whom they teach. First year teachers, special education, and high school teachers are more at risk of leaving the teaching profession and school principals need to use instructional leadership practices to support these teachers.

One of the most important factors to the delivery of quality education is teacher attrition. Harris, Davies, Christensen, Hanks, and Bowles (2019) posited that up to 16% of public-school teachers may leave their schools every year, some of whom move to a different school, and many of whom leave the profession entirely. Harris et al. (2019) articulated the perception of school principals regarding the effect of workplace conditions on teacher attrition. Harris et al. (2019) asserted that several school principals disagreed about (a) workplace conditions for teachers, (b) the magnitude of these problems, and (c) the degree to which these problems may contribute to teachers leaving the teaching profession. Harris et al. (2019) stated that the greatest disagreements occurred in perceptions of (a) teachers' involvement in decision-making, (b) protection of teacher preparation time, (c) school principals' management of student discipline, and (d) the professional relationship between teachers and school principals. Harris et al. (2019) found that overall, principals believed that work conditions are relatively good for teachers, while many teachers disagreed with these perceptions. Since it is costly for

schools to lose teachers, it is important for school principals to understand the factors

driving the teacher attrition problem.

Instructional Leadership Practices

School principals can help decrease the number of teachers leaving the teaching

profession due to burnout. Balyer, Ozcan, and Yildiz (2017) noted that school principals

can help teachers to stay in the profession by providing opportunities for shared decision-

making, building professional relationships, and creating good communication among

teachers. Balyer et al. (2017) revealed that school principals do not adequately support

teachers' autonomy or employ them in managerial roles which increases the number of

teachers leaving the teaching profession due to burnout. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis

(2015) stated that school principals' behaviors and leadership made significant

independent contributions to teacher burnout. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015)

suggested that school principals should foster and maintain a positive professional

relationship with teachers to lead schools effectively. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis

(2015) stated that a positive professional relationship has both interpersonal and task-

oriented dimensions. School principals must be prepared to engage collegially with

teachers in ways that are consistently honest, open, and benevolent, while also

dependably demonstrating sound knowledge and competent decision making associated

with administering academic programs. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) indicated

that the relationship between teachers and school principals would not be successful

without trustworthy school principals who are skillful in teacher professionalism and

community engagement in their schools. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found that

teachers' professional relationship with school principals are related to perceptions of instructional leadership. Prachee's et al. (2017) explored the role of collaboration among teachers and school principals. Prachee et al. (2017) confirmed that both collaboration and principal leadership are positively related to teacher self-efficacy. The results also indicated that school principals need to focus on enhancing self-efficacy of their teachers and give importance to teacher collaboration and principal leadership in order to improve their effectiveness in terms of delivery of instruction, teacher-student interactions, and regulating student learning. Ford, Olsen, Khojasteh, Ware, and Urick (2019) used a sample size of over 1,500 teachers from 73 schools in a large, high poverty, urban Midwestern school district. Ford et al. (2019) applied a multilevel path analysis to study the relationships between the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational dimensions of teacher psychological needs and teacher burnout, and intent to leave the school and/or stay in the teaching profession. Teachers should have a professional relationship with school principals. School principals who have a professional relationship with teachers can help decrease the number of teachers leaving the teaching profession due to burnout.

The school principal is the creator or re-shaper of a school's teacher culture and influences not only the actions of the school staff, but also their motivation to stay in the teaching profession. The school principal's personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors have a crucial influence on the principal's practices and teacher burnout. Qadach et al. (2019) asserted that keeping experienced and competent teachers in schools is becoming an important challenge for school leadership. Qadach et al. (2019) explored the direct and indirect relationship between principals' instructional leadership, collective teacher

efficacy, a shared vision, and a teacher's intent to leave their school. Qadach et al. (2019) confirmed that collective teacher efficacy and shared vision emerge as prominent mediators between principals' instructional leadership and a teacher's intent to leave. Holmes, Parker, and Gibson (2019) stated that national, state, and local educational agencies identify teacher retention as an issue of continuous importance and concern. Holmes et al. (2019) addressed the issue of teacher retention through the lens of administrative effectiveness and involvement, as well as teachers' intrinsic motivations. Holmes et al. (2019) stated that each school division and individual school must work purposefully to devise plans to retain teachers. According to Postholm and Waege (2015), that principals should support teachers. Postholm and Waege (2015) suggested that school principals' leadership practices can make a difference for teachers' who experience burnout. Hsin-Hsiange and Mao-Neng (2015) demonstrated that school principals have a significant direct or indirect impact on teachers' performance, job satisfaction, effectiveness, motivation, collaboration, and commitment to stay in the teaching profession. Hsin-Hsiange and Mao-Neng (2015) specified that an efficient school principal may need to offer teachers charismatic leadership, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. A school principal should be able to read the school culture correctly, assess the culture appropriately, and reinforce or transform it as needed to make the school run smoothly.

Summary and Conclusions

The conceptual framework were Vygotsky's theory of proximal development and Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy. Vygotsky believed that people learn and derive

meaning from interacting with others in their environment (Barohny, 2019). Knowles'

theory emphasized that adults work best when they are self-directed and can take

responsibility for their own decisions. Principals plays a vital part in improving teacher

attrition by providing support in the domains such as environmental, instructional,

technical, and emotional (Hughes et al., 2015).

The literature review focused on teacher burnout, attrition, retention, zone of

proximal development, and theory of andragogy. Teaching is a stressful profession that is

prone to burnout for teachers (Richards et al., 2018). Richards et al. (2018) stated that

less is known about the specific ways stress and principal support effects teachers who

experienced burnout. Richards et al. (2018) indicated that there is a need to understand

how the instructional leadership practices of school principals' influences teacher

burnout. Keeping good teachers should be one of the most important agenda items for

any school principal, this is especially true for placements in urban areas, facilities, and

correctional setting (Hughes et al., 2015). Data from state and national teacher turnover

rates showed that teacher attrition has been a concern for many years, with teachers

leaving the profession at a higher rate than those entering (Dassa & Derose, 2017). The

largest group affected by attrition is the beginning teacher. In the United States, 30%-

50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years (Dassa & Derose,

2017).

In Chapter 3, the methodology was described for this study, how participants were

invited to the interview was also described, the details related to the instrumentation, data

collection, and analysis. Chapter 3 also included how the participants rights and

confidentiality were safeguarded and how the trustworthiness of the study was

strengthened.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this chapter, the research design, positionality, methodology, methods of data collection, and data analysis process are presented. Ethical issues and procedures used to establish trustworthiness are outlined. The purpose of this study was to understand how school principals were implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. Helou et al. (2016) stated that teaching is a challenging profession, which can lead to teachers' burnout. Teacher burnout is also a challenge for principals (Yorulmaz et al., 2017). Teachers leave the profession because of principals' lack of leadership practices (Thibodeaux et al., 2015) and support (Richards et al., 2016). Chapter 3 includes the research design and rationale, and the positionality, methodology, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

Grounded theory was not selected because the purpose of this study was not to develop a theory (Trochim, 2006). Other research designs that were given consideration but not used were ethnography and phenomenology. Ethnography was not suitable for this study because it examines a phenomenon over an extended time (Trochim, 2006). Also, phenomenology was not appropriate because it did not support the purpose of understanding the perceptions of school principals regarding instructional leadership practices. The following research question guided this research study: How do K-12 school principals implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout?

The central phenomenon of the study was to explore, examine, and describe how school principals apply instructional leadership strategies to support teachers with burnout in a large suburban public-school district located in the southern United States. The research tradition used was a basic qualitative research study. Merriam (2009) stated thata basic quality research study as being used by researchers who are interested in how people interpret their experience. The rationale for the basic qualitative research study was chosen because it had the correct choice of appropriate methods and theories, the recognition and analysis of different perspectives, the researchers' reflections on their research as a part of the process of knowledge production, and the variety of approaches and methods (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017).

The qualitative study used Vygotsky's theory of ZPD and Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy. The qualitative study selected and recognized analysis of 15 principals who were novice administrators who were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout.

Role of the Researcher

I have been a K-12 educator for the past 17 years. For 15 years, I taught specialized reading to K-12 students. I have been an elementary school principal for the past 10 academic years. As a doctoral student, I am a novice researcher. I communicated with each participant for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes each. I was vigilant to ensure that I did not solicit former colleagues as part of this study. I did not have any personal or professional relationship with the participants.

Before the data collection process, I was responsible for communicating with the necessary administrators to gain access to the participants. The doctoral committee members at Walden University and I were the only ones who analyzed the data. However, I was the only person to collect and code the data from the participants. Professionalism and ethics were maintained to reduce my personal research biases. Given that the role of a researcher is to reduce biases during data collection and analysis phases, I adhered to the specifications of the interview protocol and asked the questions appropriately. In the event a participant did not attend the interview, I found more participants. Moreover, in the event where there were incomplete interviews, I reached out to the study participants and ensured that each pertinent interview question was addressed.

Methodology

A basic qualitative research study was chosen. In the section below, the population and sampling strategies are articulated. The sources of data, instrumentation, and protocol for the interviews are discussed.

Participant Selection

The research site included 25 school principals. Of the 25 public school principals, 15 novice school principals were selected as participants for the study. The population was identified using the state's annual teacher attrition report posted on the state department of education website (The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020). Criteria for participants included employment at schools with a teacher attrition rate at the end of the year for the last 3 school years of 15% or higher

(The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020). The criteria for participants included school principals with 2 years of administration experience who were from the same school district and state certified in secondary education administration and leadership.

A selection of 15 participants were chosen for the study because of data saturation. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research often has a smaller sample size (Patton, 2015).

