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The Lived Experiences of Male Educational Leaders

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Abstract

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MS, University of Maryland University College, 2003

BS, Bowie State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

School systems have been faced with the attrition of male educational leaders in school districts. In particular, male educational leaders in the Maryland school district are pursuing non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The conceptual frameworks that guided this study were Rogers's concepts of ideal self, self-image, and self-worth and Dawis and Lofquist's concepts of personality, need, and ability. The overarching research question addressed the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that might have influenced their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles. A purposeful sample of 20 former male educational leaders of the Maryland school districts shared their lived experiences through open-ended telephone interviews. Data were collected using an interview protocol and audio recorded interviews. Collected data were manually transcribed and coded. Interview transcripts were uploaded into the NVivo 1.3 software application. Data were analyzed using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method. The findings revealed six thematic categories: job satisfaction, positive feelings, neutral feelings, negative feelings, challenges of educational leadership, and lessons learned. Findings may contribute to positive social change by providing school systems a better understanding of developing gender diversity initiatives that address critical issues and needs from educational leadership experiences. Such understanding could be used to increase male educational leader job satisfaction and decrease their turnover.

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Dedication

I dedicate my doctoral study to my toddler son, Juan-Carlos Emmanuel Murphy, who arrived into my life a month sooner than expected on a very special day. I want my son to know that I never gave up on my hopes and dreams of things I wanted in my life, and one of those was becoming a mother. I want my son to persevere in life and achieve the desires of his heart, and your father and I will be there to support your every step of the way.

To my loving husband, Carlos Murphy, who supported me throughout this process and provided me with comfort, love, and patience that I needed to keep moving forward in achieving this personal goal. My husband spent many tireless nights taking care our son, Juan-Carlos, by himself so that I could have the mental and physical space needed to work on my dissertation. I could not have done it without you, and I will always love you for that.

To my beautiful mother, Martha S. Jones, you were my first educator in life, my educational learning all started with you, and most of all you taught me how to be resilient like yourself and to never give up on my goals in life. Thanks mommy for believing in me and cheering me on throughout my entire doctoral journey.

To my loving and supportive family: my brother Shawn, my sister Ashley, my father Henry, my stepfather Elton. Also, my friends who supported me throughout this journey in many ways and believed that I would finish my doctorate degree.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the 20th century, men traditionally dominated primary and secondary schools as educational leaders in the United States (Kafka, 2009). The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill, had an indirect effect on males earning undergraduate and advanced degrees in educational administration, which made them more qualified to be in educational leadership roles than women (Kafka, 2009). By 1973, less than 20% of primary school principals and less than 2% of secondary school principals were female (Kafka, 2009). In the 21st century, the roles of men and women in the American workforce have changed with decreasing numbers of men are pursuing and remaining in educational leadership positions (Duevel et al., 2015). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018) found that during 2016–2017 men constituted approximately 45% of school principals in the United States, and approximately 9% of them left the principalship role. Men now have different expectations of their leadership roles in educational settings than women, so it is not uncommon for more women to be in principal roles than men (Murakami & Törnsen, 2017). However, there is growing concern over male principal turnover rates (Wiggins, 2015). The problem is that male educational leaders in the Maryland school district are pursuing non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). In Maryland, men made up approximately 47% of the total number of public school principals during the 1999–2000 school year and approximately 41% of the principals during the 2003–2004 school year (NCES, 2000, 2004). The results of this study could be an asset for schools and businesses with non-

educational positions in identifying gender job satisfaction, the involvement of students and colleagues, and behaviors toward genders (Polat et al., 2017; Reiss, 2015). This study could also increase gender leadership diversity and preservation of men's decisions to remain in, as well as pursue, a leadership position in school settings (Mistry & Sood, 2015; Polat et al., 2017; Reiss, 2015).

In Chapter 1, a rationale for the study's problem that male educational leaders in the Maryland school district are pursuing non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths is presented (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). I discuss the background, purpose, and nature of the study related to the research problem. I also provide the research question, specific key terms and the conceptual frameworks, and review the related literature to educational and organizational leadership.

Background of Study

The diminishing presence of male educational leaders in the Maryland school districts is largely due to them pursuing non-educational leadership career paths (Gui, 2019). Men were the majority of education leaders in the 20th century in America, but culture significantly changed during the 21st century with men pursuing more non-educational leadership positions (Duevel et al., 2015; Kafka, 2009). Men's interests and expectations from their leadership roles changed in school settings through their career experiences, which helped them to develop strategic leadership skills toward choosing senior organizational leadership occupations (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016).

Within the United States, women and men held relatively equal percentage in the makeup of the workforce in 2013, but less than 17% of executive officer and board of

director positions were filled by women (Walker & Aritz, 2015). Given that the past decade has changed gender roles in the workplace, bias toward men as leaders in a masculine organizational culture has not changed as much (Walker & Aritz, 2015), which has influenced the lived experiences of male educational leaders in school settings and their decisions to pursue non-educational leadership roles (Smith et al., 2016). Non-educational settings have influenced gender differences in performance evaluations to advance to higher levels of leadership in which men received more positive attributes (Smith et al., 2016). If educational leaders believe they will receive an increase in job satisfaction and recognition of their leadership role by pursuing non-educational career paths, then they will follow their personal and professional interests to do so (Hussain & Suleman, 2018; Owler & Morrison, 2015; Smith et al., 2016).

Male primary school principals have experienced leadership issues merely because of their gender (Gill & Arnold, 2015). This situation has resulted in varying gender perceptions on school leaders by students, colleagues, and parents and has contributed to the decreased preservation of male educational leaders deciding to remain in that career path (Mistry & Sood, 2015; Polat et al., 2017; Reiss, 2015). For leadership effectiveness, studies have shown no significance in gender difference even though males have been perceived more suitable over females (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Developing capability themes for gender equality in educational institutions may factor in the retention of male educational leaders (Loots & Walker, 2015). But there are a limited amount of qualitative studies focusing on the phenomenon of the lived experiences of male educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-

educational leadership careers instead of educational leadership careers. This phenomenon has not been well understood in the Maryland school district among the educational leadership community and should be further examined. Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted to explore participants' lived experiences with choosing non-educational leadership positions.

Problem Statement

The diminishing presence of male educational leaders is becoming more prominent in the 21st century within primary, secondary, public, and private schools (Gill & Arnold, 2015; Goldring & Taie, 2018). Men in educational leadership positions are considered the minority in an overly female dominated workforce (Gill & Arnold, 2015). The minority status suggests that males could lack interest, both personally and professionally, in pursuing educational leadership positions (Gill & Arnold, 2015). The NCES (2013) found that during 2011–2013, men constituted approximately 47.6% of public and 44.6% of private school principal positions in the United States. During 2011–2012, female principals held approximately 64% of principal positions in public elementary schools in the United States (Department of Professional Employees, 2016). The general problem is that the diminishing presence of male educational leaders could affect students' behaviors toward genders and their academic motivation levels; colleagues' decisions-making in the classroom; and students, colleagues, and parents' perceptions of male educational leaders (Netshitangani, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Tran, 2017). The specific problem is that male educational leaders in the Maryland

school district are pursuing non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths (Hussain & Suleman, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. Open-ended telephone interviews were conducted with 20 participants to understand the decision-making process of male educational leaders that chose non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. Findings from this study may be used by the Maryland school district, educational leaders, and other school faculty to gain an understanding of how experiences in educational leadership career paths may influence school leaders' pursuit of non-educational leadership roles.

Research Question

The overarching research question that guided the study was "What are the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that may influence their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles?"

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provided the continuance for further exploration of the participants' lived experiences. The frameworks used to guide this study were the ideal self, self-image, and self-worth concepts from the theory of personality (Rogers, 1957)

and personality, need, and ability concepts from the Minnesota theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). A detailed analysis of the concepts is presented in Chapter 2.

In the theory of personality, Rogers (1957) illustrated the elements that constitute the ideal self, self-image, and self-worth concepts that promote congruence and lead to the exceptional potential to achieve self-actualization. Self-actualization, a term he coined, relates to the greatest achievement level people strive for as part of their basic instinct (Rogers, 1957). He believed that the ideal self must be congruent with the real self for an individual to be self-actualized (Rogers, 1957). These concepts relate to the study because men may perceive themselves as prosperous, dominant, and well compensated (Ifat & Lyal, 2017; Shaked & Blanz, 2018). For men to achieve congruence between how they perceive themselves and their behavior, they need to pursue a career that is more reputable, powerful, and offers a higher compensation than a career in educational leadership (Ifat & Lyal, 2017; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Blanz, 2018).

Additionally, personality traits, needs, and abilities affect how well workers adjust to their work settings (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The more a person's skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences are aligned with the demands of the job, the higher the person's work performance and satisfaction (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Men have viewed the advantages and opportunities provided by non-educational leadership roles as fulfilling to their needs and abilities in the workplace (Ifat & Eyal, 2017; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Glanz, 2018). Men have recognized that increasing their positive attitudes within the workplace toward tasks and responsibilities could result in productive behavior and good work adjustment (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015, Pulliam et al., 2017;

Shaked & Glanz, 2018). Personality traits are learned over time and can be adopted into a person's career choice to promote positive work adjustment (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015). Men do not want to be perceived as weak or a failure in their profession, which leads them to identify and embrace personality traits that need to be associated with a specific work environment to have successful work adjustment (Derue et al., 2011; Tominc et al., 2017). These concepts provided a platform to understand the decision-making process of the participants, identifying predictors of personality traits for adapting to a good work adjustment (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Glanz, 2018).

The conceptual frameworks grounded the study and provided the basis for the development of the interview questions and instrument to explore the lived experiences of the participants. In addition, the frameworks relate to the descriptive phenomenological nature of the study by focusing on the decision-making process of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. A more thorough explanation of the key elements of the conceptual framework are presented in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study. The researcher used the descriptive phenomenology design to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The qualitative research design was appropriate because the focus of the study was

to understand the decision-making process of these male educational leaders who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths.

The focus of this study was also consistent with the concepts in both Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) Minnesota theory of work adjustment and Rogers' (1957) theory of personality. To demonstrate the relationship, the concepts were explored using open-ended telephone interviews conducted with participants. The participants were former male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. An interview protocol (see Appendix) was developed by me, and an audio recorder was used to gather and collect data from the participants during their individual open-ended telephone interview sessions. The data were analyzed using the NVivo 1.3 software application and Giorgi's (1985) phenomenological method of analysis. I used NVivo 1.3 to organize the data to correlate the opinions, feelings, and values of the participants through labeling and coding the emergent themes and patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Definitions

Attrition rate: The rate at which employees either retire or quit their jobs (Gurley, 2016).

Educational leaders: Educational leaders in this study are referred to as principals and vice principals of schools (Adams et al., 2017).

Intrinsic motivation: The motivation to perform a task without expecting external reward (Proctor & Tweed, 2015).

Motivated leadership: A form of leadership where leaders are intrinsically motivated to perform their duties (Onjoro et al., 2015).

Non-educational careers: Non-educational careers are not related to the educational field (Brachem & Braun, 2016).

Non-educational settings: Non-educational settings are not within the school system (Brachem & Braun, 2016).

Primary school: Primary schools in Maryland provide formal education to students beginning at age five starting in kindergarten and continuing through fifth grade, and primary schools are also referred to as elementary schools (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2018).

Principals: Principals are individuals who provide educational and academic guidance to faculty and staff, students, and parents along with managing primary and secondary schools. Their role is to ensure educational curriculum is followed and strive to accomplish the goals, missions, and objectives established for the schools (U. S. Department of Labor, 2018).

Private school: A private school is an educational institution not funded by the government but funded through private organizations or individuals (Broughman et al., 2017).

Secondary school: Secondary schools in Maryland provide formal education to students beginning at the sixth grade through the 12th grade. Secondary schools are commonly referred to as middle schools and high schools. Middle schools consist of

grade levels sixth through eighth, and high schools are ninth through 12th grade levels
(MSDE, 2018).

Transactional role: A role that involves constant involvement and exchange in
carrying out a specified task (Eboka, 2016).

Assumptions

There were four assumptions identified for this research study. The first
assumption was that all selected participants would provide open-ended, reliable, and
accurate responses during the interview sessions. The second assumption was that the
selected sample size will represent the larger target population of former male
educational leaders of the Maryland school district that are currently in non-educational
leadership positions. The third assumption was that the interview questions were
structured in a way that extracts relative data that can be collected and evaluated to help
address this study's research problem. The fourth assumption was that articles used in the
literature review portray accurate information related to the current state and gaps in the
study. These assumptions were necessary to help guide the focus of the study. They also
support the basis of the research study analysis in addressing the lived experiences of the
participants.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of the study was to understand the decision-making process of male
educational leaders who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead
of educational leadership career paths. The reason for selecting the male educational
leader population was that their diminishing presence could negatively affect students,

colleagues, and parents (Netshitangani, 2016; Tran, 2017). The sample population

consisted of 20 former male educational leaders of the Maryland school district. Open-

ended, in-depth phone interviews allowed the study's participants to openly express how

they experienced influences during their career path decision-making process. This

interview method allowed me to gather data that supported this study's descriptive

phenomenological method.

The specificity of qualitative research studies makes them less generalizable,

which is relevant to this current study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The results of this study

are not generalizable or transferrable, which is left to the reader, and only reflect the lived

experiences of former male educational leaders in Maryland. Further, findings of this

study may be applicable to other populations or situations but may differ due to different

elements.

Delimitations were established to narrow the scope of the study. The selected

geographical location of the participants was a delimitation. Only former male

educational leaders of the Maryland school district that are currently in non-educational

leadership positions were interviewed. These criteria excluded all males who held an

educational leadership role in other states located in the United States, in other countries,

and excluded all females. My focus was understanding the decision-making process of

male educational leaders who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths

instead of educational leadership career paths. Using purposeful sampling to identify the

study's population sample was another delimitation. Purposeful sampling can produce

rich data from the participants' unique experiences of the study's phenomena that will

establish transferability (Burkholder et al., 2016). I also delimited the research question, interview questions, research design, and sample size. Lastly, the time during which the study was conducted is a delimitation because the results could have been influenced by events occurring during that time.