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. Purposive sampling is where a researcher selects a sample based on their knowledge about the study and population (Heather, Claire, & Simon, 2019). Participants were identified for the study by reviewing the attrition rates of schools and reviewing the school websites for the credentials of the participants. I sent an email to the school principals to personally recruit them to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Interviews were the sole data collection instrument. An interview protocol was used for the interviews (see Appendix A). Interviews provide researchers with rich and detailed qualitative data for understanding participants' experiences, how they describe those experiences, and the meaning they make of those experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview process focuses on the conditions fostering quality interviews, such as gaining access to and selecting participants, building trust, the location and length of

time of the interview, the order, quality, and clarity of questions, and the overall process

of conducting an interview (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Historical or legal documents were

not used as a source of data for this basic qualitative research study.

Open-ended interview questions were the sole data collection instrument used in

the study. Qualitative interviewing provides a method for collecting rich and detailed

information about how individuals experience, understand, and explain events in their

lives (Oltmann, 2016). The interviews can range from loose conversations to structured

exchanges in which all interviewees are asked the exact same set of questions (Oltmann,

2016) (Appendix A).

Interviewing was used since questions can be prepared ahead of time, it allowed

the participants the freedom to express their views in their own terms, and it can provide

reliable, comparable qualitative data (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015). The interviews were

conducted via Zoom. The interview questions were developed by the researcher. Prior to

interviewing participants, the interview questions were reviewed with non-participating

principals for their input and comments. Retired principals were pursued who were at

schools that they did not know how to implement instructional leadership practices to

support teachers who experience burnout for this research study. The purpose of the

research study was explained. After receiving the principals' feedback to the interview

questions and the demographic information, the interview questions were updated. The

interview questions were sent out electronically to each of the principals for further

review and comment. A final version of the interview was then created. Validity was

established with interviewing because situational and job-related questions were used.

The interviews were highly structured. To ensure interviewer reliability, questions used were designed that way.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To recruit participants for the study, an email was sent to the principals of the schools to personally invite them to participate in the study. The email included a consent form for the participants to fill out (Appendix C). In the email to the participants, the nature of the study was briefly outlined, the research question of the study was stated, it was stated that each interview will last 1 to 2 hours each, and that each interview will be recorded with the participants' permission. The email also included the Zoom link with the date and time for the participants to book appointments for the individual interviews. At the end of the email, it was stated that the researcher was willing to answer any questions that the participants might have. The participants had 3 days to respond via email to the invitation to the study along with their signed consent form (Appendix C). For the individual interviews, an interview protocol was created. The interview protocol was used to ask open-ended interview questions.

Castillo-Montoya (2016) explored the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework comprised of a four-phase process for systematically developing and refining an interview protocol. The four-phase process includes: (1) ensuring interview questions align with research questions, (2) constructing an inquiry-based conversation, (3) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (4) piloting the interview protocol. The IRP method can support efforts to strengthen the reliability of interview protocols used

for qualitative research and thereby contribute to improving the quality of data obtained from research interviews.

Kornbluh (2015) noted that member checks are widely utilized in qualitative research for soliciting participant insight on research findings. Although they are appraised as the gold standard for establishing trustworthiness, limited description, and detail exist regarding how to conduct member checks. The strategies include: (a) understanding the population, (b) conveying the data analysis process, (c) reconstructing data collection memories and being open to change, (d) comparing themes, and (e) incorporating member checks into the data analysis process. Kornbluh (2015) illustrated each step with an example from a research project that solicited member checks from students. This procedure can be used with several different populations, and with a variety of qualitative data.

After obtaining participants for the study, the researcher went by the schedule from Zoom and conducted the virtual interviews with the principals. Notes were taken and interviews were audio taped to be transcribed after the interview. The interview consisted of 10 interview questions that explored the inconsistently of school principals implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout (See Appendix A). The questions for the interview were shared and reviewed with retired principals who were not included in the study for their feedback and review prior to having any interviews. Alignment should be between interview questions and research questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Alignment can increase the utility of

interview questions in the research process, while ensuring their necessity for the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Member checks were conducted with the participants regarding their responses. Data or results were return to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Signed consent forms were previously attained from the participants and scheduling of each participant took place via email. Participants were given alphanumeric codes to help identify them in the study and to keep information confidential. Interviews were conducted at times that were convenient for the participants over a 2-week period. The interviews were then transcribed using the notes of the researcher and the cloud feature from Zoom. The participants were given the completed transcripts to review for authenticity of their interview transcripts. The participants checked the transcripts to see what they stated in the interview was true or not. The participants were given the opportunity to add additional information or make changes to the transcript. Any changes made by the participants were included in the final transcription. Coding, themes, and patterns were identified from the final transcription.

Data Analysis Plan

For this basic qualitative research, data was collected for one month. School principals were asked interview questions based on the research question: How K-12 school principals implement instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout? School principals who meet the criteria for the study were invited to

participate in the interviews. After 1 week, when the minimum number of participants had agreed to participate, interviews began using Zoom.

After each interview, the transcribed interviews were color coded. Coding was used when reviewing the interview data collected. Coding was conducted manually. Coding the transcripts or breaking them down into meaningful and manageable chunks of data, was a critical part of the data analysis. Coding helped to prevent the interviewer overemphasize the importance of any one aspect early in the study and to help ensure a thorough analysis of the entire interview.

A qualitative data analysis, in vivo coding, was used to aid in coding the interviews. In vivo was not used to analyze data but rather to aid the analysis process, which the researcher must always remain in control of. In vivo places emphasis on the actual spoken words of the participants by identifying common words and phrases (Saldana, 2016). Thematic analysis was used for emergent themes. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Thematic analysis is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. Thematic analysis was used to closely examine the data to identify common themes such as topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly in the interviews.

Henry (2015) advocated that there is an increasing call for in-depth and rigorous research to enhance the evidence-based practice of most of the practice professions. Henry (2015) reviewed various published articles on rigor of qualitative research and discusses on the various criteria presented in the articles to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Henry (2015) selected five published

articles those analyses rigor in qualitative research. Majority of these articles based their rigor criteria in the suggestions provided by Lincoln and Guba. In-depth analysis also showed that researchers tried to develop further new parameters ensure the credibility of qualitative researches.

Nowell et al. (2017) asserted that as qualitative research becomes increasingly recognized and valued, it is imperative that it is conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to yield meaningful and useful results. To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. Although there are numerous examples of how to conduct qualitative research, few sophisticated tools are available to researchers for conducting a rigorous and relevant thematic analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) suggested that researchers should be using thematic analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) offered personal insights and practical examples, while exploring issues of rigor and trustworthiness. The process of conducting a thematic analysis is illustrated through the presentation of an auditable decision trail, guiding interpreting, and representing textual data. Nowell et al. (2017) stated that thematic analysis is used to systematize and increase the traceability and verification of the analysis. Once researchers have read and familiarized themselves with data, the introduction of coding takes place. Nowell et al. (2017) specified that coding in qualitative research allows researchers to focus and identify common words or phrases found in the data. Nowell et al. (2017) explained that there can be many levels of coding,

but too many levels of coding can be counterproductive to the goal of attaining clarity in interpreting and organizing the data.

Trustworthiness

All qualitative researchers should incorporate strategies to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of a study during research design and implementation (Kornbluh, 2015). For qualitative researchers, the methods used to establish trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings of this study: (a) member checks and (b) building rapport with participants.

Birt et al. (2016) stated that trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research. Member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of results. With member checking, data or results are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Birt et al. (2016) critiqued how member checking has been used in published research, before describing and evaluating an innovative in-depth member checking.

Member checks are an effective technique and procedure applied in qualitative research to ensure and establish (the) validity of a researcher's findings by seeking feedback from the participants in response to the raw data originally collected from them (Lub, 2015). The strategy was employed to determine if participants believed the transcripts reflected their responses to questions accurately and to assess if the analyses will be credible and plausible. The participants were emailed to offer them the opportunity to review the transcribed material as well as the conclusions and determine if

the findings accurately reflected their feelings and experiences. Transcripts of the

interview were shared with each participant within three days of the interview for their

comment, feedback, and input. Building rapport with the participants went beyond

protecting their identity and concealing certain information that would reveal their

identities through a disclosure and the signing of an informed consent form. Building

rapport involves the responsibility of reporting participants' responses in ways that did

not distort the intended meanings (Stewart, Gapp, & Harwood, 2017).

Threats to Validity

Credibility

Member checking was conducted during the process of interviewing and data

analysis. Member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a

technique for exploring the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). The participants were

emailed within 3 days to afford them the opportunity to review the transcribed material as

well as the conclusions and determine if the findings accurately reflected their feelings

and experiences. The participants either affirm that the transcripts reflected their views,

feelings, and experiences, or that they did not reflect these experiences. If the participants

affirm the accuracy and completeness, then the study was said to have credibility.

Collegial review was another strategy that was employed to address credibility to

minimize bias and error in the study. Collegial review is the process of enlisting the

talents of colleagues in similar positions to obtain structured feedback about a project or a

study to diminish the chance of error and bias that could invalidate the study (Stewart,

Gapp, & Harwood, 2015). Experts in the education field such as retired former school

principals were used to review the open-ended questions developed for the interviews with the objective of providing the researcher with constructive feedback.

Confirmability

Confirmability is a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Amankwaa, 2016). To improve techniques for improving confirmability in the research, the procedures for checking and rechecking the data were documented during the entire research. A reflexive journal was maintained during the process of data collecting and analysis. Reflexivity is an attitude that a qualitative researcher adopts when collecting and analyzing data (Henry, 2015). With this journal, the researcher looked at her own background and position to see how these influences the research process of selecting the topic, choosing the methodology, analyzing the data, and interpreting the results. To improve confirmability, a data audit was carried out which inspected the data collection, analysis procedures, and more judgements concerning the potential for bias or distortion (Kornbluh, 2015).