The conceptual framework from Bem's (1972) self-perception theory relates to my area of study but was not further investigated. Other conceptual frameworks such as the concepts from Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) Minnesota theory of work adjustment and Rogers's (1957) theory of personality that were more consistent to the focus of my study were used. Research that targets the influence of career decision-making skills in the context of leadership roles could be used by researchers to expand on this study.

Limitations

There were four limitations identified for this study. The first limitation was the individuals who voluntary agreed to participate in this study. The participants may not be a true representative of the population, and I could not determine the openness and honesty in their interview responses. Interviews can affect the participants' responses and that data analysis can lead to misinterpretations (Morse, 2015). The second limitation was the varying career lengths in educational leadership that participants served. This can limit generalizability and transferability of the study's results (Morse, 2015). The third limitation was the participants' race. This study was not dependent on including the demographic information of the participants, so there was a likelihood all participants could be from the same race or be from a combination of races. Lastly, the participation was limited to only one state. All participants were from Maryland.

To address the first limitation, participants were reminded that their identities were confidential and would not be disclosed. I also made sure that when the interviews were conducted, it was in a serene and reclusive environment that eliminated distractions and interruptions. To address the second, third, and fourth limitations, I provided thick, rich descriptions of the participants' unique lived experiences to establish transferability (Guest et al., 2020).

Significance of the Study

The findings of this descriptive phenomenological research study may fill the gap in understanding the lived experiences that influenced the decision-making process of male educational leaders who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. This study is unique and significant because I focused on an under-researched area that explores the career path choices of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district. Insights from this qualitative research could assist schools and businesses with non-educational positions in their efforts to identify gender job satisfaction in leadership positions. Qualitative research on gender role topics has been known to yield useful knowledge that impacts the effects of positive social change by addressing societal disparities (Tominc et al., 2017). Positive social change may bring forth a global effect on the sociodemographic characteristics on how gender roles and social context could influence a person's career decision and actions (Castillo-Mayén, 2014).

Significance to Practice

The results from this research study may assist the MSDE with developing and promoting specialized gender diversity initiatives for male educational leadership in schools across the districts. These specialized gender diversity initiatives could be initially launched as a pilot in a few school districts that have high attrition rates of male educational leaders. If the pilot is successful, the specialized gender diversity initiatives could be expanded and implemented across all Maryland school districts targeting aspiring and current male educational leaders.

Insights from this research study may assist specialized gender diversity initiatives with enabling aspiring and current male educational leaders in Maryland with the skills and knowledge to address critical needs in school settings. Their experience from these initiatives may lead them to be successful in their current role as principal and in future educational leadership roles. This study may lead to decreased attrition rates among male educational leaders in educational settings in Maryland school districts.

Significance to Theory

This study's results may inform future research into male educational school leaders' career decisions, professional development in educational settings, and pursuit of leadership roles in non-educational settings. Results from this study may also support and strengthen scholarly understanding of the lived experiences of male educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership careers instead of educational leadership careers. There may be significant parallels between current male educational leaders' decisions to remain or depart their career in

educational settings and former educational leaders who departed their career in pursuit

of leadership careers in non-educational settings. This study may inspire future research

to be conducted on educational leadership and career decision-making. Insights from this

qualitative study may increase the effectiveness of current male educational leaders in

school settings and former male educational leaders in non-educational settings to

achieve positive social change.

Significance to Social Change

In Maryland, male educational leaders in educational settings leave their

profession to pursue leadership roles in non-educational settings. Conclusions may

develop from this qualitative research study that could potentially lead to improved

perceptions from male educational leaders in school settings and improve practices on

their decision-making process to pursue leadership roles in non-educational settings.

Insights from this study may contribute to positive social change by providing a stronger

understanding of mitigating attrition concerns and may encourage male educational

leaders to remain in their educational leadership career paths.

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Summary and Transition

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In Chapter 1, I presented and defined a rationale for the problem of male

educational leaders in Maryland pursuing non-educational leadership career paths instead

of leadership career paths in the school district. The research question and specific key

terms for the research were also presented. In the sections of this chapter, I reviewed the

related literature to educational and organizational leadership. The conceptual

frameworks of Rogers's theory of personality and Dawis and Lofquist's Minnesota

theory of work adjustment were influential in determining the research approach and design. The information from the research presented in Chapter 1 informed the next chapter. In Chapter 2, a comprehensive review of the literature on the evolution of male educational leaders pursing non-educational career paths instead of educational career paths is presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of the male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The problem is that male educational leaders in the Maryland school district are pursing non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Current statistical data compiled by the Principal Follow up Survey from 50 states on attrition rate of school principals who left the career entirely was at 10% (Gray & Taie, 2015). Several studies in various educational districts across the country have indicated that yearly principal attrition rates are in the range of 12-30% (Vooren, 2018). Thirteen percent of educational leaders in Maryland who left their jobs in 2017 were reported to have pursued other careers (Kirwan, 2017). A report published by the MSDE cites the attrition rate of male principals and teachers as one of the problematic areas in the state (MSDE, 2016). In addition, the MSDE cited the number of female principals to be at 957, whereas the male principals were at 473 (MSDE, 2017).

In Chapter 2, the literature search strategy methods used to obtain relevant research literature are presented. Additionally, to understand the decision-making process of male educational leaders and explore the lived experiences of their leadership career paths, I relied on the concepts from the theory of personality (Rogers, 1957) and Minnesota theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) as the conceptual frameworks, which are described in this chapter. In Chapter 2, I further explore the gaps

in research and provided a review of the literature on: (a) personality and work adjustment; (b) gender job satisfaction; (c) male educational leader personal and professional interests; (d) effects of leader gender on student motivation and behavior; (e) impact of leader gender on teachers; (f) students', teachers', and parents' perceptions of male educational leaders; (g) effects of school leader attrition on schools and business communities; (h) educational setting; and (i) non-educational career decisions of school leaders. Each of the themes bear their own significance in identifying the gap in the research.

Literature Search Strategy

There is importance for any dissertation to make use of quality, peer-reviewed articles, and journals to provide the most credible information. There was a scarce number of sources that dealt exclusively with the research problem. However, an exhaustive review of the literature was performed on a varied number of databases available. I used the following databases: Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Education Source, ERIC, PsycINFO, SAGE Journals, MSDE, and NCES. The search engine used was Google Scholar. The main key terms for the searches were *principal attrition rate in Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Education, perceptions of students, colleagues and parents on male educational leaders, reasons for attrition rate of school principals, gender differences in educational leaders in Maryland, job satisfaction, gender diversity, male educational leaders, female educational leaders, school leader perceptions, Minnesota theory of work adjustment,* and *theory of*

personality. An article from an independent organization called the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was also used.

The search process involved using combinations of terms in various databases. The MSDE and NCES databases offered statistical data on the attrition rates of principals and teachers in 24 counties within Maryland when the key terms *principal attrition rate in Maryland* were used. The databases also offered shortage areas of male principals in various types of schools including content areas and in minority groups. PsycINFO databases offered peer-reviewed journals on the theory of personality, Minnesota theory of work adjustment, and the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents on male educational leaders. The key terms used were *Minnesota theory of work adjustment, theory of personality*, *perceptions of students, colleagues,* and *parents on male educational leaders.* Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Education Source, and SAGE Journals databases offered information on the career perceptions of school leaders who leave their careers for other non-educational careers. The search terms used were *reasons for attrition of school principals, job satisfaction, gender diversity, male educational leaders, female educational leaders,* and *school leader perceptions.* ERIC offered a significant amount of literature that documented the perception of students, colleagues, and parents on male educational leaders. The key search terms used were *perceptions of students, colleagues,* and *parents on male educational leaders.* Google Scholar provided many journals and articles concerning the research problem, but few of them specifically centered on Maryland; however, they did provide statistical data concerning the attrition levels in different states, which I used to focus on Maryland. I

ignored the other states that showed in the search results and focused primarily on

Maryland. The main search terms were *reasons for attrition rates of school principals,*

gender differences in educational leaders in Maryland, and *Maryland State Department*

of Education. Using the search results from the databases and search engine, I identified

141 sources. I used 121 articles, 18 books, and 2 dissertation for this study.

Conceptual Framework

The central phenomenon of this study was the lived experiences of male

educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-

educational leadership careers instead of educational leadership careers. The conceptual

frameworks of the theory of personality (Rogers, 1957) and the Minnesota theory of work

adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) were relevant to explore the study's phenomenon.

These concepts provided a platform for understanding the participants' decision-making

process by identifying personality attributes that may determine their adaptation to a good

work adjustment (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Glanz, 2018).

Theory of Personality

Rogers illustrated the elements that constitute the ideal self, self-image, and self-

worth concepts that promote congruence leading to the exceptional potential to achieve

self-actualization (Rogers, 1957). Self-worth (self-esteem) is based on the way a people

evaluate or value themselves. Self-image (real-self) is how a person views oneself, and

the ideal-self is who a person is striving to be like or achieve like (Rogers, 1957). Self-

actualization relates to the greatest achievement level people strive for as part of their

basic instinct (Rogers, 1957). Actualizing Tendency is the innate tendency to strive for

growth, development, and independence (Rogers, 1957). Being in harmony with the ideal

self and the real self is the state of congruence required to become self-actualized

(Rogers, 1957).

Further, empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence are the essential

attributes needed to foster an open environment that will promote personal growth

(Rogers, 1957). Understanding the feelings and experiences of a person requires

empathy, recognition of the subjective nature of every person's experiences, and the need

to cater to their diverse needs as crucial to developing healthy relationships (Rogers,

1959). Being accepted, embraced, and valued without demands, and regardless of the

type of behavior displayed, will provide a person with a conducive and nonjudgmental

atmosphere defined by unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1959). Congruence is the

most critical attribute that focuses on a person's authenticity developed through the

alignment of a person's inner experience and outward manifestation (Rogers, 1959). To

obtain the ultimate objective of self-actualization, the state of congruence must be

achieved after the requirements for unconditional positive regard are fully met (Rogers,

1959). Genuineness cultivates trust, which forms the foundation for healthy relationships

and encourages humans to openly express themselves (Rogers, 1959).

In past studies, researchers have suggested that how people identify with their

career roles is associated with experiences in the work environment that can transform

their self-concepts because those experiences lead to ideals that offer motivation for

positive self-worth (Olson & Shultz, 2013; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Individuals in

leadership roles have a higher regard for expectations formed by the perceptions of their

subordinates, thus guiding leaders' behaviors and attitudes regarding their self-worth and ideal self (Merolla et al., 2012; Olson & Shultz, 2013). Researchers have suggested that positive and negative self-views can influence leaders' decision-making processes to remain in their roles or pursue more prestigious leadership roles that will enhance their pursuit of the ideal self and promote a sense of self-worth (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Furthermore, researchers have concluded that a person's pursuit of a more prestigious career role could be based on a need to deflect low self-esteem (Olson & Shultz, 2013; Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

Determining the relationship between this current study's approach and the conceptual frameworks that supported the research question and guided the development of the researcher's instrument used to explore the participants' lived experiences was important and necessary to understand participants' decision-making process for choosing leadership career paths. Humans desire growth and development to achieve their highest potential according to Rogers (1957). Male educational leaders may perceive themselves as successful, dominant, and highly compensated but still decide to pursue non-educational leadership careers to achieve their exceptional potential (Ifat & Lyal, 2017; Shaked & Blanz, 2018). For some male educational leaders to achieve congruence between how they perceive themselves and their actual behavior, they need to pursue a career that is deemed more prestigious, influential, and lucrative than a career in educational leadership (Ifat & Lyal, 2017; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Blanz, 2018).

Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment

The Minnesota theory of work adjustment can be used to examine how an individual fits or functions within their job (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The more a person's skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences are aligned with the requirements of the job, the greater the person's work performance and satisfaction will be (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The concepts of personality traits, needs, and abilities affect how and why workers adjust to their work settings (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). When these concepts relate to or closely align with the demands of a person's job, the higher the potential will be for completing tasks satisfactorily (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Eggerth and Flynn (2012) suggested that the connection between workers' needs, abilities, and personality traits are important determinants of their optimal work environment. In contrast, when discord exists between an individual's needs and their work environment, their maladjustment could result in a turnover due to voluntary departure, forced departure such as termination, or by an attempt to increase their alignment with the work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Additionally, workers perceive the quality of their work environment in terms of the work rewards they receive and the extent to which their basic needs are met (Eggerth & Flynn, 2012). Workers fulfill job demands in exchange for reinforcers from the work environment to satisfy their various needs, including social, psychological, and financial (Eggerth & Flynn, 2012). Rewards offered to workers should correspond to the value placed on job satisfaction in performing and accomplishing work duties (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). But not all needs will be met in the work environment. The work

environment may satisfy needs that make use of a person's abilities but limit self-expression in interaction with others (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The lack of intellectual and personal fulfillment in performing work roles can lead to negative personality traits such as anxiety, anger, and insecurity being exhibited through negative behaviors and attitudes in the work environment (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015). Personality traits are developed over time and can also impact a person's career choice for good work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). A healthy and supportive work environment is likely to occur when a person's attitude, behaviors and actions allow positive personality traits such as cooperativeness, openness, and adaptability to be exhibited (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015). According to Eggerth and Flynn (2012), the concept of need will influence male educational leaders' choice of work and productivity in the work environment to meet their needs.

Dahling and Librizzi (2015) conducted a study on 150 working Americans to determine job satisfaction in the workplace. A job satisfaction survey was used to measure the following elements: promotion opportunities, salary, supervision, work benefits, communication, staff relationship, operating procedures, and the nature of the job (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015). In their findings, Dahling and Librizzi identified how employees perceived their level of job satisfaction within their work role, their level of satisfaction with the environment and working conditions. They also forecasted the potential turnover rate of those workers. Ultimately, high job satisfaction levels will ensure a higher retention rate when workers' needs are aligned with the job demands (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015). A harmonious environment is necessary for workers to

experience job satisfaction (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2015). Several researchers have suggested that when male educational leaders reinforce positive attitudes in the workplace, their motivation increases to successfully complete tasks and responsibilities, resulting in productive behavior and good work adjustment (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015, Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Glanz, 2018). Demonstrating positive personality traits such as being considerate, focused, dedicated, and ethical will define a person as a good leader. These traits will also promote good work adjustment, build confidence in learning new skills, and strengthen current skills (Shaked & Glanz, 2018).

Literature Review

This literature review presents a summary and analysis of research studies pertinent to the purpose and scope of this study. Relevant research studies are discussed in terms of purpose, methodology, and findings. The collective body of research reviewed is summarized in terms of extracted topics that are significant to the purpose and design of this study. Those topics are discussed individually, and relevant conclusions are drawn from them.

Personality and Work Adjustment

The concepts of personality and work adjustment are co-dependent when exploring lived experiences of leadership roles and, more precisely, educational leadership roles (Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Glanz, 2018). These concepts influence the success and effectiveness of an educational leader in running the school as well as improving student performance (Khumalo, 2015; Williams, 2011). They also determine the likelihood of attrition among educational leaders (Sezer, 2018). Both the personality

of the educational leader and their work adjustment to the role determine the effectiveness of the leadership (Williams, 2011). Both factors are linked to the attrition and the retention of school leaders (Imazeki, 2015). An educational leader with a poor work adjustment or poor motivation is more likely to leave the career for a new one (Neto, 2015).

Positive and productive personality traits are important for any educational leader because they directly affect the leader's motivation while performing his or her duties. Studies show that principals have both negative and positive personality traits (Sezer, 2018). In 2011, Williams conducted research to determine how school principals manage their roles despite the daily challenges they face. The following topics were examined in Williams' 2011 research study:

- The effects of leader personality on educational leadership effectiveness.

- The effects of working conditions on educational leader adjustment.

- The personality effects on career change decisions of educational leaders.

- The effect of work adjustment issues on the career change decisions of educational leaders.

Dahling and Librizzi (2015) concluded that for an educational leader to successfully play an instructional role in the school set up, they must first reach a state of harmony with their social and emotional environments. The social environment consists of the teaching staff, parents, and students. The emotional environment consists of understanding and empathizing with a range of emotions (positive, neutral, negative).

In Williams' 2011 study, the participants were four high school principals from a school district in the eastern Maryland. They participated in face-to-face interviews with the researchers who explored the constraints of their jobs, the demands of their jobs, and the perceptions of the principals on the instructional and non-instructional career paths (Williams, 2011). Williams studied the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework that was developed in response to Maryland's increased focus on instructional leadership. This framework was adopted by the Maryland State Department of Education in 2005.

Principals have complained of feeling stressed by the amount of work they do because their role became more demanding, though some have persisted in their educational leadership duties with optimism (Gurley et al., 2016). However, other research has shown that even though the role of a principal is much more challenging, there are a few principals who are optimistic about their careers (Williams, 2011). The increased demand on school principals has been one of the contributing factors for the high turnover rate in Maryland (Gurley et al., 2016). High attrition rates of school leaders negatively affect school performance (Gurley et al., 2016). But the personality of the individual is an important factor in determining their level of adjustment to their work role (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Positive and productive personality traits are important for any educational leader because they directly affect the leader's motivation while performing his or her duties (Sezer, 2018).

Furthermore, research has shown the importance of connectedness in school environments in fostering good working relations with teaching staff and students (Williams, 2011). For an educational leader to successfully play an instructional role in

the school, they must first reach a state of harmony with their social and emotional

environments. The social environment consists of the teaching staff, parents, and

students. The emotional environment consists of understanding and empathizing with a

range of emotions (positive, neutral, negative; Dahling & Librizzi, 2015). Williams' 2011

study addressed several key factors relevant to the purpose of this study. The study

introduced new perspectives into the attrition rates of educational leaders in Maryland.

One major perspective is that even though the role of a principal is much more

challenging, there are a few principals who are optimistic about their careers (Williams,

2011). Furthermore, these perspectives gave researchers new insight into understanding

how the theory of personality and the Minnesota theory of work adjustment function in a

real-life situation.

Williams' 2011 study also addressed the impact of subjective feelings

experienced by the principals in Maryland. Key aspects of Williams' findings that proved

relevancy for this study were the participants' experiences, feelings, and thoughts on the

importance of 'connectedness' in school environments in fostering good working

relations with teaching staff and students (Williams, 2011). The study's findings suggest

that experiences in the workplace, personality traits, and decision-making processes on

careers strengthen the fundamental aspects of the theory of personality and the Minnesota

theory of work adjustment.

A potential weakness in Williams' 2011 study is the sole focus on four principals

within Maryland, providing only a small representation of the total number of the State's

educational leaders. Williams provided some insight to my study's phenomenon.

However, the findings of the Williams study lacked the depth this current study needed to identify the number of pertinent issues relevant to the research problem.

Gender Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction is mostly associated with the level of satisfaction and success that an individual experiences from his or her job (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). The individual scales of job satisfaction can range from extraordinary satisfaction to extreme disappointment (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). When gender is examined in relation to job satisfaction, the concept becomes even more subjective (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Researchers are faced with the problem of determining which gender experiences a greater amount of job satisfaction and in which contexts do they enjoy this satisfaction (Hussain & Suleman, 2018).

In research by Anthony (2016), a survey was administered to a group of selected principals in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The purpose of the study was to determine trends in gender job satisfaction of educational leaders (Anthony, 2016). Anthony (2016) examined the following topics in the research study:

- The influence of gender job satisfaction on principal attrition rates.
- The challenges that educational leaders of both genders face in the carrying out of their duties.
- Gender selection of educational leaders.

Many researchers including Donohue and Heywood (2005) cited that there were no significant differences in job satisfaction between male and female workers. However,

there are certain cases in which there is a difference in job satisfaction between members of the same gender (Hussain & Suleman, 2018).

Though the gender of the educational leader may have little effect on their job satisfaction (Anthony, 2016), a certain level of disparity in gender job satisfaction may exist when the number of female principals and male principals is taken into consideration (Anthony, 2016; Ford et al., 2018). Based on a study in the Mid-Atlantic United States, female principals made up approximately 76% of the total principals as compared to the male principals who made up only approximately 24% of the principals (Anthony, 2016). This can be attributed to the higher career mobility of male leaders as compared to female leaders (Holden, 2016). None of the research participants cited gender related reasons for their plans to depart from their educational leadership roles, but approximately 41% of the principals within the school district admitted to having plans to leave their educational leadership role within the next three years due to poor instructional and operational school facilities and school environments (Anthony, 2016). Other studies determined that the main factors affecting job satisfaction are mostly related to workplace environmental factors (Ford et al., 2018). Personal factors, such as motivation and altruism, also affected job satisfaction (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015).

Herzberg (1959) developed a two-factor theory in which he explained the causes for satisfaction in the workplace. He explained that motivational factors are those facets of the job that individuals have a desire to accomplish to feel satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg added that these motivating factors are intrinsic to the individual and they include accomplishment, altruism, and responsibility (Herzberg, 1959).

There is a limited amount of qualitative research information pertaining to gender job satisfaction, however, research conducted by Anthony (2016) has contributed to the understanding of the types of educational leadership experiences by gender that determine educational leader career satisfaction. A major weakness was the researcher's approach to the analysis of the trends in gender job satisfaction and principal attrition rates. The study was largely based on quantitative data analysis which offered little insight into the phenomenon of my study's qualitative approach. This study did provide some personal views of the principals in relation to factors principals consider essential for maintaining smooth operations of the schools.

Herzberg (1959) was instrumental in explaining why individuals opt for some careers while they decline others. Herzberg explained in his dual factor theory why some individuals chose to quit their jobs for new ones. This theory closely relates to the problem of my study. The dual factor theory provides insight to my study's phenomenon of lived experiences of male educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership careers instead of educational leadership careers. This insight strengthens the value of the qualitative research approach for my study. Such qualitative research will be helpful to other school districts concerned with the attrition rates of male educational leaders by providing a deeper insight into leaders' needs for gender job satisfaction.

Male Educational Leader Personal and Professional Interests

Personal interests are the subjective interests and goals that individuals may have whereas professional interests refer to an individual's present or future career goals (Ford

et al., 2018). The personal interests of educational leaders vary from one leader to another. They are however related to achievement, success, and opportunities for development (Owler & Morrison, 2015).

Personal roles are the individual motivational factors that drive an educational leader to perform his or her duties (Holden, 2016). Professional development is primarily associated with career development and growth (Holden, 2016). Planning and implementing professional development is a key role played by the principal as an instructional leader (Sogunro, 2017).

Slotnik, Bugler, and Liang (2015) conducted a study of the MSDE's Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program with the assistance of the Mid Atlantic Comprehensive Center. The Teacher and Principal Evaluation system is a program that analyzed the measurements of professional practice and student growth in schools to determine the personal and professional interests that school leaders have while in their positions (Slotnik et al., 2015).

The program was also used by Slotnik et al. (2015) to rate the effectiveness of both the teachers and the principals in performing their duties. The relevant findings from Slotnik et al. (2015) provide a rationale for the need to study the problem and central phenomenon my research study addresses. Slotnik et al. (2015) found that:

- The participating principals and teachers cited the need for more professional development to improve school performances. This could be completed through training the principals and teachers and organizing more principal and teacher conferences.

- The principals were evaluated on their perceptions and experiences of instructional leadership and they agreed that instructional leadership was an effective style of leadership.

The following topics were examined by Slotnik et al. (2015):

- The personal interests of male educational leaders in the state of Maryland.

- The professional interests of male educational leaders in the state of Maryland.

- How male educational leaders achieved their personal goals.

- How male educational leaders achieved their professional goals within their career path.

Slotnik et al. (2015) collected their data from interviews conducted with leaders in the educational field from 12 Maryland school districts and from a case study conducted on educational leaders from 4 Maryland school districts. The research participants held educational roles such as principals, superintendents, local teacher association leaders, statewide teachers' association members, and central office administrators. The case study conducted on the four Maryland school districts involved individual interviews and focus groups.

My qualitative research study is similar in nature, however, my research participants were former educational leaders from the Maryland school district that were individually interviewed on questions related to the problem of my research study. Even though Slotnik et al.'s (2015) research did not incorporate the views of educational leaders who were contemplating leaving the educational profession, the researchers

offered the views of principals who were still optimistic about their profession. The methodologies and findings of Slotnik et al, (2015) provided parameters for my research on professional and personal interests of educational leaders and the motivations that encouraged or discouraged them in achieving their personal goals and professional career goals.

The personal interests of leaders can be explained by the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Vroom (1964) developed the expectancy theory which stated that people generally have set expectations for different contexts. Past experiences will determine the assumption leaders will make about their job performance (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). The workers create assumptions about the results they receive from their work. This implies that they will be more biased towards certain results because of their experiences (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). In the case of educational leaders, they decide, before they undertake the leadership role, what benefits they seek to acquire and what those benefits mean to them (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Research has shown that most teachers chose their career out of passion or love for the job (Delahunty & Howes, 2015).

Slotnik et al. (2015) provided insight into the personal and professional interests of educational leaders. Results from the study showed that educational leaders are concerned with improving their competencies as well as the competencies of their teachers to impact the achievement of students. The findings indicated that principals in the state of Maryland wanted to ensure that students perform well on measures of standards established for the schools, and that their professional interests are associated with their desire to develop career proficiency through training and guidance from

competent leaders (Slotnik et al., 2015). The principals demonstrated their personal and professional interests by making use of programs such as the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program to learn methods of achieving the set goals.

Male educational leadership has also indicated a willingness for early retirement (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Vacant leadership positions that historically attracted a high number of applicants are now drawing few of them. The migration started as early as 1999 to 2000 with a significant number of leaders preferring a role in the private sector. Fewer school leaders prefer a career path that will result in administrative positions (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Consequently, the process for recruitment and retention of qualified leaders is a significant challenge facing nearly all schools in the United States. The implications include a school administrative role that is increasingly difficult, less attractive, and one that requires a thoughtful approach (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016).

Educational leaders are more concerned with students' learning goals and are likely to admit the need for further professional development (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Professional development is critical for meeting the overall expectations of their respective roles (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). In a situation where the school leadership lacked the qualified support personnel to strengthen the decision-making processes needed for their schools to operate in stable conditions, the attitudes of the school leaders eventually transitioned to seeking non-educational leadership positions (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). The rewards for educational leadership positions are also not financially desirable (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Persistent leaders are more

likely to enjoy intrinsic rewards and relationships (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Male school leaders are more likely to leave their job in a situation where the frustrations of their roles exceed the benefits associated with their positions (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Schools leaders will likely leave for alternative occupations for the same or a better salary using the same levels of education and skills (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). This study's approach was useful to my research design because the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program offered accurate information regarding the educational leaders' career goals. Slotnik et al. (2015) provided qualitative data using interviews. This is critical to understanding the career decision-making processes and experiences of educational leaders that relate to the scope of my study.

Lindqvist and Nordänger (2016), further noted that the work engagement issues surrounding school leadership roles are a critical factor that requires adequate consideration. Work engagement practices are associated with job fulfillment and dedication, which in turn, improve organizational effectiveness (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). The retention of male educational leadership is influenced by the existence of leadership training courses and enables such leaders to link their job descriptions to the broader purpose and goals of the institutions (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). Job satisfaction was the general term that was used within Herzberg's dual factor theory to imply a general attitude towards the leader's specific roles. Job satisfaction was achieved whenever leaders like their jobs and it was strictly associated with either personal circumstances or organizational factors (Herzberg, 1959).

Effects of Leader Gender on Student Motivation and Behavior

The decreased presence of male educational leadership in the school district could affect students' motivation for involvement and behaviors toward genders (Polat et al., 2017; Reiss, 2015). Student motivation is defined as the student's willingness, readiness, desire, and enthusiasm to learn or perform a certain task related to their academics (Kirdok & Harman, 2018). A common question often asked of students is whether they have any preferences as to the gender of their school leaders and if students do, how the leaders' gender impacts the students' academic performance, discipline and motivation levels (Alkaabi et al., 2017). Student engagement and motivation is affected by the gender of the school leaders (Varughese, 2017). Many students prefer a male school leader to a female leader because they believe that men are more assertive and will stick to the curriculum. Female educational leaders are seen as timid and more likely to deviate from the curriculum. Additionally, male leaders offer a sense of security to students thus reducing their anxiety and increasing motivation and student engagement (Varughese, 2017).

Imazeki (2015) determined that the attrition rate of male educational leaders negatively impacts the academic performance of students. Also, students may take a long time to adjust to a new educational leader and this may have a negative effect on their academic performance. Change in school leadership may affect student motivation levels, causing other direct and indirect impacts on their scholastic achievement (Anthony, 2016).