Dependability

The more consistent the researcher is in the research process, the more dependable are the results. A major technique for assessing dependability is the dependability audit in which an independent auditor reviews the activities of the researcher to see how well the techniques for meeting the credibility and transferability standards have been followed (Kornbluh, 2015). If the researcher does not maintain any

kind of audit trail, the dependability cannot be assessed, and dependability and trustworthiness of the study are diminished (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

An audit trail was maintained to address validity and minimize bias and error in the case study. The help of 2 expert administrators were enlisted to obtain structured feedback to diminish the chance of error and bias that could invalidate the study. The 2 administrators were former school administrators not involved in the study. The expert administrators reviewed the activities of the study. The activities of the study were included in the initial email sent to the participants, the consent form (see Appendix C), the open-ended interview questions, and the interview transcripts. The experts provided constructive feedback to see how well the techniques used for the study met the credibility and transferability standards.

Transferability is established by providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To deal with transferability, qualitative researchers attempt to provide readers with rich, descriptive information about a context or participants so that they can determine for themselves whether the results speak to their situation or experience (Kornbluh, 2015). To establish transferability for the study, thick description was provided. Thick description is a technique in which a qualitative researcher provides a detailed account of their experiences during data collection (Sacks, 2015). Thick description of the data collection was provided such at the interview questions and the responses from the participants.

Ethical Procedures

For compliance with Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Standards, the study met the institution's ethical standards, as well as U.S. federal
regulations. The study included the protection of all human subjects as well as ethical
partnership with sites and appropriate usage of scholarly tools (Walden University,
2020). All identifying information such as participants' names, age, schools, were kept
confidential. As an added measure of confidentiality, the researcher was the only person
who handled the data, which was password protected on a flash disk, stored in a locked-
in file cabinet at her home office for 5 years thereby guaranteeing the privacy of the
participants. The principals in the study were identified only by aliases. Plagiarism was
avoided throughout the study by carefully citing all sources.

Permission was obtained by district email prior to approaching any prospective
respondent employed by the school districts (see Appendix B). Principals were provided
with information about the research and where they could make an email request for a
copy of the results. A brief description of the study was given and was explained that the
result consisted of group data and that individual participants and school districts were
not identified. Principals were encouraged to contact the investigator if any questions or
concerns arose with their participation in the study.

Summary

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology of this research study was
identified. The basic qualitative case study incorporated interviews with principals in
different settings using Zoom. The phenomenon studied was the instructional leadership

practices of school principals. The study included purposive sampling of 15 principals

from various schools based on 3 years of data. Participants received a brief description of

the study prior to the interview via email. Interviews using Zoom were at times that was

most convenient to the participants. Interviews were conducted to conveniently schedule

to preserve their confidentiality during the interview process. After the data collection,

the data analysis included the coding process that was initiated was shared in the chapters

to follow. Ethical, confidentiality, and trustworthiness issues were considered during the

data collection and data analysis phases of this research study. In Chapter 4, reflections

and conclusions were added to the study. Any personal or organizational conditions were

described that influenced participants or their experience at the time of study that may

affect interpretation of the results.

Chapter 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In Chapter 4, I present the findings of data collected in this basic qualitative study in addition to a description of the methods used for collecting, recording, and analyzing data. The problem addressed in this basic qualitative study was that school principals were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. A basic qualitative study design was chosen to explore, describe, and examine the leadership practices of K-12 principals that have an influence on teacher burnout. A basic qualitative approach is based on a social constructivism perspective, and the interpretation is based on a combination of researcher perspective and collected data (Windsong, 2018). The data collection for a basic qualitative study involves interviews, archival data, or observations (Windsong, 2018). The data for this basic qualitative study was collected through one-on-one structure open-ended interviews via Zoom with 15 K-12 school principals from one school district in the southern United States. The purpose of this study was to research the instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout.

The results of this study will help school principals better implement their instructional practices regarding teachers who experience burnout. The findings of the study are presented by first reviewing the setting and data collection methods, and then examining the data analysis strategies utilized. I received permission from Walden University's IRB and from the school district to conduct this study.

Setting of the Study

In this research study, I analyzed the instructional practices that school principals believe were positively influencing teachers who experienced burnout. The population was K-12 school principals from one school district in the southern United States who were inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices. The population for the study was identified using the state's annual teacher attrition report posted on the state department of education website (The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020).

The four criteria for this study required each participant to be (a) principals at schools having a teacher attrition rate at the end of the year for the last 3 academic years of 15 % or higher, (b) experienced in administration for more than 2 years, (c) from the same school district, and (d) state certified in secondary education administration and leadership. One-on-one open-ended interviews were conducted via Zoom to coordinate schedules with all participants. This consistency established the reliability and validity of the data collected.

All 15 participants have been in education for several years, ranging from 12 to 38 years, with 25.3 years being the average. The 15 school principals have been in administration from 4-17 years, with 10.5 being the average number of years the principals in this sampling were in administration. The participants served as principals at their current school from 3-15 years, with the average being 8.3 years (see Table 1). Most of the participants have earned a master's degree, except for 2, who have doctorates.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Academic career timeline	Range	Average
Years in education	12-38	25.3
Years as a principal	4-17	10.5
Years as a principal at the current school	3-15	8.3

Data Collection

The basic qualitative study was conducted to analyze qualitative data resulting from virtual interviews. I received IRB approval from Walden University (IRB #05-21-20-0225375). After receiving IRB approval, I received approval from the school district to conduct my research study and to interview principals within the school district. Signed consent forms were attained from each participant after they were contacted about the study, were told the requirements for the interview, and agreed to participate. Interviews were conducted with 15 principals over a 14-day period. P1-P15 were used as an alphanumeric coding system to help identify the participants and to keep their information confidential. Scheduling of the interviews was a slight challenge because of COVID-19 and the necessity for virtual rather than in-person interviews. All of the interviews took place via Zoom. Using Zoom helped protect the confidentiality of each participant. The interview questions used were written in advance. The principals were not given any time constraints, and their consent was received to participate prior to the interview.

Each principal was interviewed about the school where they worked for at least 2 years. The interviews were recorded using the cloud recording feature on Zoom with permission from each participant. The length of the interviews ranged from 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Each interview was transcribed verbatim using both the cloud feature on Zoom and my notes in a Microsoft Office Word document. The participants received the completed Word document electronically to make sure the transcription was accurate and represented their intended response. The participants were given an opportunity to make changes and add additional information to the transcript to help complete the interview questions. Changes made by the participants were included in the final transcription. Only one minor change was made by one participant regarding the training and support offer to teachers who experienced burnout.

The data from the interviews provided information about the principals' belief about their instructional leadership practices. Before interviewing began, I made a slight modification to the original interview questions to allow for more detailed responses. During the data collection process, there were no unusual circumstances. Notes on the participants' responses were written as the interviews took place and immediately after as part of the first round of coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

While transcribing during the interviews, I took notes of my initial reflection. I coded each transcription by hand by carefully reviewing the responses from each participant for the round of coding. The in vivo coding strategy was used to help identify phrases and common words and to place emphasis on the actual spoken words of the

participants during the initial coding (Saldana, 2016). Words or phrases with similar meanings were grouped together. The first coding cycle identified common phrases and words (Table 2).

Table 2

Common Codes

Interview question	Common in vivo terms
1	Tired. Stressed from teaching. Overworked. Underpaid. Lack of resources. Depressed. Frustrated. Inadequate working conditions. Chronic stress. Lack of support. Emotional and physical exhaustion. Detached. Mentally drained. Students' discipline issues.
2	Visit classrooms. Observe instruction. Collaborate. Monitor. Support teachers. Consistent goals. Allocate resources. Discipline. Conflict resolution. Professional development. Manage schedules. Budget allocation. Manage curriculum. Provide a safe environment. Growth mindset. Expectations. Effective communication. Positive feedback.

Table 3 continued

More Common Codes

Interview question	Common in vivo terms
3	Support teachers by advocating for them. Be the voice for teachers. Being real. Sharing personal stories. Communication is clear. Motivation. Regroup. Respect. Value. Collaboration. Visible in classrooms and hallways. Encouraging emails. Being accessible and available.
4	Grossly underpaid. Compassionate fatigue. Stressors. Prevalent. Administration. Affects the quality of education. Fatigue. Anxiety. Frustration. Lack of classroom management. Discipline problems. Preventable.
5	Absenteeism. Increase of teachers' attrition rate. Ineffectiveness of teaching. Negative teachers. Unmotivated teachers. Low performance of students. Distrustful attitude. Low morale. Classroom disruption. Low grades. Resistant to change.
6	No training and support. Limited support from administrators. Stress management workshop. Coping strategies. Proactive screening. Mental health evaluation. Professional development.
7	Mental health awareness. Informational pamphlets. Emails. Brochures. Flyers. Articles. Videos. Face-to-face communication. Newsletters. Open-door policy. Privacy. Monthly meetings.
8	No new initiatives.
9	State testing. Class size. Lack of resources. Lack of administrative support. Parental involvement. Teachers' salaries. Budget cuts. Lack of training. Student discipline. New technology. Intense workload.
10	Open door policy. Assess teachers' mental health. Communication. Survey. One-on-one conversations. Questionnaires. Maslach Burnout Inventory. Observations of teachers. Teacher satisfaction. Assess culture and climate of school.

For the second round of coding I used categorical aggregation (Bikakis,

Berouaret, & Sacharidis, 2016) and pulled out short phrases or individual words to create

a descriptive code that summarized the data more concisely and grouped responses

together. Moreover, participants described the steps they used to support teacher burnout

without necessarily using the word *supporting*. Nevertheless, the intent of the

participants' practice was clear and concise from the description of their actions (Table

4).

Table 4

Example of 2nd Cycle of Coding.

Vivo codes	2nd cycle of coding
Tired. Stressed from teaching. Overwhelmed. Overlooked by administrators. Emotional and physical exhaustion. Detachment.	Burnout
Collaboration with teachers. Organized. Open to new ideas. Consistent goals setting. Conflict resolution. Professional development. Lead by example. Open door policy.	Instructional leadership practices
Very positive. Communication is clear and concise. Motivation. Empowering of strengths. Visibility in the classroom. Collaborative. Best interest at heart for teachers. Accessibility. Shared in vison of school. Positive feedback. Advocating for teachers.	Supportive relationship

In the next step of coding, the codes were organized and grouped into

encompassing categories. After reviewing the categories as well as the my analytical

memos, reflections, transcriptions, and initial coding, I identified themes and patterns. A

member check was further conducted by asking the participants to review the themes

identified from the data analysis to make sure the results were aligned with their practices and beliefs.