The high attrition rates of both male teachers and male educational leaders has been considered the main reason for the student performance gender gap that exists in schools (Varughese, 2017). The gender gap is a measure of the disparity between the performance of male and female students within a school. Performance measures in schools have often shown female students performing better than male students (Varughese, 2017).

Researchers have also found that male students have a higher discipline rate in schools, a higher school dropout rate, and a higher rate of drug abuse (Salmon, 2017, Smith, 2015). This phenomenon can be attributed to the lack of enough male educational leaders who can act as positive role models for male students (Smith, 2015). The responsibility of the school principal is to resolve indiscipline cases within the school (Yhayeh, 2015).

Educational leadership continues to grow as a highly stressful profession (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). The potential adverse effects of changes in educational accountability, policies, and increased workloads result in adverse professional effects leaders may experience (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). These adverse effects include burnout, increased absenteeism from work, stress, depression, and finally the changeover to non-educational leadership professions (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

The use of test-based accountability as a measure of performance has contributed to the increase in stress and job dissatisfaction that is resulting in the transition of educational leaders to non-educational leadership professions (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). The exodus of male education leaders in Maryland school districts strains resource

allocations and creates a need for increased training resources to prepare new educational leaders. The discrepancy in economic resource allocation and investment is created when the institutions fail to maintain male leaders who underwent training and leadership development programs (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

Implementing performance-based accountability policies in the school districts will potentially make the schools less likely to retain the male leaders. However, such polices are considered critical to overall student performance (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). This is relevant to my research study because student performance will provide insight into how the direct and indirect impact of their experiences in school settings are connected to the gender of their educational leaders.

Educational leader gender has been identified as a prevailing factor when examining the perceptions of the students, teaching staff, and parents towards educational leadership in school settings (Anthony, 2016). There is significant relevancy in the Anthony (2016) data analysis that provides a perspective on the extent to which lived experiences of male educational leaders have influenced their decision to pursue non-educational career paths. The data addressed how the attrition rate of educational leaders adversely affects student performance.

Impact of Leader Gender on Teachers

Male educational leaders pursing non-educational leadership career paths could affect teachers' motivation for involvement and their behaviors relative to leader gender (Polat et al., 2017; Reiss, 2015). Both teachers and students look to the leadership and motivation of the school principal to carry out their respective duties effectively (Eboka,

2016). Teachers' perceptions of a school educational leader are mostly determined by the level of trust they have in the leader which is less gender biased (Babaoglan, 2016). However, female leaders have been found to have better instructional leadership skills compared to their male counterparts (Shaked & Glanz, 2018).

Eagly conducted a study in 2003 which revealed that females were better transactional leaders (Eagly, 2003). Female leaders rewarded their counterparts and teachers more often than male leaders and they encouraged and motivated them in better ways (Shaked & Glanz, 2018). New principals may lack the experience and/or qualifications to competently manage a school (Anthony, 2016). Several studies have shown that the quality and experience of the school principal directly influences the school's outcomes (Dodson, 2015). Studies have also shown that teacher motivation is impacted by the performance of school leaders and this is critical because teacher motivation directly affects student performance (LaSalle, 2015).

Researchers found that democratic leadership by the principal increases levels of teacher trust and satisfaction while autocratic leadership creates mistrust. (Kars & Inandi, 2018). The turnover of educational leaders in schools also creates a state of mistrust when new leaders are assigned to schools (Holden, 2016). The suspicion created between the teaching staff and the new school leaders lowers the level of cooperation among staff members and leads to broken teacher-principal relationships. As a result, teachers will act autonomously in classrooms and end up making ill-advised decisions that cause conflicts within the schools (Bayler, 2016).

The absence of an educational leader who can internalize the goals of the school into the teaching staff can lead to unmotivated teachers (Dodson, 2015). Unmotivated teachers are more prone to perform poorly in their duties as well as quit their jobs or transfer to other schools (Crehan, 2016). An effective educational leader will ensure that there is 'program coherence' within the school. This means that there must be a coordinated approach to achieving the set school goals (Wieczorek, 2017).

Teachers who have more than five years of experience often claim that their internalized goals are in line with the school's goals. However, the attainment of the school goals is largely dependent on the leadership in place (Poon-McBrayer, 2018). Consequently, school educational leaders have the responsibility to motivate their teaching staff and this is often harder with new teachers (Poon-McBrayer, 2018). The role of educational leaders in motivating and guiding the teaching staff is essential to maintaining a sustainable work environment (Poon-McBrayer, 2018). Researchers identified teacher and student perceptions and feelings toward educational leaders to be instrumental in teacher decision making and motivation in the classroom. These factors are linked linking those concepts to the quality of the educational leader's work experience (Anthony, 2016; Wieczorek, 2017).

These studies examined the impact of educational leaders on teacher performance in general and some of them looked specifically at the relationship of school leader gender as a factor that impacts the motivation and performance of teachers and students. The findings of these studies provide a deeper understanding to my research study's phenomenon particularly through their identified connections between instructional skills

and transactional leadership skills that female principals are perceived to possess. These
attributes of female principals are perceived by their teachers, hence giving the female
principals acclaimed recognition for their teachers' increased motivation levels and
performances in the classrooms (Shaked & Glanz, 2018; Eagly, 2003). The findings are
instrumental to understanding the experiences that might have influenced the decision-
making processes of male educational leaders to transition non-educational leadership
roles.

Students', Teachers', and Parents' Perceptions of Male Educational Leaders

Students, teachers, and parents' perceptions of leaders can impact male
educational leadership presence in school districts (Dodson, 2015; Sogunro, 2017). The
perception of the student towards his or her educational leader is a determining factor in
the student's success (Dodson, 2015). Generally, students expect a qualified leader who
will inspire and motivate them to achieve success in their studies (Sogunro, 2017).
Research shows that students look to a male educational leader for these qualities
(Varughese, 2017).

Male educational leaders are often perceived as being better symbols of authority
compared to female educational leaders and because of this the students perceive them as
being good role models (Ifat & Eyal, 2017). The principal plays an important role in
ensuring sound school discipline practices. Male educational leaders are perceived as
being authoritative and firmer than female educational leaders. Teachers perceive that
this gives male educational leaders and added advantage in terms of managing student
discipline (Curran, 2017). Students may also perceive male educational leaders as only

exercising a managerial role as opposed to an instructive role. However, this is entirely dependent on the leader's involvement in the daily operations of the school (Gurley et al., 2016).

The perception of an educational leader by the teaching staff is dependent on several factors that mostly revolve around the ability of the leader to manage the students, the staff, the parents and the school operations effectively (Vooren, 2018). In addition, the gender of the school leaders is important in determining teaching staff perceptions of the leadership of the school (Ifat and Eyal, 2017). Teachers generally prefer a male principal as compared to a female principal because of the belief that male educational leaders are firmer and more decisive school leaders (Ifat and Eyal, 2017).

Parental involvement in the education system is seen as being essential for the students' success (Yamamoto, 2016). Their involvement is most beneficial when there is cooperation among parents, the teaching staff, and the educational leaders (Yamamoto, 2016). The educational leaders' gender has been identified as a prevailing factor when examining the perceptions of the students, teaching staff, and parents towards educational leadership in school settings (Anthony, 2016). These studies, which identify the perceptions of different groups of stakeholders, provide useful perspectives for the design of my study's phenomenon. The studies help identify the connection between male educational leaders' experiences and the perceptions of others in their school settings.

Effects of School Leader Attrition on Schools and Business Communities

The attrition rate of male educational school leaders has many effects on the schools which are left with a positional gap to fill (Imazeki, 2015). The effects are often

seen in the deterioration of student performance and failure in the organizational structure

of the school (Imazeki, 2015). The effect of the attrition rate on the business community

has both long term and short-term effects (Imazeki, 2015). The admission rate of students

from the state of Maryland into professional courses in colleges and universities has

decreased in size (Popovich, 2015). The effect of the phenomenon is that fewer

candidates are being released into the job market thus the business community is losing

significant human resources, especially in the STEM fields: Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics (LaForce et al., 2017). In addition, the costs incurred in

training and hiring new teachers to fill the occupational gap are high (Anthony, 2016).

Imazeki (2015) examined areas in the state of Maryland that had the highest

levels of school leader attrition and the effects the attrition had on the students and their

college enrollment rates. The study was prepared for the MSDE, Imazeki (2015)

examined the following topics in the study:

- The effects of attrition rate of educational leaders on the students.

- The effects of attrition rate of educational leaders on the business
  communities.

- The effects of attrition rate of educational leaders on the rate of college
  enrollment of students in the state of Maryland.

The researcher focused primarily on schools within Maryland which contributed to

exploring the phenomenon under study.

Imazeki (2015) relied on the *Geographic Cost of Education Index* to determine

the relation between the rate of school leaders' attrition in different counties in Maryland

and the cost of operating the schools within the region. The cost of operating schools in

Maryland differs from one location to another. Higher attrition rates of school leaders and

staff in schools are in high poverty areas of Maryland (Imazeki, 2015). These schools had

a higher student dropout rate, a higher rate of discipline cases leading to juvenile

detention, and lower levels of student performance (Imazeki, 2015). Some schools

reported having had five principals within a period of five years (Imazeki, 2015). The

study showed that the main reason the school leaders and staff quit their jobs was poor

environmental conditions in the schools. Additionally, the lack of social amenities within

these poorer regions of Maryland influenced the decisions of the principals as well as

teachers to quit their jobs (Imazeki, 2015). Students were negatively impacted

academically by the high attrition rates of school leaders. One impact was low levels of

student enrollment in colleges and universities. The increased school dropout rates

contributed to the decreased number of high school diplomas and higher education

degrees earned. In turn, there was a negative economic impact on high poverty

communities and businesses (Imazeki, 2015). The findings indicated that the quality of

public education can contribute to poverty which can have adverse impacts on businesses

in the communities where they operate.

The student graduation rates of students in Maryland high schools with high

principal attrition have reduced (Hemelt et al., 2017). The principal is mandated with the

task of being an instructional leader who relates well with the students (Shaked & Glanz,

2018). Female educational leaders have demonstrated that they have better instructional

leadership skills compared to their male counterparts (Shaked & Glanz, 2018).

Additionally, the instructional leadership roles held by principals in schools within high

poverty areas of Maryland are scarce due to the frequency of principal attrition (Hemelt

et al, 2017). Consequently, the academic performance goals in these high poverty areas

are not being achieved and have resulted in lower student enrollment into colleges and

universities (Hemelt et al, 2017). Imazeki (2015) did not include the factor of community

socioeconomic levels in all Maryland school districts but rather, focused only on school

districts in high poverty areas. However, the findings are significant in gaining additional

insight and strengthening my study's problem and phenomenon.

Being an educational leader is a demanding job, and good educational leadership

is necessary for major efforts aimed at increasing the opportunities for student success

(Bush et al., 2019). Educational leaders must assume major responsibility for direction

and instruction. (Bush et al., 2019). There is continued growth in the responsibilities of

educational leaders. The expanding responsibilities include ensuring a safe learning

environment, maintaining discipline, management of school budgets and enforcement of

new and existing governmental policies (Bush et al., 2019). According to Bush et al.

(2019), other factors made such positions demanding by increasing role expectations to

include the management of the school to home communication and professional

accountability.

Tensions arise whenever the educational leaders try to merge various

responsibilities within the learning environment (Bush et al., 2019). Male educational

leaders in a school context are expected to handle two diverse and critical roles,

instructional and administrative duties. Maintaining a balance between the two roles is a

great challenge (Bush et al., 2019). For instance, the school principal may indicate lack of

adequate time to conduct official compliance roles as required by district administrators,

due to the time required for instructional leadership duties (Maxwell & Riley, 2017).

Some of the administrative roles are more explicit and procedural. The expanded

instructional leadership expectations have contributed to the attrition of male school

leaders (Maxwell & Riley, 2017).

Educational Setting

The educational setting is comprised of leadership, the teaching staff, the students,

the parents, and the school environment. (Whitesell, 2015). To examine the education

setting in Maryland, it is necessary to examine how the roles each of the education

shareholders, (principals, parents, students, and teachers) contribute to the setting.

A study was conducted by Kane, Owens, Marinell, Thai, and Staiger (2016) on

the MSDE school systems using the Education Management and Information Systems

Model Program. The purpose of the study was to examine the educational settings of

schools in the state of Maryland and four other states regarding how school settings

impact students, principals, and teachers' performances (Kane et al., 2016). The

following topics were examined by Kane et al. (2016):

- The role of educational leaders in an educational setting.

- The role of parents in an educational setting.

- The importance of the educational setting to the student.

The researchers examined the policies that individual schools within Maryland

implemented for the running of the schools. These policies were all implemented for the

purpose of creating a suitable environment or school setting for learning to take place.

The most conducive environment for educational leaders and teachers is one that offers

opportunities for career development (Kane et al., 2016). This educational setting

motivates the teaching staff and educational leaders in carrying out their duties (Kane et

al., 2016). The researchers suggested that for efficient career development to take place

there must be budget considerations as well as efficient programs to guide the process

(Kane et al., 2016).

Teaching is generally referred to as an intrinsically motivated profession. Various

researchers and theorists have concluded that the most rewarding aspect of teaching is the

success achieved by the student (Sogunro, 2017). The teacher is thus an important part of

the educational setting of a student. Sogunro (2017) determined that student motivation is

negatively impacted by poor quality of instruction. Students have also been found to

exhibit positive motivation and learning behaviors when they receive quality instruction.

Highly motivated students accept challenging tasks and persist in doing them while

poorly motivated students usually give up easily (Sogunro, 2017). Wiseman and Hunt

assert that quality teachers are teachers who can motivate their students or create an

atmosphere in which the student can find motivation (Sogunro, 2017).

Parents are part of both the educational and the non-educational settings of students.

Research conducted by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) identified the beneficial effects of

parental involvement on the academic performance of students. This study examined

several variables including: (a) invitations for involvement from teachers, principals and

students; (b) parent support of students; and (c) the wealth of resources and assistance

parents can offer. Monitoring homework assignments, openly communicating with teachers, and attending and assisting with school events are critical components of parental involvement.