Results

This basis qualitative research was conducted to examine and explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout at their schools. The state's annual teacher attrition report over a 3-year period was used to help detect schools that had a high teacher attrition rate. The results and findings of this study were based on my analysis of data that I collected from each of the 15 interviews.

Interview Question 1: Tell me how you as school principal define teacher burnout.

All 15 participants shared their perceptions of defines teacher burnout. P1 stated, "Teacher burnout is when teachers are tired or stressed from teaching." P1 perceived that teacher burnout is when teachers become overworked from the day to day operations of a school. P2 stated, "Teacher burnout occurs when teachers are depressed, underpaid, and having lack of resources for the classroom." P2 perceived that teacher burnout is when teachers are not valued enough and are not given the necessarily resources to teach effectively. P3 stated, "I believe teacher burnout is an emotional and physical condition that decreases teachers' achievements in the classroom." P3 perceived that teacher burnout is a psychological condition that affects the teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. P4 stated, "Teacher burnout is when teachers are overwhelmed, frustrated, and depressed from teaching." P4 perceived that when teachers are burnt out, they become depressed, stressed, and exhausted from teaching, which could affect student learning. P5 stated, "Teacher burnout is when teachers are stressed from working

conditions faced at school." P5 perceived that teachers becomes burnt out when the school culture and climate are not positive or conducive to teaching. P6 stated, "Teacher burnout is when stress is very high for the teacher due to conditions at school." P6 perceived that teachers become burnt out from school when they are under a lot of emotional and physical stress. P7 stated, "Teacher burnout is related to chronic stress. Teacher's morale is often overlooked by the administrators and that contributes to burnout in teachers." P7 perceived that teacher burnout has to do with stress and low morale. P8 stated, "Teacher burnout is one of the most common reasons that teachers leave the teaching profession due to stress and lack of support from administrators." P8 perceived that teachers often leave the profession due to the lack of support from administrators, especially when they are stressed from the job. P9 stated, "I define teacher burnout as stress that leads to emotional and physical exhaustion in the classroom for teachers." P9 perceived that teacher burnout involves an emotional and physical exhaustion related to negative classroom environments. P10 stated, "Teacher burnout is when teachers are detached from school because of problems that they may have." P10 perceived that when teachers are disconnected from the school environment because of personal problems, they are likely to become burnt out from the teaching profession. P11 stated, "Teacher burnout is when teachers are mentally drained from the everyday activities at school." P11 perceived that burnout occurs when teachers become physically and emotionally stressed by their job. P12 stated, "I define teacher burnout as teachers being stressed from long hours at work." P12 perceived that teacher burnout is when teachers are mentally, physically, and emotionally stressed from being overworked by

administrators, parents, and students. As such, burnout relates to juggling the various roles teachers must play. P13 stated, "As a school principal I define teacher burnout as a condition when teachers are depressed, stressed, or overworked." P13 perceived that teacher burnout is when teachers are unhappy, anxious, and tired from working at their school. P14 stated, "I believe that teacher burnout is a working condition that teachers develop from emotional and physical stress." P14 perceived that teachers become burnt out when they are working under a lot of stress due to the school environment. P15 stated, "Teacher burnout is defined as teachers being physically exhausted from test scores, students' discipline issues, and lack of resources in the classroom." P15 perceived that burnout involves teachers becoming overly stressed due to standardized testing, classroom management, and insufficient or ineffective materials.

Interview Question 2: Tell me about your instructional leadership practices.

The participants described their instructional leadership practices that support teachers who experienced burnout. Most of the participants described their leadership practices as supportive, collaborative, and positive. P1 stated, "I visit classrooms daily, observing instruction, and student learning. Observations helps me to identify classroom needs and strengths. I collaborate regularly with teachers to monitor the needs of students and to determine strategies and resources that could better support students and teachers." The instructional leadership practices of P1 is very supportive and positive for both teachers at the school. Teachers are given the opportunity at the school to collaborate with the principal on a regular basis. P2 stated, "I set clear and consistent goals, I allocate resources, and evaluate teachers regularly to promote learning for all students."

Allocation of resources to help teachers effectively teach students is one of the most important instructional leadership strategies that P2 uses at the school. P3 stated, "My instructional leadership practices consist of discipline, conflict resolution, scheduling, and meetings in general." The instructional leadership practices of P3 consist of being organized and prepared to run the day to day operations of the school which includes lot of meetings. P4 stated, "I provide professional development for teachers, manage schedules and curriculum, resourcing and budget allocation, and fundraising." The instructional leadership practices of P4 is encouraging. P4 explained in the interview that professional development training can help teachers to become better at staying organized and planning their time. P5 stated, "At my school, I lead by example, I establish goals, and expectations. I also provide a safe and orderly environment for students and teachers." P5 instructional leadership practices entail of having high expectations for both teachers and students to create a secure environment where learning could take place. P6 stated, "I create a safe and secure learning environment and effective interventions for students in need, I try to catch great teachers doing things right, and supporting them with genuine appreciation." P6 instructional leadership practices are encouraging and motivating where the teachers are shown appreciation for their hard work by being given positive feedback. P7 stated, "At my school I collaborate and listen to teachers. I promote peer coaching and for teachers to observe each other in the classroom. I also encourage growth mindset through reflection by helping teachers understand what works and what does not." P7 is a visionary principal whose instructional leadership practices comprise of improving the school through collaboration

and encouraging a growth mindset of teachers. P8 stated, "My instructional leadership practices at my school is a routine part of the job along with the budget, curriculum development, master schedule, meetings, phone calls, emails, and many other duties." P8 instructional leadership practices involve being a good leader that takes the responsibilities for the successes and failures of the school. P9 stated, "I establish a common vision and expectations for all teachers. I try to get in the classrooms more and provide positive feedback for teachers." P9 instructional leadership practices are clear and consistent where the teachers understand the expectations expected of them from their principal. P10 stated, "I model, I coach, and I explain." P10 instructional leadership practices consist of being supportive of teachers through scaffolding. P11 stated, "I cultivate leadership in others so teachers and staff can assume their part in realizing the school vision." P11 is another visionary principal whose instructional leadership practice is supportive for teachers to become leaders themselves. P12 stated, "At my school, I work with teachers to create relevant goals and provide professional developments." P12 instructional leadership practices foster a collaborative workplace for teachers to grow professionally. P13 stated, "I shared in the mission and vision of the school with the teacher, students, and staff of the school." P13 instructional leadership practices involve shared leadership where the teachers share in the goals and vision of the school. P14 stated, "My instructional leadership practices consists of monitoring lesson plans, managing curriculum, setting clear goals, and evaluating teachers to promote student learning and success." P14 instructional leadership practices comprise of modeling norms and behaviors for teachers that promotes learning for all students. P15 stated, "I set an

example for others by treating teachers fairly. I tried to be supportive and use effective communication with teachers." P15 instructional leadership practices are fair and consistent where the principal is adept at building a positive relationship with the teachers.

Interview Question 3: Tell me how you apply instructional leadership practices to support teachers.

Each participant shared how they applied instructional leadership practices to support teachers. P1 stated. "I apply leadership practices to support the teachers by advocating for them. I am the voice of the teachers at district meeting, board meetings, and any other community events." P1 is an advocator who supports teachers by being informed through attending meetings. P2 stated, "I like to support my teachers by being real with them. I like to share touching stories during staff meetings that highlight that I am supportive of teachers and the success of every student at my school." P1 supports teachers by being a realistic principal who shape the framework for goal setting. P3 stated, "I apply instructional leadership practices to support teachers by ensuring that my communication is clear and concise. I like to keep teachers informed about changes of the school schedule, or task loads as soon as possible." P3 encourages teachers by being an effective communicator who keeps the teachers abreast about school policies. P4 stated, "I support my teachers at my school through motivation by making myself available, praising them, and empowering each of their strengths." P4 is a motivator who supports the teachers by using encouraging words and recognizing teacher's individual strengths in the classroom. P5 stated, "I usually show my teachers the data from prior test results. I

use data to help teachers understand how their hard work and dedication has led to an increase in scores. If the test scores are low, I like to support my teachers by regrouping and finding strategies together that could improve the test scores for the next year." P5 is a collaborator who works with teachers to help improve the academic success of students. P6 stated, "I apply instructional leadership practices to support teachers by showing the teachers that I value and respect their time and responsibilities. During the school day, there are times where I must make simple adjustments to the schedule to show teachers that I support them." P6 is an organizer who plans for teachers when needed during the school day. P7 stated, "I like to treat my teachers' planning time as a precious commodity. Most often, I try not to take away planning time from my teachers because they need that time to plan lessons, grade papers, collaborate with colleagues, make copies, contact parents, or even use the restroom." P7 is a supporter who values and respect teachers' time and effort. P8 stated, "I support my teachers by being visible in classrooms and hallways of the school. The teachers at my school know that I am always willing to give a hand and that I am easily accessible." P8 is a leader who is adept at building relationship with teachers by connecting with them. P9 stated, "I like to support my teachers by sending encouraging emails to my teachers to tell them how much I appreciate their work effort." P9 is a communicator who inspire teachers with positive messages through emails. P10 stated, "I apply instructional leadership practices to support teachers by having teachers share in the school vision. At my school, teachers have the right to participate in the determination of school goals, policies, and procedures. Allowing teachers to participate in different opportunities at school, increases

teacher empowerment and morale." P10 is a visionary leader who shares the school

vision with teachers. P10 also supports teachers to participate in the academic, emotional,

and social learning of students. P11 stated, "I try to support teachers by using available

school funds to rotate substitutes during the school week for teachers to collaborate and

plan." P11 is a transformational leader who supports teachers by obtaining outside help

so teachers could grow professionally. P12 stated, "I like to support teachers at my school

by using effective communication through emails, phone calls, and letters." P12 is a

communicator who supports teachers through extensive communication. P13 stated, "I

support teachers at my school by reducing staff meetings. Instead of meeting with the

staff once a week after school, I switched to every other week. The teachers said with the

new schedule, they have more time to go to doctor's appointments, their children after

school events, or time to grade papers." P13 is an adapter who supports teachers by

altering the school day to fit the different needs of teachers. P14 stated, "I support

teachers by encouraging them to develop, continually learn, and to become leaders

themselves." P14 is a leader who empowers teachers and cultivate leadership skills. P15

stated, "I support teachers by providing various professional development opportunities

that could stimulate their growth in education." P15 is a motivator who finds workshops,

conferences, and relevant courses for teachers to attend to outside of school.

Interview Question 4: Tell me about teacher burnout.

All 15 participants interviewed shared their beliefs about teacher burnout. The

participants indicated that teacher burnout is prevalent in their school district. P1 stated,

"Teachers in the school district are grossly underpaid which contribute greatly to

burnout." P1 explained that teachers become burnout due to the low salary and dwindling benefits. P2 stated, "Many teachers in the United States are leaving the teaching profession due to burnout." P2 did not give a clear explanation on the topic of teacher burnout. P3 stated, "Teachers are selfless and care so much about students, I equate teacher burnout more to compassionate fatigue." P3 articulated that teacher burnout is equivalent to exhaustion in teachers. P4 stated, "Teacher burnout is a major issue in our school district. Many teachers, especially newer teachers find it difficult to deal with the everyday stressors of public education." P4 replied that teacher burnout is prevalent in novice teachers because the teaching profession is very stressful. P5 stated, "I can see how easy for a teacher to get burnout." P5 did not give a clear answer to the question about teacher burnout. P6 stated, "Teachers understand what they sign up for, we need to push through and take care of the students." P6 verbalized that teachers should not complain about burnout because they knowingly signed up for the job. P7 stated, "Teacher burnout is prevalent in my school." P7 replied that teacher burnout is present in their school but still did not give an evident answer on the topic. P8 stated, "When I was teaching, the chief contributing factor of burnout was the lack of support from administration." P8 acknowledged that the lack of principal support is a contributing factor to teacher burnout. P9 stated, "When teachers are unmotivated the students suffer." P9 posited that teacher burnout affects the quality of education for students. P10 stated, "The symptoms of boredom in the classroom, fatigue, anxiety, and frustration is teacher burnout." P10 stated that a combination of various symptoms is the cause of teacher burnout. P11 stated, "Teacher burnout is stress that leads to physical and emotional

exhaustion and feeling of ineffectiveness in the classroom." P11 explained that stress is a

contributing factor to teacher burnout. P12 stated, "Teacher burnout is caused when

teachers have problems with students in the classroom due to behavior issues." P12

indicated that teacher burnout is caused by teachers having lack of classroom

management. P13 stated, "Burnout is one of the most common reasons teachers leaves

the profession, and it contributes to the increased teacher turnover rate in the United

States." P13 stated that the increase of attrition rate of teachers is caused by teacher

burnout. P14 stated, "The current education climate has created a culture of burnout and

stress for teachers." P14 articulated that the education system has set up a culture of

failure and that is why teachers are burnout. P15 stated, "Teacher burnout is totally

preventable. We as administrator should be making more of an effort to take care of our

teachers." P15 expressed that teacher burnout is avoidable if administrators take the

necessary steps to support teachers.

**Interview Question 5: Tell me what you see as the challenges related to teacher
burnout.**

The 15 participants stated that there are challenges related to teacher burnout.

Some of the participants indicated that absenteeism and increased students' discipline are

the common problems associated with teacher burnout. P1 stated, "Increased absenteeism

and poor interpersonal relationship with colleagues and students are the challenges

related to teacher burnout." P1 indicated that building trust and relationships with

colleagues and students are one of the challenges to teacher burnout. P2 stated, "The

challenges related to teacher burnout are the increase of teachers' attrition rate for a

school and the ineffectiveness of teaching in a classroom." P2 expressed that the increase

of teachers leaving the teacher profession is a challenge to teacher burnout. P3 stated,

"The challenges related to teacher burnout are negative teachers who lacks classroom

management skills." P3 disclosed that teachers who are not positive provides a challenge

in the classroom for students to learn. P4 stated, "The challenges to teacher burnout is

unmotivated teachers in the classroom." P4 posited that the lack of motivation in teachers

is a challenge. P5 stated, "Teacher burnout brings negative effects such as decline in

classroom performance, less commitment to the job, and absenteeism." P5 explained that

teachers' declining job performance is a challenge to teacher burnout. P6 stated, "The

challenge related to teacher burnout are an increased in students' discipline referrals, low

performance for students in the classroom, and the classroom climate suffers." P6 stated

that the challenge related to teacher burnout is the decrease of students' success and

performance in the classroom. P7 stated, "Teachers leaving the teaching profession is a

challenge related to teacher burnout." P7 articulated that the increase of teachers' attrition

rate is a challenge related to teacher burnout. P8 stated, "The challenges related to teacher

burnout are an increase in student discipline and poor classroom management due to

unmotivated teachers." P8 expressed that when teachers are not motivated, classroom

management for teachers becomes a challenge. P9 stated, "The increase of teacher

leaving the teaching profession for another career is a challenge related to teacher

burnout." P9 posited that the changing of career path for teachers is a challenge to teacher

burnout. P10 stated, "Distrustful attitude towards administrators, colleagues, students,

and parents is the challenge related to teacher burnout." P10 stated that teachers'

distrustful relationship with stakeholders is a challenge to teacher burnout. P11 stated, "Burnout teachers are less productive, have low morale, and lower tolerance for classroom disruption." P11 indicated that teachers who are burnout have low morale for teaching and they become less productive at school. P12 stated, "The challenges related to teacher burnout are teachers who are absence more from school, more substitutes in the classroom, and students who are not prepared for state testing." P12 explained that teachers' absenteeism is a challenge of burnout that cause students to be unprepared for standardized testing. P13 stated, "An increase of parent conferences about students' behaviors and grades occurs when a teacher is burnout." P13 articulated that students' discipline could be a challenge to teacher burnout. P14 stated, "Burnout teachers are resistant to change and are narrow minded to new ideas." P14 posited that teachers who are burnout becomes a challenge for schools because they are highly resistant to new ideas. P15 stated, "The challenges that are related to teacher burnout are an increase in absenteeism, ineffectiveness in the classroom, and a high failure rate for students." P15 expressed that the challenges to teacher burnout is a mixture of different factors that affects teachers and students.

Interview Question 6: Tell me the type of training and support you offer to teachers at your school specially for the teachers who experienced burnout.

Many of the participants in the interview stated that they did not offered training and support to teachers who experienced burnout at their schools but shared that in the next few years that there will be some kind of training in place for the teachers. P1 stated, "Currently, there is no training and support offer to teachers who experienced burnout."

P1 articulated that there is no support system in place to help teachers who experienced burnout. P2 stated, " My school do not have training for teachers who experienced burnout. Although we do not have training, we do offer support to teachers who experienced burnout. Teachers who are burnout usually are given support from the administrators; the teachers are given more of a choice in class scheduling and are allow more break time in the school day." P2 expressed that although there is no training for burnout, administrator support is given to the teachers when needed at the school. P3 stated, "No, my school do not offer training and support to teachers who experienced burnout. Next school year, I hope to have teacher burnout training in place." P3 stated that even though there is no training and support program in place, there is possibility to have one in place for the next school year. P4 stated, "My school provides support services for teachers who experienced burnout." P4 posited that their school offers a training and support program to teachers who experienced burnout but did not state what the program offers. P5 stated, "Currently, there is no training and support offer to teachers who experienced burnout." P5 expressed that there is no training and support offered to teachers at the school. P6 stated, "No, there is no training in place for teacher burnout. Next year, I hope the school district will continue with the plan to have a stress management workshop in place for teachers who experienced burnout." P6 communicated that there is a plan in place by the school district to have a stress management program for teacher burnout. P7 stated, "My school has relaxation training to help teachers learn how to deal with burnout." P7 said that the school provides coping strategies to help teachers who experienced burnout. P8 stated, "Currently, there is no

training and support offer to teachers who experienced burnout, but I believe there should

be one in place." P8 articulated that they believe there should be a training and support

program at their school because currently there is not one in place. P9 stated, "No, there

is no training and support offer for teachers who experienced burnout because I really do

not think there is one needed. P9 said that a training and support program is not necessary

for teachers who experienced burnout. P10 stated, "My school do not have training and

support for teachers who experienced burnout." P10 also expressed that there is no

training and support system in place at their school. P11 stated, "My school has yearly

proactive screening. Teachers goes through a mental health evaluation and this could help

detect teachers who experienced burnout." P11 communicated that the school provides a

yearly mental checkup that helps identify teachers who may need help with burnout. P12

stated, "No, my school do not offer training and support to teachers who experienced

burnout." P12 did not state if there is a program in place for teachers who experienced

burnout. P13 stated, "At my school I foster a positive school culture that support teachers

who experienced burnout." P13 explained that burnout teachers are provided with a

positive school environment. P14 stated, "No, my school do not offer training and

support to teachers who experienced burnout and if we did have one, it probably would

cost a lot of money that is not in the budget." P14 revealed that a training and support

program for teacher burnout will cost the school money that is not in the school's budget.

P15 stated, "The teachers at my school last year participated in a professional

development for time management and coping skills related to teacher burnout." P15

articulated that the school was working with burnout teachers using various professional developments.

Interview Question 7: Tell me the strategies you use to communicate to teachers at your school about burnout.