Non-Educational Career Decisions of School Leaders

There is little information on the career paths that principals take after leaving educational leadership careers (Anthony, 2016). Goldring and Taie (2018) revealed that 54% of all principals who quit their jobs moved to another school within the same school district. The Goldring and Taie (2018) study offered limited information on the career changes of the other 46% of principals. The non-educational setting can simply be referred to as any place that an individual occupies which is not related to the educational system. The NCES reported that 10% of the principals left their educational job to pursue other careers (NCES, 2018). This group of principals was referred to as 'leavers' (Goldring & Taie, 2018; NCES, 2018).

The Principal Follow up Survey is a component of the National Teacher and Principal Survey. The Principal Follow up Survey was developed and implemented to provide information related to the attrition rate of principals (Goldring & Taie, 2018). Goldring and Taie (2018) documented the findings from the Principal Follow up Survey in the 2016–2017 school calendar year. The purpose of their study was to determine the attrition rates of principals and the reasons for the attrition of principals. Goldring and Taie (2018) examined the following factors:

- The rate of principal attrition in schools.
- The reasons for principal attrition in schools

- The alternative career choices that former principals engage in after leaving their educational careers.

Data results from the Principal Follow up Survey were from public school principals on both the national and regional levels. The primary data collection method was from questionnaires that were mailed to each principal or school administrator of the sampled schools. The percentage of school principals who left their educational careers for other jobs was 10% for the years 2015–2016 (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The statistical data on 'leavers' showed that principals who were above 55 years of age had the highest rate of attrition which was at 18.8% (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The principals who were less than 45 years old had the lowest attrition rate which was at 6.2% (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The data also showed that female principals exhibited a higher career mobility rate among the 'leavers' (Goldring & Taie, 2018). Female principals recorded a total of 10.5% of leavers whereas the male principals were at 8.9% (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The principals' salaries were also analyzed during the study. Principals who had a salary of less than $60,000 annually had an attrition rate of 15.7%, whereas principals who had an annual salary of more than $100,000 had an attrition rate of 9.3% (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The principals' experience levels were analyzed during the survey. Researchers discovered that principals with a teaching experience of more than 10 years had a higher attrition rate than those who had less than 10 years of experience (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The principals with more than 10 years of experience had an average attrition rate of 14.7% while those principals with less than 10 years of experience had an average attrition rate of 9.9% (Goldring & Taie, 2018). Goldring and Taie (2018) stated some of

the reasons cited by leavers for having remained in their educational leadership career up to the point of their attrition are as follows:

- to be eligible for Social security benefits

- to be eligible for retirement benefits

- to wait for a better job

While Goldring and Taie (2018) provided valuable statistical data on the attrition rate of educational leaders, little data exists regarding the second careers options that these leaders may have (Anthony, 2016). However, the reasons for attrition given, offer valuable insight. The principals in the survey cited several reasons for leaving their jobs, one of them being the desire to find a better job (Goldring & Taie, 2018).

The growing demand associated with the role of the principal has led to high rates of principal burnout (Hooftman et al., 2015). Carter School District in the state of Maryland has one of the highest teachers and principals' attrition rates in the state (Holden, 2016). Among other reasons for principal attrition are eligibility for retirement benefits and social security benefits (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The research conducted by Goldring and Taie (2018) provides statistical attrition data that is critical to the phenomenon being explored in my study.

Chard (2013) and Hill (2018) explored the relationship between masculinity and leadership, as well as reasons males pursue careers in educational sectors. Chard (2013) and Hill (2018) identified potential obstacles faced by male educational leaders that cause them to choose to work in non-educational leadership professions. The researchers

conducted personal interviews using structured questions, primarily with male educational leaders.

The career path of school leadership has become a critical cause of concern. The nation continues to experience a shortage of male principals as the role of the principal has expanded in the area of instructional leadership (Coldwell, 2017; Goldring & Taie, 2018). Varughese (2017) and Torres (2016) discussed the role of the existing gender gap and the career progression of both males and females. The primary cause of the shift in career leadership paths can be significantly attributed to the impact of job satisfaction (Coldwell, 2017).

Studies have placed greater emphasis on matters such as salary, autonomy, individual characteristics, and overall job satisfaction levels (Murakami et al., 2016). Career development and growth goals also affect the longevity of school leadership (Murakami et al., 2016). Additionally, there is a significant challenge relating to the availability of effective leadership training programs (Murakami et al., 2016).

Female educational leaders find the roles more difficult to obtain and sustain due to personal, social, and organizational challenges (Torres, 2016). Schools in the United States have been dominated by male educational leaders in the past, until numerous campaigns emerged demanding for more women and gender equity in school leadership (Torres, 2016). Torres (2016) concluded the shift in career paths for male school leadership can be explained by factors such as a reduced passion for teaching and education, external motivational factors and recent policy changes that make school leadership more challenging.

Individual leaders who have worked in non-educational settings have identified several factors and measurements. Such factors include payments, promotional opportunities, contingent rewards, nature of work and working environment, operating processes and procedures, and communication (Gui, 2019). Prevention of voluntary attrition of educational leaders requires state education policymakers to introduce provisions for better compensation and bonuses to educational leaders (Torres, 2016).

Educational leader job stability is a critical factor in the decision to choose non-educational leadership career paths (Sutcher et al., 2016). Professional development programs should include training on how to deal with such uncertainties as a leadership career path decision factor (Sutcher et al., 2016). The ability to deal with such uncertainties allows a positive influence on job commitment and satisfaction (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Collaborations and job satisfaction are factors correlated with a commitment to educational leadership, and much of this remains to be studied (Gui, 2019).

The pursuit of non-educational career paths has also been linked to the introduction of new approaches to measurement and evaluation of school leaders and their effectiveness (Gui, 2019). Landmark legislations such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (U.S. Congress, 2002) and *Every Student Succeeds Act* (U.S. Congress, 2015) were introduced in 2002 and 2015, respectively. The purpose of such legislations was to enhance the accountability of the schools' leaders and to improve the test scores of students.

Test scores are considered as an appropriate assessment of the quality and effectiveness of schools. Such legislations have been considered as a right direction for all students (Darrow, 2016). Across the United States, nearly all the school districts, including Maryland, have adopted standardized assessment of students as the criteria for measurement of teaching and school leader quality (Darrow, 2016). As a result of adopting the individual test-based accountability policies, school leadership can either be rewarded or punished based on their achievement in raising student test scores (Darrow, 2016).

The critical factors for professional retention include high job satisfaction, support, and professional empowerment (Gui, 2019). Institutional administrator programs are necessary for the preparation and continued professional development of school leaders (Gui, 2019). These programs foster innovation and provide supportive leadership capacities.

Torres (2016) suggested the criticality to nurture empowerment, efficacy and reduce potential cases of work-related stress in school leaders and their intention to quit. Torres' (2016) study on leadership accountability pressure is critical for school policymakers to understand the levels of influence existing and new legislation has on the professional outcomes of school leadership. Educational settings that are stressful work environments impact the psychological and behavioral factors that contribute to school leader attrition and movement to non-educational settings (Torres, 2016).

The methodologies and findings of these studies are significant in terms of understanding the depth and breadth of principals' attrition rates in the Maryland school

districts. The studies did not provide substantive data and findings into the next career paths of the 'leavers' who left their educational leadership roles to pursue other careers. The data from these examined studies is essential to my study's phenomenon and problem which focuses on how the experiences of male educational leaders influenced their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership career paths.

The strength and relevance of these studies is their approaches to identifying the workplace factors that influenced the male educational leaders' to leave their career role. This supports my study's research problem and phenomenon. These workplace factors include skills, experience, and job requirements that are associated with reduced commitment and attraction to continue staying in the leadership profession (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). In addition, district school leaders who feel they do not possess the skills and abilities to achieve the educational goals successfully are more likely to leave their profession (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Contrary to such observations, male school leaders with experiences of higher abilities and competencies as compared to the general demand may feel detached to such jobs, or even eagerly hope to fill existing opportunities in non-educational careers (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Job satisfaction is also significantly influenced by the existing differences or similarities between expectations and job tasks (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, a comprehensive and concise literature review was conducted on studies that examine the increasing shortage of male educational leaders and factors leading to their decision-making process to choose to pursue non-educational leadership

career paths. The researcher identified and summarized all major themes and statistical

data related to the current study's central phenomenon. An analysis of themes produced

new insight into the expectations that stakeholders have for male educational leaders. The

analysis also clarified the concept of the changing roles of male educational leaders in

heading schools. The concepts of the theory of personality appear in the literature as

relevant factors in the explanation of various phenomena, such as the motivation for male

educational leaders and the self-actualization process (Rogers, 1957). The concepts of the

Minnesota theory of work adjustment by Dawis and Lofquist (1984) focused on

individual's adjustment to their work environment as a factor that may influence male

educational leader decisions to either leave the career or continue with the role.

Educational leadership is no longer dominated by male professionals (Hussain &

Suleman, 2018). In contrast, the personal, social, and organizational challenges within the

profession are often considered as more challenging, and more suitable for male

educational leaders as compared to female educational leaders (Anthony, 2016). The

review of the literature helped to demonstrate the presence of a research gap in

understanding the reasons and issues behind the increasing absence of male educational

leaders in schools. The literature review also suggests that the experiences of male

educational leaders and the perceptions of others in the workplace influence their career

change decisions. Studies conclude that there is a critical need for additional resources for

training their replacements in the Maryland school districts. There are a limited number

of studies that identify the non-educational leadership career paths male educational

leaders pursue after leaving their positions. Further studies are necessary to evaluate the

nature of perceived job complexities, the impact increasing standards, levels of accountability, and new regulations have on the growing shortage of male educational leaders.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research selected for this current study. The rationale for the research is presented as well as the research design and the role of the researcher. The methodology and issues related to trustworthiness of this study are also discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of the male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. In Chapter 3, the research design and rationale for choosing the research design are discussed. Further, this chapter includes my overall role in the study, methodology, participant selection logic, procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, data analysis plan, and the instrumentation used in this study. In the final part of this chapter, I address issues of trustworthiness and how ethical procedures were followed. The conclusion of this chapter includes a summary and transition to the next chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question examined in this study is "What are the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that may influence their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles?" The central phenomenon explored in this study was the lived experiences of male educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership careers instead of educational leadership careers. To explore the central phenomenon, I used a qualitative descriptive phenomenological research approach.

The descriptive phenomenological design allowed me to conduct an in-depth exploration of the participants' lived experiences that produced transformation of data based on what participants stated (Giorgi, 2014). The qualitative design was selected for

this current study because I wanted to collect data about the lived experiences of former male educational leaders and the reasons that influenced their decision-making process. Further, the qualitative research design allowed me to use techniques such as conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews and decoding and translating data to further explore their lived experiences. Quantitative and mixed methods research designs were not applicable for my study because I was not attempting to show a statistical relationship from the results, and those designs would not provide an in-depth comprehension of the central phenomenon that was explored (Maxwell, 2012). The results of this descriptive phenomenological study could provide a deeper comprehension into the increasing attrition of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that stems from their pursuit of non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Qualitative research on gender role topics has been known to yield useful knowledge that impacts the effects of positive social change by addressing societal disparities (Tominc et al., 2017).

The qualitative research approach was chosen for this study after varied qualitative designs were considered. Narrative, case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology designs were all reviewed, but the phenomenological design was deemed the most effective design for this study. The narrative design would have been less effective because it focuses on a past life experience using a detailed story in chronological order for one participant or a small number of participants for validation (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The investigation into the phenomena of this study would require a small number of participants. A case study requires examination and in-depth

research of a case. The case study design was not appropriate for this current study because the goal was not to develop a case but rather to draw inferences and conclusions about lived experiences of former male educational leaders. The ethnographic study design would have been less effective because it focuses on gaining an understanding of the research participants' cultures, languages, and behaviors (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994). The grounded theory design would have been less effective because it aims at developing a theoretical construct that would articulate what the researcher observed during the data collection process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Conversely, phenomenology allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The descriptive phenomenology design allowed me to examine the phenomenon of the participants' shared lived experiences and was therefore, the most appropriate design for this study.

Role of Researcher

In qualitative studies, the researcher is considered the primary instrument and will function in the role of a participant in the data collection and analysis (Lewis, 2015). For the phenomenological research design, the researcher is the instrument that created a data gathering tool as well as collected, compiled, and analyzed the data from the interviews with all research participants (Giorgi, 1997). My role as a participant in the study was employing the qualitative design strategies and methods throughout the entire process that ensured trustworthiness of the data and managed my personal biases (Daniel, 2019).

As researcher, I identified participants, requested their participation for open-ended telephone interviews, and translated their responses using a digital audio recorder

and handwritten notes. Further, my role included sending interview transcripts to each individual participant for transcript verification. My interviewing skills and structure of the interview process allowed for effective and thorough interviews to be conducted, which provided data for the study's findings. Open-ended telephone interviews were conducted, and participants were encouraged to provide as much detail through open, unbiased, and honest responses (Byers & Onwuegbuzie, 2014). I provided each participant with the same set of open-ended questions and allowed the participants an unlimited amount of time to provide responses during the telephone interviews.

Any biases I had were managed with bracketing and reflective journaling (Chan et al., 2013). To address and regulate my biases, I acknowledged my personal beliefs and values, opinions, perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and cultural aspects (Chan et al., 2013; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Any assumptions I had could have obstructed my comprehension and influenced interpretations of the data collected from the research participants (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) stated that bracketing can be referred to as phenomenological reduction or the Greek word *epoche*. Epoche or bracketing, when applied effectively, can assist the researcher in putting aside any prior knowledge and prejudices of a phenomena (Moja-Strasser, 2016). Another method I used for continued awareness of any biases was reflective journaling throughout the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The reflective journal was my resource to use for documenting how the research was being conducted, capturing my methodological decisions and rationales (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

I did not have a personal or professional relationship with any of the research participants. I have never worked in the educational field nor have I worked with any male educational leaders from the Maryland school district. I work in a field separate from any school districts in Maryland. Therefore, no influence and indirect or direct power differentials were aimed toward me from the research participants. I did not have any preconceptions of the participants. Additionally, there were no foreseen ethical issues that hindered or altered the interviewing process for this study. The data collected from the participants will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of this study.

Methodology

Participation Selection Logic

The population chosen for this study was a group of former male educational leaders from Maryland school districts who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. I used purposeful sampling to provide an accurate portrayal of the population sample for the study (Duan et al., 2015; Suri, 2011). This sampling strategy is typically used and favored in qualitative research studies. It uses a sample that includes participants from various experiences (Burkholder et al., 2016). Purposeful sampling of participants is based on individuals with the required knowledge and expertise to achieve a target sample (Suri, 2011). Purposeful sampling is a viable method that helped generate rich information from the male educational leaders' unique experiences of the phenomena under study that was relevant to the conceptual framework (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Recruitment for participation began by searching the internet and the MSDE's public site to identify past male educational leaders from public and private elementary, middle, and high schools in Maryland. The internet searches identified professional associations that might have had affiliations with former male educational leaders. Searches of social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook were used for participant recruitment as well. The search results identified past male educational leaders' names, titles, school names and locations of where they worked, and contact information.

There was no permission required by Maryland school districts to contact former educational leaders because the research participants were no longer employees of the school system. Further, I also recruited prospective participants by obtaining permission from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to send the invitation email to professional education associations of Maryland and requested them to forward it to their members. Per the IRB, this action constituted the associations' voluntary participation, and no permission was needed.

After prospective participants were recruited, I spoke with them before the interviews commenced to ensure they satisfied the research criteria and fully comprehended the purpose, procedures, and protocols of the study. For a participant to be considered for the study, the inclusion criterion was for them to identify as a former male educational leader of the Maryland school district and currently in a non-educational leadership position. The exclusion criterion was male educational leaders currently serving in the role. The participants were identified by pins after the interviews and for all other aspects of the research study.

In phenomenology, the recommended participant sample size ranges from three to 10 participants (Dukes, 1984; Morse, 1994; Riemen, 1986). Morse (1994) recommends a sample size of 6 for valid phenomenological research studies. A phenomenological study's sample size can be a smaller than the sample size of other qualitative research methodologies because higher numbers tend to not produce more knowledge and insight to the study's phenomena (Burkholder et al., 2016; Morse, 1994). Hence, a smaller sample size can attain saturation when no sufficient new data are offered from the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Though for qualitative interviews a sample size of 20 is common (Mason, 2010). For qualitative research studies, the appropriate sample size can be attained through saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The sample size of 20 participants or until saturation was reached was adequate for this phenomenological qualitative research and provided rich and thick data (Guest et al., 2020).

Instrumentation

Data collection instruments for the study consisted of an interview protocol (see Appendix) and a digital audio recorder. These instruments were used during open-ended telephone interviews with the participants. The interview protocol is a researcher-developed instrument that was used to guide the interviews.

The interview protocol contained demographic data, career role, and probing questions aligned to the research question. Demographic information collected included participant name, current position, total years in educational leadership, highest degree earned, certifications, types of schools worked in as an educational leader, and number of years at each school as educational leader. The career role questions consisted of

collecting participants' data on the decision-making process in choosing their current and former leadership career paths, their views on different aspects of educational leadership, career experiences, and job satisfaction needs. When appropriate, I asked the participants probing questions to gain a better understanding of their lived experiences (Burkholder et al., 2016).

The overarching research question and phenomena for this study were used as a guide for developing the interview protocol. Continuity was established for each participants' interviews by using a researcher-developed interview protocol as a common foundation (Bastos et al., 2014). The interview protocol helped focus the open-ended telephone interviews. The questions were designed to collect data specific to the participants' lived experiences that might have influenced their pursuit of non-educational career paths. The interview protocol contained questions followed by blank spaces to capture responses and any additional questions posed to the research participants. Handwritten notes and memos from the interview protocol were converted to an electronic format using Microsoft Word for traceability purposes. Notes and memos can provide the researcher with a more in-depth explanation of those areas in the transcription phase that need clarification (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I selected three subject matter experts (SMEs) who specialized in organizational leadership and management to review and provide feedback on relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the interview protocol to establish content validity (Maxwell, 2012). The interview protocol included a total of 23 questions that were submitted to the SMEs. There were six demographic questions, 12 related to career roles, and five probing

questions. The SMEs approved 22 of 23 questions. One of the career role questions was deemed not relevant or appropriate for the study by the SMEs. They also provided feedback on the remaining questions. I analyzed and incorporated the feedback from the SMEs into the interview protocol to ensure that the appropriateness of the interview protocol was equitable in terms of content validity (Daniel, 2020). The SMEs' input helped prevent potential unintentional and ensure content relevance and validity and determine that the interview questions were clear and concise (Maxwell, 2012). The experts' feedback increased the effectiveness and credibility of the data collection instrument (Maxwell, 2012).

An audio recorder was used during the open-ended telephone interviews sessions to capture the true meaning of participant statements and to ensure content validity in the transcription process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Audio recordings allowed me to perform repetitive listening of collected data for clarification and accuracy. The transcribed data from the audio recordings were used for data analysis.

A reflective journal, researcher memos, and notes were also used throughout the study, which helped maintain reflexive practices during the research process (Clancy, 2013). Another reason for using the reflective journal was to recognize and acknowledge any research bias (Clancy, 2013). Researchers can increase content validity and mitigate potential research bias by focusing on the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon during the interviews (Girogi, 1997). Ensuring that the interviews were entirely focused on each participant's decision-making process to pursue non-educational

leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths was critical to ensuring content validity and reducing bias within the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Procedures for recruitment included using websites from public internet searches and social media that contained data such as names, contact information, and past career experiences of males who served as educational leaders in the Maryland school district. The goal of these search results was to identify those former male educational leaders who served in public and private elementary, middle, and high schools and are now in non-educational leadership roles. Invitation emails were sent to the prospective participants identified from these search results who had publicly displayed email addresses and message capabilities on social media.

Searches were also conducted on social media and the internet for professional associations in Maryland that networked with and/or had members that were educational leadership professionals. The search results were used to only identify email addresses of the professional associations obtained from their websites and not of their individual members. Professional associations were emailed regarding the participant recruitment using the recruitment email for associations along with the invitation email as an attachment for them to voluntarily forward to their members. When prospective participants made contact through social media or by email to express their interest in participation, they were sent the invitation email. According to the IRB, a letter of cooperation was not required from the associations because I requested the associations

to forward my invitation email to their members which constituted the associations'
voluntary participation.

After collecting contact information for prospective participants, I emailed each
of them a copy of the Walden University informed consent form using my Walden
University email account. The emails requested that interested prospective participants
reply with the words "I consent," their typed name and date of consent, their best contact
number, and three preferred dates and times for their telephone interview. After I
received a participant's consent, I thanked them for their willingness to participate and
scheduled their telephone interview using one of the dates and times they provided. The
first 20 prospective participants who agreed to participate and met the inclusion criteria
of identifying as former male educational leaders of Maryland school districts that are
currently in non-educational leadership positions were my target sample size. If any of
the recruited participants had withdrawn or were no longer able to participate then
recruitment of additional participants would have continued until data saturation.

Before the telephone interviews began, I explained the study requirements,
addressed any questions, or concerns the participants had, and informed them that their
interviews would be audio recorded. I also informed the participants that I would be the
only person who would have access to the audio recordings, their participation would be
strictly voluntary, and they could withdraw at their will whenever they chose for any
reason. The participants were asked to provide honest and unbiased responses to open-
ended demographic and career role questions during their telephone interviews.

The researcher collected data from open-ended telephone interviews that were conducted individually with each participant. Multiple telephone interviews were conducted on a weekly basis until 20 participants were attained. The researcher scheduled and conducted only one 45-minute interview with each participant with the understanding that the participant's involvement could increase or decrease the length of the interview.

The researcher audio recorded the participants' responses during the interview using an interview protocol and digital audio recorder. Throughout the study a reflective journal, memos and notes were used to record my reflections, feelings, and values and did not only address my natural biases but also added additional details to the data (Dahl et al., 2016). The research data collected were used to answer the study's research question. The researcher was able to recruit and use 20 participants for the study.

Debriefing procedures informed the participants on how they would exit the study. Immediately following the telephone interview with each participant, I began the debrief process by reiterating to them their participant rights as identified in the informed consent form, answered questions, addressed any concerns, and discussed the transcript verification procedures. The transcript verification procedures involved each participant being sent an email from the researcher within two days after the interview that contained their interview transcript for review and verification. The researcher requested that each participant complete their transcript verification within 1 day after receipt, and upon completion notify the researcher via email or telephone. Further, the participants were requested to inform the researcher of any inconsistencies during their transcription verification or state any questions and concerns. If there was no further information

needed from the participant, a thank you email was sent. If participants chose not to perform their transcript verification, I considered their interview transcripts acceptable and used them for my data.

Data Analysis Plan

I used NVivo 1.3 software to help manage and analyze the research data. The open-ended telephone interviews provided the primary source of data. I performed hand coding after each interview to identify emerging themes. The NVivo 1.3 software application allowed me to organize the telephone interview responses that correlated the opinions, feelings, and values of the participants through labeling and coding the emergent themes and patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This helped me to proceed with a second cycle of NVivo thematic coding to display any present themes from data patterns collected in the study. Cochrane (2016) described thematic coding as a systematic approach to organizing collected data into recurring categories, ideas, phrases, or words. NVivo was used to organize and relate emerging themes by linking and cross-linking any emergent themes from the interview transcripts.

The transcript verification process was used to confirm the actual accounts of the participants' lived experiences for understanding themes and patterns that emerged (Cochrane, 2016). The themes identified in the data answered the research question: "What are the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that may influence their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles?"

The researcher was the primary tool in the data analysis process and used NVivo 1.3 along with the phenomenological method of analysis derived from Giorgi (1985) that

assisted with analyzing the collected data. NVivo 1.3 is appropriate for qualitative data

analysis because it organized the collected unconstructed data to justify the results of this

study. NVivo's auto code feature allowed the researcher to create nodes that were further

analyzed into themes and phrases. The researcher used NVivo to perform queries on

phrases and keywords to collect and analyze various subsets of data. The NVivo

application was used to correlate participants' responses to unveil major and minor

themes. Major themes solidly addressed the research question, and minor themes were

those smaller themes that did not fully address the research question but could be used to

provide insight into future research. Further, by using NVivo I was able to sort data for

common words and performed a word frequency query that word counted commonly

used words from participants' transcripts. These results from the word counts were used

to analyze the frequency of data code within each major and minor theme.

　　　　Using the qualitative data collected from the participants, the researcher was able

to: (a) delineate the meaning units, (b) transform meaning units into themes, and (c)

identify specific constituents (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). Major and minor themes

were presented under categories with descriptive names. Codes were determined through

hand coding for similar response patterns and using NVivo's coding feature and rich text

functionality. Further, new codes were added, and existing codes were adjusted as new

categories and themes were discovered within the data. The categories and codes allowed

the researcher to identify related or contradicting data, and relationships (Doyle et al.,

2015).

Kaisa et al. (2002) used the phenomenological method of analysis derived from Giorgi as a framework to guide the qualitative analysis process in a streamlined and systematic direction. Giorgi's (1985) method of analysis has several stages of data analysis which were used in the current study. The stages are as follows:

1) Develop a holistic sense of the lived experiences and phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). In this stage, the researcher reads all the interview transcripts to grasp an understanding of the meaning units with no attempt to analyze the content (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002).

2) Assume the psychological phenomenological attitude to discriminate meaning units (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). In this stage, the researcher reads each of the interview transcripts again to delineate the meaning units and extract those units that are directly related to the phenomenon being explored (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002).

3) Transform the true meaning told by the participants into expressions that are sensitive, both psychological and phenomenological (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). In this stage, the researcher allows transformation to occur through reflection and imaginative reasoning while converting expressions into the appropriate psychological language (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002).

4) Synthesize the transformed meaning units into specific and general descriptions (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). In this stage, the researcher uses all transformed meaning units for synthesis to form a specific description of situated

structure and a general description of situated structure (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002).

My research data did not present discrepant cases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Discrepant cases can present defects in the data analysis and results which can affect the validity of a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The transcript verification process performed by the participants can help to address discrepant cases by accepting or rejecting data. This process allows the researcher to engage with the participant to obtain meaning and clarification to the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The descriptive phenomenological research approach is as a method of discovery as opposed to a method of validation (Giorgi, 1997, 2009). As a qualitative researcher, I must ensure that research data is not purposefully forced into a theory for it to fit, and the data that does not fit cannot be ignored either (Lewis, 2015). I remained open-minded to eliminate bias during coding, analysis, and interpretation (Amankwaa, 2016).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is considered the most important criterion to demonstrate trustworthiness in research (Dahl et al., 2016). Credibility also reflects how confident the participants trust and believe in the researcher's findings (Dahl et al., 2016). Credibility was established using selected appropriate strategies for this study's research design.

Bracketing was used to reduce any biases to establish credibility and ensure that my personal beliefs and experiences did not influence the data gathering and analysis process. Continuous reflective journaling throughout the data collection process allows

the bracketing of bias thoughts related to research participants' lived experiences

(Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The questions in the interview protocol were validated using 3

SMEs that specialized in the areas of leadership and management to determine

appropriateness and clarity (Maxwell, 2012). Furthermore, saturation can provide enough

participants for data collection and analysis that allows data replication for the validity

and credibility of the study's quality (Guest et al., 2020).

The use of multiple strategies ensured quality and credible data were gathered through

transcript verification that validated and authenticated the participants' responses (Bevan,

2010).

Transferability

The use of purposeful sampling and thick, rich descriptions were strategies used

to establish transferability in this current study. Purposeful sampling can produce rich

data from the participants' unique experiences of the study's phenomena that will

establish transferability (Burkholder et al., 2016). The trustworthiness of thick, rich

descriptions of the participants' lived experiences, methodology, and results would

ensure external validity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). These thick, rich descriptions in the

findings were derived from transcribed interviews with the participants, my reflective

journal entries, memos, and notes taken throughout the research process to ensure

transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability is a necessary factor for the replication of a research study (Dahl et

al., 2016). Documentation creates the physical audit trail necessary to establish

dependability. Such documentation was captured in my reflective journal, memos and notes compiled throughout the study. The researcher needs to maintain a sense of awareness to continuously capture changes within the context of the study (Dahl et al., 2016). The physical audit trail was created through documenting all the study's key milestones, interviews, methodology, findings, decisions, and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data collection and analysis section identified the decision-making process and all the steps the researcher performed for replicability (Dahl et al., 2016). Furthermore, the audit trail increased validity and transparency which allows future researchers to replicate with different sampling populations.