All 15 participants shared the strategies that they use to communicate burnout to teachers. Emails, videos, and face-to-face communication were some of the common strategies the participants mentioned in the interview. P1 stated, "There is no clear-cut strategy as every situation differs with teacher burnout." P1 verbalized that teacher burnout situations varies, so the communication strategies used with teachers varies too. P2 stated, "Once per semester during staff meeting, I discuss strategies to mitigate mental health awareness for teachers." P2 stated that talking about mental health awareness at faculty meetings is a communication strategy used to addressed teacher burnout. P3 stated, "Teachers are given informational pamphlets to help with stress and related symptoms due to burnout, this has helped with burnout for teachers." P3 posited that giving teachers pamphlets about stress can help communicate burnout to teacher at a school. P4 stated, "Emails are sent to teachers about mental health workshops that are provided for teachers." P4 explained that emails are used at the school to communicate with teachers about mental health programs that are available. P5 stated, "At my school, teachers are sent emails, brochures, and flyers about topics that may involve teacher burnout." P5 said that teacher burnout is communicated to teachers in many ways throughout the school. P6 stated, "Articles and videos from various sources that are related to teacher burnout are sent to teachers." P6 suggested that articles and other media

sources can help teachers with burnout. P7 stated, "The strategies used to communicate teacher burnout varies for each situation at my school." P7 explained that the strategies used to communicate teacher burnout can vary depending on the teacher's situation. P8 stated, "I send out staff e-mail on Mondays that contained school information and usually health awareness topics are included." P8 said that health awareness topics are communicated through emails to teachers but did not said if the topics are about teacher burnout. P9 stated, "Emails and brochures are often used to communicate to teachers about burnout." P9 stated that the strategy used to communicate teacher burnout to teachers is through visual outlets such as brochures. P10 stated, "Newsletters in print and emails are a great way to communicate teacher burnout at my school." P10 explained that using traditional newsletters with teachers has been an ideal way to communicate teacher burnout. P11 stated, "At my school, teachers are sent emails and letters about topics that may involve teacher burnout." P11 stated that emails and letters are used at the school to address the topic of teacher burnout. P12 stated, "I have an open-door policy at my school and that is how I communicate with my teachers about topics such as stress and burnout. I feel that my teachers are more comfortable to talk when they have privacy and not an audience." P12 articulated that having an open-door policy at school is helpful in communicating burnout to teachers. P13 stated, "The topic of teacher burnout is communicated to teachers at our monthly staff meetings. My assistant principal usually assists me in conducting icebreakers at our monthly meetings. The icebreakers are usually 3-5 minutes activities to show teachers how to cope with symptoms related to teacher burnout." P13 expressed that teacher burnout is a topic that is communicated on a

regular basis at school. P13 said that the use of icebreakers has help teachers understand

the topic of burnout. P14 stated, "Meetings in person is useful to inform teachers about

topics like burnout at the school." P14 expressed that face-to-face communication is used

with teachers when discussing important topics such as teacher burnout. P15 stated, "My

assistant principal and I published a weekly blog using an app called Smore. The blog is

to provide the teachers with inspiration and innovative practices for their classroom. On

one of the blogs, my assistant principal and I provided the teachers with breathing

activities that could help reduce stress related to teacher burnout." P15 articulated that

teacher burnout is addressed and communicated at the school. P15 has a blog that inspires

and motivate teachers to perform well in the classroom.

Interview Question 8: Has the school undertaken any new initiatives recently that

seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels?

Few of the participants in the interview stated that their school has untaken new

initiatives that would influence teacher burnout levels. P1 stated, "No, my school has not

undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout

levels." P2 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that

seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P3 stated, "Yes, my school has

undertaken new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels."

P4 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem

likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P5 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken

any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P6

stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to

influence teacher burnout levels." P7 stated, "Yes, my school has undertaken new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P8 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P9 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P10 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P11 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P12 stated, "Yes, my school has undertaken new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P13 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P14 stated, "No, my school has not undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P15 stated, "Yes, my school has undertaken new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels." P 3, P7, P12, and P15 indicated that their schools have taken new initiatives for the upcoming school year but have not disclosed what the initiatives would be. P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, and P14 indicated that their schools have not undertaken any new initiative to help teachers with burnout.

Interview Question 9: Tell me the factors do you think exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout.

All participants interviewed shared their beliefs about the factors they feel exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout. State testing, class size, budget, and lack of

support from administrators were the common answers to the interview question. P1 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are state testing, class size, and technology." P2 stated, "The factors that influence teacher burnout are lack of resources, students' discipline problems, lack of support from administrators." P3 stated, "I think the factors that influence teacher burnout are students' discipline, lack of parental involvement, large class sizes, and not enough pay." P4 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are teacher's salaries, and budget cuts, and bureaucracy." P5 stated, "The factors that influence teacher burnout are challenging interactions with parents, a lack of resources, and a lack of administrative support." P6 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are over-emphasis on standardized testing, teaching outside of area of expertise, and a lack of training for new initiatives." P7 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are bureaucracy, state testing, and large class sizes." P8 stated, "The factors that influence teacher burnout are student discipline problems, classroom management, new technology, and an overload of meetings." P9 stated, "Evaluation of teachers based on state testing, parental support, lack of professional develop for new initiatives are the factors that influence teacher burnout." P10 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are lack of training for using technology, test score pressure, and intense workload." P11 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are student behavior, low salary, administrative issues, and lack of resources." P12 stated, "The factors that influence teacher burnout are the lack of respect for teachers, student discipline, low morale of other teachers at the school,

and school climate." P13 stated, "Lack of classroom management, student discipline, large class sizes, and administrative support are the factors that influence teacher burnout." P14 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are administrative observations, trainings, meetings, and performance reviews." P15 stated, "The factors that exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout are students that are below grade level, different learning styles in the classroom, class sizes, and lack of parental support."

P1, P8, and P10 explained the integration of new technology in schools has a great influence over teacher burnout. P2, P5, and P11 stated that the lack of resources to use in the classroom with students contributes to burnout in teachers. P3, P5, P9, and P15 expressed that the lack of parent support at school can influence burnout in teachers. P2, P3, P8, P11, P12, and P 13 articulated that student discipline problems is a concern that has impact teacher burnout. P3, P4, and P11 communicated that low salaries for teachers has a great control on teacher burnout. P1, P6, P7, P9, and P10 all explained that standardized testing is an issue that contributes to burnout in teachers. P2, P5, P11, P13, and P14 stated that lack of support from school administrators can exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout. P1, P3, P7, P13, and P15 said that large class size could influence teachers to become burnout at school.

Interview Question 10: Tell me what measures you use to assess burnout in teachers.

All participants stated the measures that they used to assess burnout in teachers. It was evident that surveys were the most popular assessment tool used with the participants. Most of the participant stated in the interview that surveys were used at their

schools to assess the mental health of teachers for burnout. P1 stated, "I allow teachers and staff to come to the office anytime to report problems, discuss issues, ask questions, or get feedback." P1 utilized an open-door policy to measure burnout in teachers through open communication, discussion, and feedback. P2 stated, "Periodically I check on my teachers by popping my head in the classroom to make sure that they are alright." P2 used informal observations to assess burnout in teachers at the school. P3 stated, "My office is always open for the teachers to come and talk with me. Usually I am able to assess the teachers' mental health when they visit and talk with me in the office." P3 operated an open-door policy to assess the mental health of teachers at the school. P4 stated, "I use a survey mid-way through the school year to measure the teachers' burnout levels." P4 used surveys to measure teachers' burnout levels halfway through the school year. P5 stated, "I usually visit my teachers' classroom to make sure that there are no problems and to offer my support. P5 visited the teachers' classroom to informally assess the burnout in teachers and to offer support when needed. P6 stated, "I conduct questionnaires to assess the feelings of the teachers." P6 conducted questionnaires to measure the burnout level of teachers. P7 stated, "Recently my school gave the teachers the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure the teachers' burnout levels." P7 utilized a psychological inventory that measure the burnout levels in teachers. P8 stated, "Teachers are given a survey about the culture and climate of the school yearly." P8 gave teachers a culture and climate survey to help assess burnout levels. P9 stated, "I conduct regular one-to-one meetings with teachers. The scheduled meeting usually includes an assessment of the teachers' mental wellbeing." P9 conducted formal meetings with

teachers to assess their mental wellbeing. P10 stated, "I maintain an open-door policy where teachers are able to communicate stress related to the job." P10 maintained an open-door policy to become more accessible for teachers to share their problems that may relate to burnout. P11 stated, "I use a yearly teacher satisfaction survey to measure the teachers' stress levels." P11 organized a yearly survey to assess burnout levels in teachers. P12 stated, "It is difficult to measure my teachers' level of stress. The teachers at my school takes an end of the year survey about the culture and climate of the school. The survey helps me to identify how the teachers are feeling about the school." P12 stated that measuring teachers' stress is challenging. P12 also stated that a culture and climate survey is given to teachers to assess their feelings about the school environment. P13 stated, "I use a survey to gauge my teachers' level of burnout." P13 used a survey to assess burnout symptoms in teachers. P14 stated, I tried to communicate with my teachers regularly to see how they are feeling about teaching and their classrooms." P14 used communication skills to assess the level of burnout in teachers. P15 stated, "I used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure my teachers' burnout levels." P15 utilized a burnout inventory to measure the level of stress in teachers.

Summary of Themes

Thematic analysis was used for emergent themes. During the interview, each principal shared their instructional leadership practices and beliefs that positively support teachers who experience burnout. From the responses of the participants, the following six themes emerged.

Theme 1: Foster positive relationships with teachers.

Theme 2: Collaborate with all teachers.

Theme 3: Provide feedback and support to all teachers.

Theme 4: Communicate effectively with teachers.

Theme 5: Provide professional development to support teachers.

Theme 6: Care about the well-being of teachers.