Confirmability

To establish a high level of confidence, the research findings must be confirmed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using reflexivity and thick, rich descriptions ensures confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I recorded my reflections, feelings, values, methodological decisions, and reasoning for them, in a reflective journal to address any biases (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The findings did not incorporate my preconceptions or any assumptions I had prior to and during the study. To also validate confirmability, I used strategies such as bracketing and audit trails to mitigate bias (Amankwaa, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

An IRB application along with the recruitment material were submitted to Walden University's IRB for review and approval. To alleviate any ethical concerns about my recruitment material, I ensured all material met the IRB's requirements and obtained IRB's approval. Upon receiving IRB approval, I identified and recruited candidates to

serve as my research participants. Per the IRB guidelines, I had to provide the research participants with the most current version of Walden University's Informed Consent Form. The form contains the study's background information, procedures, voluntary nature of study, risks and benefits, participant rights to withdraw or decline, payment, privacy, contacts, and processes for asking questions and providing consent. I also informed the prospective research participants of the purpose of their recruitment, that being to help fulfill the requirements needed for the successful completion of my Doctor of Philosophy degree in Management. I provided all research participants with the expected timeline of the study.

Using the email addresses of potential research participants collected during the recruitment process, I individually sent each participant the Walden University's Informed Consent Form using my Walden University email account. Each potential research participant was required to read the entire email containing the consent form before deciding to agree to participate. The email requested that interested participants reply with their consent stating, "I consent," along with their typed name for electronic signature, date of consent, contact number and three preferred dates and times for their telephone interview. The participants' consent meant they understood what was required and agreed to participate in the study. Upon receiving a participant's consent, I replied to confirm their interview using the preferred dates and times they provided. Further, I contacted professional associations using the recruitment email for associations with the invitation email attached and asked the associations to forward the invitation email to their members.

Pins were created by the researcher using abbreviations for the participants' race and total years of educational leadership experience that served as their identifiers. The participants' race and years of experience were identified during the interviews and pins were assigned upon completion of the interviews. All data collected about the participants will remain confidential. Data were tracked using the pins assigned to each participant. The pins were used in transcripts, interview protocols and results. To withdraw from the study, the participants would reference their assigned pin when contacting me by email or telephone regarding their withdrawal.

There were no adverse events or negative experiences with the participants during the data collection process. However, if a participant had presented a harsh response or dialogue, and/or presented any negative experiences during the process I would have immediately terminated the interview in a respectful manner. Upon terminating the interview, I would have contacted the IRB to inform them of the adverse event and followed their guidance.

The researcher is the only person that has access to the pin assignments. The pin assignments, along with all research data collected from the participants, were securely locked in a safe for the entire duration of the research. The electronic information collected from the participants during the study was stored on my computer in a password protected folder and the data analysis file within the NVivo software application was password protected and was only accessible to the researcher. Once the study is completed the protected folder will be transferred onto a password protected external hard drive that will be physically secured in a locked safe, and the password protected

folder on my computer will be permanently deleted from my computer's hard drive. All email communications such as transcription verification with the participants were printed and stored in the locked safe, and then those email communications were permanently deleted from my email account. All email communication hardcopies, reflective journal, memos, notes, and audio recorder containing the interview recordings will be stored in the locked safe for the entire duration of the research and for five years following the conclusion of the study. The locked safe will be stored inside of a room with a locked door within my home. I will shred all research documentation hard copies, permanently delete all research data from the external hard drive and audio recorder after five years to eliminate any data traceability back to the research participants.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research design and the rationale chosen for this qualitative study. I thoroughly defined my researcher role and described how data will be gathered, analyzed, and confidentially retained for the study. The research methodology was described in enough depth for future replication of the study. I identified and explained the participant selection logic and procedures, instrumentation, and the overall data analysis plan. Issues of trustworthiness were explained in detail which included the archiving, protection, and confidentiality of the research participants' identity and collected data upon completion of my research study. In the next chapter, the results of data collection and analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness will be explained in more detail. Also, in Chapter 4 the research participants' demographics will be described along with the data collection process used in the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The research question for this study addressed the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that may influence their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles. In this chapter, the findings of the study are summarized. An overview of the research setting and the participants' demographics are presented in this chapter. Further, the data collection and data analysis methods, and the implementation process used for evidence of trustworthiness are described in this chapter. Lastly, the study results are presented in the conclusion, including categories and themes that address the research question.

Research Setting

After former male educational leaders of Maryland volunteered and qualified for the study, they selected interview dates and times for their telephone interviews to be conducted. I collected data from August 18, 2020 to October 10, 2020. The interviews lasted between 18 and 31 minutes with an average duration of 23 minutes. The telephone was conducive for the conversational nature of the interviews with each participant. The telephone supported a setting free from interruptions by nonparticipants.

Demographics

The participants consisted of 20 former male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who met the study's inclusion criteria for participation as outlined in

Chapter 3. All the former male educational leaders are currently in non-educational leadership positions. The participants had an average of 4.3 years of educational leadership experience in the Maryland school district, ranging from 2 months to 14 years. There was diversity among the participants in the areas of race, education levels, and educational leadership years of experience. The demographics of the 20 participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participant	Race	Education level	Years in educational leadership	Educational leadership roles	School types worked as educational leader	Current educational or non-educational related certifications
CA04	Caucasian	Master's	4	Vice Principal	public high school	educational
CA02	Caucasian	Master's	2	Vice Principal Principal	public middle and high schools	both
CA10	Caucasian	Master's	10	Vice Principal Principal	public high school	both
AA10	African American	Doctorate	10	Vice Principal	public middle schools	non-educational
AA02	African American	Master's	2	Principal	public high school	non-educational
AA03	African American	Master's	3	Principal	public elementary-middle school	non-educational
AA04	African American	Master's	4	Vice Principal Principal	public elementary-middle school	non-educational
CA01.5	Caucasian	Master's	1.5	Principal	public elementary school	non-educational
CA01	Caucasian	Master's	1	Principal	private elementary-middle school	non-educational
CA07	Caucasian	Master's	7	Vice Principal Principal	public middle schools	none
CA03	Caucasian	Doctorate	3	Principal	public high school	non-educational
CA006	Caucasian	Master's	.5	Principal	public elementary school	non-educational
AA002	African American	Master's	.2	Principal	public elementary school	non-educational
CA02A	Caucasian	Master's	2	Vice Principal	public middle schools	non-educational
AA14	African American	Doctorate	14	Vice Principal Principal	public high schools	non-educational
AA09	African American	Master's	9	Vice Principal Principal	public elementary and middle schools	none
AA02A	African American	Master's	2	Principal	public high school	educational
AA01	African American	Master's	1	Principal	public high school	non-educational
AA06	African American	Doctorate	6	Principal	public high schools	non-educational
AA03A	African American	Master's	3	Vice Principal	public middle school	non-educational

Data Collection

Data were collected for this study from 20 former male educational leaders of the Maryland school district through telephone interviews. Open-ended telephone interviews were conducted with each participant. Each telephone interview was less than 45 minutes. Data were recorded using the data collection instruments outlined in Chapter 3, which were the interview protocol and audio recorder. Using the interview protocol, I presented demographic questions followed by career role questions to the participants. Probing questions were asked when necessary to gather additional information to a response. None of the participants refused to answer any of the questions.

Audio recordings were used during the transcription process to ensure data integrity. For transcript verification, each participant was sent a transcript of their interview responses to decrease any potential bias and to review for accuracy. After I received the participants' transcript verifications, their interview transcripts were imported into NVivo 1.3, a software application developed by QSR International.

I continued the data collection process until data saturation was achieved, which was after interviews with 20 participants. To determine data saturation, I conducted seven interviews and generated a list of categories, themes, and codes. Three additional interviews were conducted to identify any potential new themes and one new theme did emerge. I then conducted 10 additional interviews to identify the emergence of any additional new themes. When no further themes emerged in the 10 additional interviews, data saturation was then confirmed. There was no variation in the data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. There were no unusual circumstances encountered in data

collection except that the data collection process occurred during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted in accordance with Giorgi's (1985) phenomenological method of analysis as outlined in Chapter 3. Using Microsoft Word documents, I transcribed the participants' verbal responses from each interview. The transcripts were uploaded into the NVivo 1.3 software application once I received transcript verification approval from the participants and after hand coding was completed.

The first stage in the phenomenological method of analysis process required me to develop a holistic sense of the lived experiences and phenomenon of this study. I read each interview transcript in its entirety to gain an understanding of the meaning units with no attempt to analyze the content at that time. I was able to immerse myself in all the collected data to embrace the descriptions of phenomenon. The second stage in the phenomenological method of analysis required me to assume the psychological phenomenological attitude to discriminate meaning units. I read all interview transcripts again and delineated the meaning units and extracted units that were directly related to the phenomenon being explored. For the third stage, I transformed the true meaning shared by the participants into expressions that were sensitive, both psychological and phenomenological. In this stage, I allowed transformation to occur through reflection and imaginative reasoning while converting expressions into the appropriate psychological language. Further, I simplified the identification of clusters of meanings during this stage.

Finally, in the last stage I synthesized the transformed meaning units into specific and general descriptions. I used all transformed meaning units for synthesis to form a specific description of situated structure and a general description of situated structure (Giorgi, 1985; Kaisa et al., 2002). This allowed me to define and name themes by embracing the essence of each theme and what data that captured.

The NVivo application assisted me in organizing the data by interview questions, identifying the frequency of data coded in each theme, and coding the data for emergent themes. I hand coded the transcripts prior to upload in NVivo 1.3 for further data analysis. I transposed the meaning units developed during the phenomenological method of analysis process into major themes summarized in this section. These themes can be used for future research to exhibit validity in this study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The NVivo 1.3 application identified common patterns and trends within the participants' responses on their lived experiences as former educational leaders and those commonalities became coded nodes. There were no discrepant cases in this study.

Themes in six categories emerged from the data using the verbal statements provided by the participants about their lived experiences that support the phenomenon of this current study. The themes are explained in further detail later in this chapter. Table 2 is the codebook derived from this study's data-driven codes. The codebook includes descriptions and frequency of all coded data. Large and small themes were coded for this study. As shown in Table 2, positive and negative feelings, financial increases, burnout, and need collaboration themes were among the most prominent themes that had higher

frequencies of code per theme. The other themes in the codebook presented smaller

frequencies of code per theme.

Table 2

Codebook

Code	Description	Frequency
Positive	Positive feeling towards career role	43
Negative	Negative feeling towards career role	31
Financial increases	Compensation increases from non-educational jobs with higher pay	22
Burnout	Feeling of exhaustion related to overwhelming stress and/or being overworked	20
Need collaboration	Need for collaborative work environment	19
Work achievement recognition	Employee workplace contributions, achievements and recognition	12
School improvements	Enhancements aimed towards effective changes in the school	10
Workplace respect	Treating people with dignity and respect in the work environment	7
Commute	Roundtrip travel from home to work location	6
Workplace bullying	Mistreatment in workplace	5
Neutral	Neutral feeling towards career role	3

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure credibility in this study, I explicitly followed the qualitative, descriptive

phenomenological research design described by Giorgi (1985). Credibility is considered

the most important criterion to demonstrate trustworthiness in research (Dahl et al.,

2016). I used bracketing in this study to reduce bias so that my personal beliefs and

experiences would not influence the data collection and data analysis process. I

maintained an audit trail and reflective journal to ensure credibility. All procedures

performed during this study and any biases were continuously documented in my

reflective journal. Transcript verification was employed for participants to review and

validate their transcribed interview responses to ensure credible data. Data saturation was

used to demonstrate repetition for credibility and validity of this study (Guest et al., 2020).

Transferability

Transferability was demonstrated by providing rich descriptions of the participants' lived experiences, methodology, and results for readers to determine transferability of this study's results to their situations (Burkholder et al., 2016). The emergent themes in this study are consistent to the related research presented in Chapter 2 that further increase transferability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants' interviews demonstrated consistency with each other to support the findings of this study to other situations.

Dependability

Ensuring dependability was necessary so that other researchers may perform replication of this research study in terms of format, method, participants, and context to produce similar results (Dahl et al., 2016). I accomplished dependability by maintaining a physical audit trail captured in my reflective journal, memos and notes documented throughout the study. Validity and transparency were increased by the audit trail and will allow for future replications of this study by researchers with different sampling populations (Dahl et al., 2016).

Confirmability

To establish confirmability, I conveyed the participants' lived experiences, and I did not incorporate my preconceptions or any assumptions I had prior to and during the study (Amankwaa, 2016). Reflexivity and thick, rich descriptions were also used to

ensure confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A reflective journal and audit trail were maintained for future replications of this study (Amankwaa, 2016).

Study Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. This study was guided by an overarching research question that was used to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that might have influenced their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles. Major themes in six categories emerged from the data collected as a result of the coding performed for data analysis: (a) job satisfaction, (b) positive feelings, (c) neutral feelings, (d) negative feelings, (e) challenges of educational leadership, and (f) lessons learned. The main themes about lived experiences of job satisfaction that emerged were (a) need collaboration, (b) work achievement recognitions, and (c) financial increases. Feelings were sorted into three categories: (a) positive, (b) neutral, and (c) negative. The themes about the challenges of educational leadership were (a) school improvements, (b) work commute, and (c) workplace bullying. The themes about lessons learned were (a) burnout and (b) respectful work environment. Participants' quotations were used to provide context in support of the themes. Table 3 presents the major themes in each category that addressed the research question.

Table 3

Themes and Participant Contribution

Themes	Number of participants contributed	Percentage of participants contributed
Job satisfaction		
Need collaboration	8	40%
Work achievement recognitions	5	25%
Financial increases	4	20%
Positive feelings	20	100%
Neutral feelings	3	15%
Negative feelings	16	80%
Challenges of educational leadership		
School improvements	6	30%
Work commute	2	10%
Workplace bullying	2	10%
Lessons learned		
Burnout	6	30%
Respectful work environment	2	10%

Category 1: Job Satisfaction

The participants discussed their lived experiences relative to job satisfaction in their educational leadership careers. The main themes identified for job satisfaction are (a) needing a collaborative work environment, (b) receiving recognition for work achievements, and (c) financial increases in compensation. Eight participants stated in the interviews that they needed to work in a collaborative environment to achieve job satisfaction. There were five participants who reported lived experiences that led to work achievement recognitions led to their job satisfaction. Receiving increases in compensation was identified by four participants as necessary for job satisfaction. Table 4 shows participant endorsement for the themes in the job satisfaction category.