Theme 1: Foster Positive Relationships with Teachers

All principals shared their beliefs on the importance they placed on creating positive relationships with teachers. Theme 1 was the most referenced throughout the interviews. According to P1, "it is the golden rule, treating others like you want to be treated." The participants talked about becoming proactive by planning ways to promote, recognize, and praise teachers. P12 explained how important it was for principals to let teachers know you are supportive and care about them. Each participant communicated versions of this belief of bonding with the teachers at their school by being supportive, personable, friendly, and positive. Many of the participants interviewed talked about starting the school day with being welcoming, smiling, remaining calm, and encouraging even during stressful moments.

Creating a stress-free, supportive, and positive relationship helps teachers feel secure and comfortable when working with the principal. For example, P4 explained his approach as being supportive and warm while mentioning that teachers stated that they feel comfortable with talking to him about classroom issues and are not threatened by

negative feedback. P9 noted that teachers now ask him to come by to observe their classrooms when trying a new lesson with the students to get his feedback.

Theme 2: Collaborate with all Teachers

During the interviews, the participants explained the leadership opportunities and the shared decision-making that they provided their teachers. P7 shared that when you find the "right people, you need to make room for them to grow." Many of the principals stated that when hiring new teachers, they wanted to hire teachers to become leaders. P2 shared that when she is hiring teachers "first she looks for a leader and second looks for a teacher."

Also, all participants had some type of a collaborative team meetings at their schools. In the interview, four of the participants placed strong emphasis on the collaborative team approach that they used through professional learning communities and felt that the opportunities were important to help teachers in the classroom with instructional strategies and to decrease the work load of teachers. Many of the participants believed that professional leadership communities helped to lessen stress in teachers. P5 shared that he spent a lot of time at his current school strengthening the professional learning communities to focus on effective instructional strategies for teachers and for team members to lead meetings instead of him. P5 also stated that when other teachers see teachers leading meetings then they are encouraged to take leadership roles as well.

The participants also explained the value of letting all teachers provide input. P11 explained how she makes sure all teachers feel they have a voice through a shared

decision making and a team approach. P3 is a strong supporter of shared decision making and makes sure teachers know he takes their input seriously. P6 stated that teachers have the right to use their voice at her school.

Theme 3: Provide Feedback and Support to all Teachers

The value the participants put into ensuring effective instructional best practices to provide feedback and support to teachers is clear. The participants responses stated that being an effective instructional leader for teachers was one of their main roles as a school principal. P2 articulated the common theme each principal shared about how important it is for principals to be an effective instructional leader at their school for teachers. P4 stated that he encourages his teachers to set goals and offer them feedback in relation to those goals. P6 shared that she provides formal and informal feedback to her teachers about the instructional strategies used in the classroom. P8 explained that he makes it a priority to have discussions on instructional best practices which lead to the success of teachers in the classrooms. P13 stated that "85% of her time has to be on instruction and providing positive feedback and support for teachers."

Theme 4: Communicate Effectively with Teachers

Participants in the interview shared how crucial it was to be transparent in their communication to earn trust and credibility with the teachers. A lack of transparency in communication makes it difficult to for teachers to trust and build relationship with principals. P15 discussed the importance of being transparent, authentic, and open when interacting with teachers. P15 makes it a point to communicate regularly and share the same message and information with all teachers and staff at his school.

P14 talked about the importance of building trust with teachers by not blaming them for issues that occurred in the classrooms. P1 stated that he tries to just be his true self and be believable. P9 has a close relationship with his teachers so they feel safe and comfortable with him and his feedback. He feels people believe what he says because of his sincerity and follow through. P2 explained that she has built up a level of trust with her staff who feel comfortable to come to her if they are struggling in an area to ask her support and for her to visit their classrooms to give feedback.

Theme 5: Provide Professional Development to Support Teachers

Many of the participants shared how they continually grow their teachers by providing opportunities for professional learning to help teachers become knowledgeable with teacher burnout. P13 shared that she sends teachers, often in groups, to professional development that deals with coping strategies to help teachers with burnout. P11 explained that she believes in the importance of professional development and has her teachers share what they have learned at staff meetings. P3 shared that he believes that he needs to support and develop his teachers. P15 shared that he encourages his teachers to visit and observe other veteran teachers' classrooms to see how a stress-free learning environment looks like for teachers and students. P4 explained he encourages professional development and sends his teachers to various trainings to learn about job related stress and coping strategies.

Theme 6: Care about the Well-being of Teachers

All participants that were interviewed shared the importance of having an open door-policy at their schools to regularly check on the wellbeing of their teachers. P8

shared that she reminds the teachers frequently that her office door is always open. P15 commented that he provides a listening ear to the teachers and asked questions to check on their well-being. P5 explained that his office door is always open, and his teachers are welcome no matter what the issue may be. P2 noted that her more stressful teachers tends to come to her office to talk early in the morning before the start of school, so she tries to be to school very early for her teachers.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In a basic quality research study, the trustworthiness and credibility of the research is imperative to the research study (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). The data collected was accurately represented to lessen researcher bias. Furthermore, the findings were triangulated by comparing the responses to each interview questions with all participants and the Zoom recordings. Triangulation is used to promote social change, enhance data saturation, and mitigate bias (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Triangulation is also used to confirm results from multiple sources of data collected, in this case 15 different participants (Yin, 2018). Triangulation of the participants' responses helped identify the most common and frequent themes communicated by each participant.

Confirmability is when participants influence the study's findings and not by the researcher's interest, bias, or motivation (Hagood & Skinner, 2015). To improve confirmability in the research, a reflexive journal was used before, during, and after the interview process and data analysis. The reflexive journal was used by the researcher to be conscious of her predispositions, reactions, and emotions while data were collected and analyzed to avoid reactivity and bias (Pillow, 2015). At the beginning of coding the

transcriptions, an audit trail was kept helping with the credibility of the research. The researcher also wrote down analytical memos of her thinking and reasons for her choices (See Appendix D).

Member checking was used to strengthen the dependability of the findings. Member-checking was used to assess if both the interview and the representation of the findings were an accurate interpretation of each participant's beliefs. Member checking is one way of achieving validity and credibility in qualitative research by giving all participants an opportunity to review the interview transcripts to confirm that the statements are accurate (Caretta & Perez, 2019). Member checking was used in this research to validate the instructional leadership themes identified in this research study. Participants were asked to respond within a 3-day window after the researcher sent the transcription to them and her interpretations of their responses.

Reflecting on triangulation, the researcher's thinking, and member checking helped to support the trustworthiness of this qualitative research study. An audit trail was maintained starting from the point of obtaining input from a peer reviewer through to data analysis (see Appendix D). Furthermore, the peer reviewing process was used from non-participating principals to provide feedback to the interview questions and to identified emergent themes. During the data analysis, there were no discrepancies. Notes were maintained and follow appropriate data collection procedures to avoid bias.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the analysis of the interview responses was summarized. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the instructional leadership

practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout. After the analysis of data, 9 instructional leadership practices emerged that each participant referenced as having a positive influence on teachers who experienced burnout at their schools. Member checking was used with the participants to confirm that the researcher had accurately identified the instructional leadership practice themes they intended in their responses during the interview. In Chapter 5, the interpretation of the findings, limitation of the study, recommendations, implications for transferability, social change, and recommendations for further research were identified.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Though many studies exist that document the leadership practices of school principals regarding teachers' burnout, this study filled a gap in the existing literature. I addressed the problem of K-12 school principals inconsistently implementing instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experienced burnout. I used basic qualitative research design to address this problem and to purposely gain an understanding of the instructional leadership practices the principals believe have helped support teachers experiencing burnout. From the analysis of the interview responses, 9 common instructional leadership practices themes emerged.

The conceptual framework for this research study was based on Vygotsky's theory of ZPD, which states that people are more motivated to learn when they are supported (Barohny, 2019). Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy was also used as a conceptual framework for this study. Knowles emphasized that adults are self-directed and expected to take responsibility for their own decisions (Tanish, 2016). Both Vygotsky's and Knowles' theories are embedded in the nine instructional leadership practice themes that I identified and helped guide the analysis and categorization of the participants' responses. Additionally, I also identified the instructional leadership practices as being important to support teachers who experienced burnout. According to Benoliel and Barth (2017), instructional leadership styles of school principals has an influence on teachers' job satisfaction and burnout levels. Effective principal leadership is essential in supporting and motivating classroom teachers to create a positive learning environment (Sheng, Wolff, Kilmer, & Yager, 2017).

The participants were selected from a population of K-12 school principals from one school district in the southern United States who were inconsistently implementing leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout. This population was identified using the annual teacher report posted on the state department education website. Criteria for initial selection included schools having a teacher attrition rate at the end of the year for the last 3 school years of 15% or higher (The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, 2020).

I improved my understanding of effective instructional leadership practices that current principals believe positively influence teachers who experienced burnout. Even though the six leadership practice themes identified in this research study presented no strategies or concepts, this basic qualitative study enhances the literature on effective instructional leadership practices and provides understanding into the beliefs of current principals. The six instructional leadership practice themes of school principals regarding teachers' burnout that emerged are:

Theme 1: Foster positive relationships with teachers.

Theme 2: Collaborate with all teachers.

Theme 3: Provide feedback and support to all teachers.

Theme 4: Communicate effectively with teachers.

Theme 5: Provide professional development to support teachers.

Theme 6: Care about the well-being of teachers.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings identified instructional leadership practices of school principals in schools who have inconsistently implemented practices to support teachers who experience burnout. It was apparent that principals acted as both instructional and transformational leaders at their school. According to Heck and Hallinger (2015), instructional leadership has a significant effect on improving school culture and achievement. School principals' practices as instructional leaders have a direct influence on teachers' actions in the classroom (Rigby, 2015). However, instructional leadership practices alone are not able to meet the needs of all teachers but integrating those practices with transformational leadership could lead to retaining teachers in the profession and greater school success (Menon, 2015).

I also identified that although each of the participants saw themselves as instructional leaders, this was just one aspect involved in teacher support. The main duties of an instructional leader are to provide ongoing teacher support by allowing time for peer collaboration, being consistent, having an open-door policy, and continuously offering advice, assistance, and direction (Buttram & Farley-Ripple, 2016). Instructional leaders' behaviors make significant independent contributions to teacher burnout (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Instructional leaders must be prepared to engage collaboratively with teachers in ways that are consistently open, honest, and benevolent, while also demonstrating knowledge and competent decision making associated with administering school success (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

Nonetheless, the principals interviewed made it evident through their responses that many of them do not know the signs of burnout and although instructional leadership is important, they did not believe it is enough to support teachers who experienced burnout. The findings indicated that school principals are not able to identify burnout in teachers when it occurs. Suh (2018) noted in her research that school principals do not realize teachers are experiencing burnout until it is too late for the teachers. Brasfield et al. (2019) articulated that school principals are challenged to recognized factors that contribute to teachers' burnout, which may lead to attrition. The findings supported this research.

Most practitioners and educational researchers will not be amazed by the themes identified in this research study. The six instructional leadership practices themes that emerged from the data prove many of the best practice approaches that have been identified in previous literature and research. The value of integrating both an instructional leadership approach and school principals becoming more knowledgeable about burnout in teachers was confirmed through this research study. Vygotsky's theory of zone of proximal development and Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy were embedded into the responses of the interviews and emerged throughout most of the instructional leadership practices themes that were identified. In this research study, the school principals who were interviewed incorporated the theories into their own leadership style.

Brasfield, Lancaster, and Xu (2019) posited that the teaching profession has been ranked historically as one of the highest stress-related careers.

Brasfield et al. (2019) reported that the teaching profession is the highest stress-related career. O'Brennan et al. (2019) stated that teacher burnout is associated with job performance, satisfaction, and retention. Cansoy et al. (2017) said that school principals should apply instructional leadership practices to enable teachers to cope with stressful situations. Bozkus (2018) stated that workloads of teachers should be reduced because increased workload may result in increased burnout. Suh (2018) noted that school principals' pressure associated with the teaching profession also contribute to teacher burnout.

According to Cetin and Dede (2018), the teaching profession is seen as one of the professions experiencing intense stress. Bottiani et al. (2019) reported that both stress and burnout are pervasive among public school teachers and amplified in suburban schools. Occupational stress is a common contributor of inefficiency in teaching (Sneha & Maheswari, 2020). Stress in teachers impacts teachers' sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout, attrition, and physical health (Haydon, 2018). Burnout has a negative effect on occupational performance (Okcu & Cetin, 2017). Teachers' mental health may contribute to the resilience of teachers who choose to stay in the profession (Gray et al., 2017) and the role of a teacher is becoming increasingly complex, and that teachers are more prone to burnout (Richards et al., 2016).

Teachers are leaving the profession at a higher rate than those entering (Dassa & Derose, 2017) and teacher burnout is a chronic phenomenon that causes high percentage of attrition in the education profession (Rumschlag, 2017). Gui (2019) indicated that school principal's leadership practices negatively affect teacher satisfaction and attrition.

Cross and Thomas (2017) articulated that most teachers leave within their first 5 years in the teaching field. Elyashiv (2019) indicated that the main reasons that motivate teachers' decision to leave the profession are related to the stressful working environment and poor job conditions. Player et al. (2017) found that school principal's support strongly predicted attrition in one's school. Nguyen (2020) suggested that principals need to diversify the teacher workforce to match that of the students whom they teach. Prachee et al. (2017) confirmed that both collaboration and principal leadership are positively related to teacher self-efficacy.

Limitations of the Study

This basic qualitative research study was limited by interviews from one school district. It was also limited using only the last 3 years of data. The basic qualitative research study approach limits the responses to what each of the participants believe were the instructional leadership practices that positively supported teachers who experienced burnout but may not actually correctly reflect their true leadership practices.

This basic qualitative research study was conducted with K-12 school principals in one school districts and may not be transferable to other school districts and states. The findings are specific to K-12 schools in this one school district which met the criteria established for this research study. Schools that did not meet the criteria for this study may have different results.

Although individual interview questions did not solely focus on the inconsistently of school principals when implementing instructional leadership practices, the overarching theme focused on the supportive instructional leadership practices used to

support teachers who experience burnout. The participants kept this theme in mind when they responded to each interview question. Therefore, an additional limitation could be that the identified instructional leadership practices may only support teachers who experienced burnout.

Recommendations

The findings of this research study identified six instructional leadership practices school principals believe positively support teachers who experienced burnout. The primarily recommendation for this study is to share the results with principals at schools with a teacher attrition rate of 15% or higher to support teachers who may have experienced burnout. A secondary recommendation would be for school districts, state school officials, and principal preparation programs to utilize the findings from this study to advise the training of new and current principals in creating similar instructional leadership practices at their own school. The following three recommendations are made based on the results of this study:

1. To assess teachers at the participants' schools with Vyogtsky's theory of zone of proximal development (Barohny, 2019) and Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy (Tanish, 2016) for alignment of teacher perspectives with the school principals' beliefs as documented in their interviews.

2. To interview principals at schools with teacher attrition rate of 14 % or lower to see if similar themes emerge.

3. To interview principals at schools that did not meet the study's criteria to assess whether the instructional leadership practices identified in this study were absent.

Implications

This basic qualitative research study has implications for social change. Teacher burnout has become a challenge in many educational systems worldwide (Elyashiv, 2019). An abundant of data shows that a large portion of teachers between 20% and 50% leave the profession due to burnout (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Studies have shown that administration support (lack of collegiality and collaboration, lack of opportunities to participate in decision making), challenging organizational aspects (large classes, heavy workloads, lack of autonomy), and difficulties in class management (low student engagement, student discipline problems) are determinants that motivate teachers to become burnout and leave the teaching profession (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Results from studies have shown that school principals should become more knowledgeable with the signs and factors of teacher burnout; this could have a positive impact on teachers staying in the teaching profession (Kulavuz-Onal & Tatar, 2017).

The findings of this study may help school principals to better implement their instructional leadership practices to support teachers who experience burnout to stay in the teaching profession. Additionally, burnout teachers who are supported by their school principals are more successful at work, engaged in the teaching process, has less classroom management issues, and most importantly stays in the teaching profession (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Understanding the practices school principals believe are

most influential in supporting teachers who experienced burnout will help other school principals facing similar challenges.

Conclusion

It is suggested by researchers that school principals do have an influence on teachers who experienced burnout (Suh, 2018). The influence that school principals have on burnout teachers sets the tone for their school communities and has been the focus on education research (Stein, 2016). School principals play an important role in burnout teachers' sense of well-being and their decisions to stay in the teaching profession (Sliskovic, Buric, & Soric, 2019).

The leadership practices of school principals have been described as having the most influence on effective classroom teacher (Wallace Foundation, 2012). School principal's leadership style is associated with teachers' decisions to leave the profession. The school principal is the creator or re-shaper of a school's teacher culture and influences not only the actions of the school staff, but also their motivation to stay in the teaching profession (Qadach et al.) School principals using effective leadership practices, along with a solid focus on support, have a significant and positive effect on teachers who experienced burnout (Goddard, Goodard, & Miller, 2015). Vygotsky's theory of zone proximal development (Barohny, 2019) and Malcolm Knowles theory of andragogy (Tanish, 2016) is an effective framework to use to understand the leadership practices of exemplary school principals.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Tell me how you as school principal define teacher burnout.

2. Tell me about your instructional leadership practices.

3. Tell me how you apply instructional leadership practices to support teachers.

4. Tell me about teacher burnout.

5. Tell me what you see as the challenges related to teacher burnout.

6. Tell me the type of training and support you offer to teachers at your school specially for the teachers who experienced burnout.

7. Tell me the strategies you use to communicate to teachers at your school. about burnout.

8. Has the school undertaken any new initiatives recently that seem likely to influence teacher burnout levels?

9. Tell me the factors do you think exert the greatest influence over teacher burnout.

10. Tell me what measures you use to assess burnout in teachers.

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Participant:_____

I am Lakeva Winchester, a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting research on instructional leadership practices of principals. I will have access to information that is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others.

I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.

I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my own personal information but only to the extent and for the purpose of performing my assigned duties on this research project.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____ Date:_____

Appendix D: Audit Trail

This audit trail describes the actions taken by the researcher to support the degree of trustworthiness of this research study.

Data Collection:

- Asked non-participating veteran principals for their feedback and input on interview questions.

- Used Zoom audio recording to record and transcribed the interviews. The researcher then reread transcription and compared it to her notes.

- Triangulated data by interviewing 15 principals.

- Conducted member check with each participant to make sure the transcriptions were accurate. Allowed participants 3 days to respond and provide comments, changes, and suggestions.

- A reflexive journal was used before, during, and after the interview process. Data analysis was used to make sure bias was avoided while data was collected and analyzed.

Data Management

- Utilized an alphanumeric system of P1-P15 to identify each participant.

- Used in vivo coding to code interviews.

- Wrote analytical memos during the coding procedure to record the researcher's thinking and decision making. *(Example: May 22, 2020 – Open-door policy continues to be mentioned by the participants as a common strategy used to communicate and assess burnout in teachers.*

Participants stated that open-door policy was used as a communication strategy in which teachers came to the participant's office to ask questions, discuss issues, and receive feedback about teacher burnout. May 23, 2020 – reviewing the responses made by the participants and the emphasis on caring about the well-being of teachers as a theme, the researcher moved it into a separate category).

- Kept data without identifying the information or names to maintain the confidentiality of each participant.

Data Analysis

- Reviewed the transcripts to begin the coding process by carefully going thorough each participants' interview by hand and making coding notes.

- Categorized the data into themes.

- Had a non-participating principal serve as a peer reviewer to provide feedback and input on the identified themes, findings, results, and conclusion (Confidentially agreement obtained).

- Performed a member check by asking the participants to provide comment, input, and feedback on the themes that were identified from their interviews.