Table 4

Job Satisfaction Endorsement

Themes	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
Need collaboration	8	40%
Work achievement recognitions	5	25%
Financial increases	4	20%

Need Collaboration

For this study, need collaboration was identified as a theme for job satisfaction. This theme was endorsed by eight participants. The eight participants indicated the lack of collaborative work environments as educational leaders as a major factor leading to job dissatisfaction. This is evident in samples of specific responses which follow.

Participant CA02 reported, "I suffered at times not having the support of others who were failing to work with each other. This made it harder to do my job…I thought we should be collaborating as professionals aiming [for] success." Participant AA03 shared the similar sentiments, "I felt like I had to take sides in disputes between faculty who were dealing with communication issues…it was annoying to me…it would have felt better to come to work with cooperative staff…I can't succeed with that foolish stuff going on." In another example, participant CA03 shared, "…dealing with teachers' destructive behaviors even after I request for it to cease. I just wanted to be around people willing to listen and learn…I did see disconnects in communications and wanted everyone to get along so we could get the students back on track." Another example to support the theme was when participant CA01 stated, "I was not able to be a team with the vice who had been at the school for six years before I took over as principal…I

honestly felt manipulated by the vice that school year…we were not collaborative in efforts."

Work Achievement Recognitions

In this study, work achievement recognitions was identified as a theme that participants associated with job satisfaction in educational leadership roles. The theme was endorsed by five participants. Work achievement recognitions were defined as a person's contributions, services, and achievements acknowledged by their employer and colleagues. Participant CA01.5 described lived experiences of not receiving work recognition for his contributions as educational leader. He stated, "I never received bonuses, perks, and other recognitions for my achievements while working at the schools, they just don't do that…I went with a company that gives us different kinds of recognitions and stuff when I departed the school system." In another example, participant CA02A shared his lived experience in which his school recognized his successful performance in his leadership role when he stated, "there was an enormous amount of support and praise from community leaders, teachers, former administrators that helped me make the program a success…it was a humbling experience to receive that level of gratitude I did not expect. I knew that is what I needed from my company…to really be valued and praised." Participant AA02A stated his experience, "as an educational leader it lacked the recognition for my value added…I was unappreciated…I looked at new opportunities that could recognize me for the greatest achievements…one kind of job satisfaction I need is to feel valued and appreciated by those I work for and with." Participant AA03A explained his lived experiences that lacked job satisfaction

when he did not receive recognition and appreciation for the above and beyond work he performed at the school as vice-principal. Participant AA03A said that "What we accomplished there was treated in vain…my work had a long-term purpose for the youth and was repeatedly shot down with complaints…my tenure as vice-principal was the complete opposite of what I saw as job satisfaction and we were constantly reminded what the school lacked and the many great things I helped achieve for the school were ridiculed by these parents, students and so on. I wanted to go somewhere where that supported [my] efforts and triumphs." Participant AA03 described experiencing lack of recognition in his former educational leader position by stating, "some of the faculty disapproved of the school's goals I helped to outline for the school calendar year and when goals were met, they undermined me and the vice-principal, and never any kudos or positive feedback from them." He further explained his job satisfaction is contingent on "recognition for hard work."

Financial Increases

In this study, financial increases was identified as a theme that brought job satisfaction to the participants. The theme was endorsed by four participants. Financial increases were defined as obtaining pay increases through higher salaries offered in the corporate sector. Participant CA01.5 pursued a corporate career for a financial increase over a salary as a principal. He stated, "I received a competitive salary increase that matched other similar careers." Participant CA01.5 shared that pay increases were important and a significant factor in his decision to leave the educational field. Participant AA02 described his lived experiences with job satisfaction when pursuing a career at a

business that offered annual raises which he considered integral to increasing his wealth.

Participant AA02 indicated that his educational leader role income was not suitable for

his lifestyle and he pursued opportunities outside the educational system because he

desired, "at the very minimum an annual cost of living increase that did not happen at

city district I worked in…the male principals will either look for another principal

position paying more or look outside the educational field for descent pay [and] descent

salary to sustain everyday living…I did just that." Participant CA04 supported that

position by stating that he was influenced by learning that other male non-educational

leaders were making a higher salary than his and he then wanted the same for himself.

Participant CA04 indicated that influence made him pursue non-educational leadership

roles that "offered a higher salary…received a pretty generous offer that I accepted."

Participant AA002 described his lived experience when he was severely underpaid as an

educational leader in which he received entry level pay for immediate level years of

experience in education, and that impacted his decision to leave for a non-educational

leader position that satisfied his higher salary requirements. Participant AA002 stated that

he needed "good pay that aligns with his responsibilities."

Feelings

All participants shared how they felt while an educational leader and how they

currently feel as a non-educational leader based on their lived experiences. Participants'

feelings were sorted into the following categories: (a) positive, (b) neutral, and (c)

negative. Figure 1 shows a graphical comparison of participant contributions for feelings

while an educational leader versus a non-educational leader. Additionally, a comparison

of participants' feelings while as an educational leader and while a non-educational

leader are shown in Table 5.

Figure 1

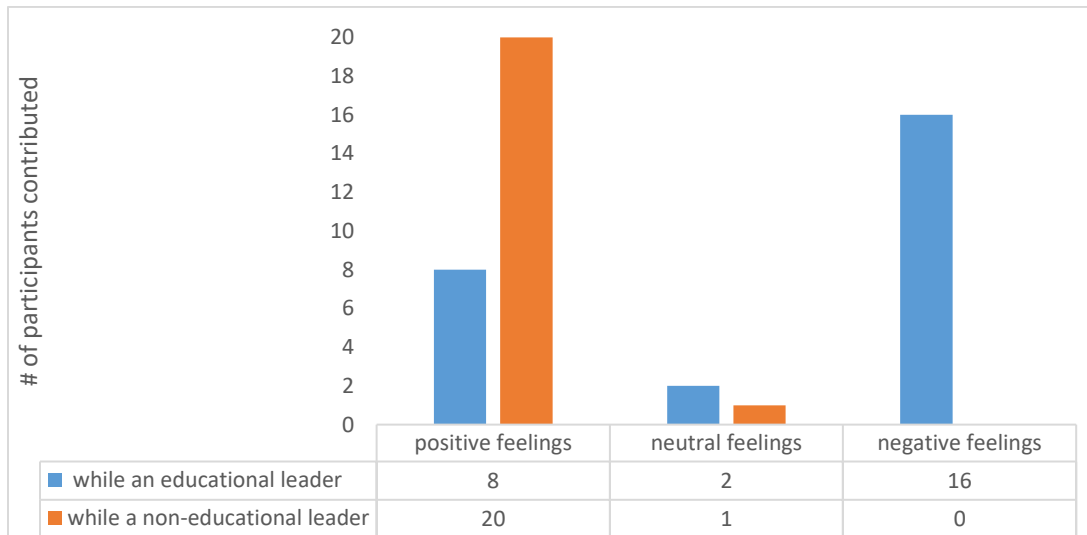*Feelings as Educational Leader versus Non-educational Leader*

	positive feelings	neutral feelings	negative feelings
■ while an educational leader	8	2	16
■ while a non-educational leader	20	1	0

Table 5

Comparison of Feelings While in Roles

Feelings	Educational Leader		Non-Educational Leader	
Positive	• comfortable • positive • leader • committed • effective • respected • enjoyable • engaged • accountable • influential • reliable • active • compassionate		• productive • motivated • successful • self-assured • empowered • effective • functional • wholesome • comfortable • ambitious • loyal • optimistic • satisfied • confident	• blessed • stimulating • respected • wholesome • at ease • secure • admired • forward-looking • recognized • worthy • appreciated • gratification
Neutral	• cautious • familiar		• disconnected from teachers and students	
Negative	• anxious • unsatisfied • demoralized • neglected • confined • overwhelmed • stressful • concerning • worn out • daunting • exhausted • disgusted • fearful • disrespected • combative • bruised	• socially confined • frustrated • non-effective • expired • restricted • discomfort • problematic • worrisome • angry • depressed • weak • annoyed • pessimistic • distressed		

Category 2: Positive Feelings

When asked to provide two to three descriptive words about their feelings, all

participants gave at least one positive word for their non-educational leader role and eight

participants provided at least one word for their educational leader role. Because all

participants shared positive feelings as a non-educational leader, it will be discussed first

then followed by positive feelings while an educational leader. Table 6 shows participant

endorsement for positive feelings.

Table 6

Positive Feelings Endorsement

	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
while an educational leader	8	40%
while a non-educational leader	20	100%

In describing positive feelings while an educational leader, participant CA04

stated he "felt comfortable." Participant AA002 stated, "I felt positive and I felt like a

leader when I was principal." Participant AA14 revealed he felt "Committed, effective"

and participant AA06 said "I felt respected"

For positive feelings while a non-educational leader, participant CA006 stated

"productive and motivated." Participant AA02A stated "successful and productive" and

participant CA10 stated "self-assured and empowered." Participant AA04 supported that

position by stating "effective and functional" as well as participant CA01 who stated

"wholesome and comfortable." Another example of positive words was from participant

AA03 who used the words, "ambitious and stimulating." Participant AA10 articulated

that he feels "loyal and optimistic." Common positive expressions remained throughout the other participants.

Category 3: Neutral Feelings

When asked to provide two to three descriptive words about their feelings, two participants gave at least one neutral word for their educational leader role and one participant provided at least one word for their non-educational leader role. Because more participants shared neutral feelings as an educational leader, it will be discussed first then followed by neutral feelings while a non-educational leader. Table 7 shows participant endorsement for neutral feelings.

Table 7

Neutral Feelings Endorsement

	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
while an educational leader	2	10%
while a non-educational leader	1	5%

Neutral feelings as former educational leaders were expressed by participant CA03 who felt "cautious" and participant AA09 who described his feeling as "familiar." Participant AA02 was the only participant to provide at least one neutral feeling as a non-educational leader. He stated that he felt "disconnected from teachers and students" while in his non-educational leadership role.

Category 4: Negative Feelings

Sixteen participants that stated at least one negative word when asked about their feelings while an educational leader. There were no negative feelings shared while a non-educational leader. Table 8 shows participant endorsement for negative feelings.

Table 8

Negative Feelings Endorsement

	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
while an educational leader	16	80%
while a non-educational leader	0	0%

Negative feelings as a former educational leader were described as "anxious and unsatisfied" by participant CA01 and "demoralized" by participant CA01.5. Participant AA04 felt "neglected" while participant AA02 described his negative feeling as "confined." Further, participant AA02A stated he felt "overwhelmed" and similarly participant CA02A described his negative feelings as "stressful and concerning."

Category 5: Challenges of Educational Leadership

Participants discussed their challenging experiences as educational leaders that supported their decision to pursue non-educational leadership careers. Three emergent themes were revealed: (a) school improvements, (b) work commute, and (c) workplace bullying. The school improvements theme was endorsed by six participants, and the work commute and workplace bullying themes were each endorsed by two participants. Table 9 shows participant endorsement for the themes in the challenges of educational leadership category.

Table 9

Challenges of Educational Leadership Endorsement

Themes	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
School improvements	6	30%
Work commute	2	10%
Workplace bullying	2	10%

School Improvements

There were six participants that endorsed this theme. These participants experienced challenges as educational leaders while trying to improve their school community. Some improvement efforts were successful and some were not. The participants lived experiences contributed to their decision to pursue non-educational leadership careers. Participant CA006 stated that he briefly led a school where the student academic test scores dropped below state level the year before and that he never got a chance to initiate improvement efforts due to his decision to depart midway thru the school year. CA0006 stated, "I really wanted to help improve low test scores at the elementary level…I met with teachers for their feedback on ways to improve the scores…only a couple of teachers gave some ideas for improvement which made it challenging to gain teachers support." Participant CA02A supported that position when he stated that he wanted "to improve school programs and initiatives…faced unnecessary challenges that were disappointing…but was able to launch an early literacy project pilot for one full school year." AA002 stated he "wanted to lead a school in a good direction…I had a goal to reestablish two after school activities that were recently dissolved…I engaged teachers and some parents in this initiative and received push back, complaints…it never got started before I left." Participant AA04 described similar feelings saying that, "Some students…need strong school leadership to help them inside and outside the classroom… I spoke with another principal that had a functioning role model program at their school to use for my school, but we lacked parental involvement…low participation interest from my students…this was added stress in

trying to monitor the success of this program." Common expressions were provided by the other two participants who faced challenges implementing school improvement initiatives during the lived experiences that contributed to their decision to pursue non-educational leadership careers.

Workplace Bullying

In this study, two participants endorsed the workplace bullying theme as one which influenced their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership roles. Participant AA002 noted the workplace bullying when stating, "Workplace bullying led me to be on administrative leave. I was the victim... [that is] when I knew…it's not… for me. So, I resigned". Participant CA01.5 described the workplace bullying in the statement, "I was falsely accused by one of the female faculty members that led me to resign before the situation go out of hand. Her smear tactic was definitely workplace bullying."

Work Commute

Two participants endorsed the work commute theme. They both experienced challenges in their commutes to and from the schools where they worked as educational leaders. These challenges influenced their decision to pursue a new career role that had fewer commuting challenges. For example, participant CA02 mentioned "spent 2 hours a day driving to my school…I was frustrated some days and exhausted the other days at that time spent in the car…location of my [new career] role was a big decision factor too for the leaving the school." Another example is participant CA01.5's explanation, "I decided…[what] would work best for me and location closer to home was the best

option…driving that distance to work cost me tons at the [gas] pump and service center for on-going maintenance stuff."

Category 6: Lessons Learned

Participants were asked to discuss experiences that were lessons learned as educational leaders. The respectful work environment theme endorsed by two participants and the burnout theme endorsed by six participants were two emergent themes that arose from the lessons learned discussions. These lived experiences contributed to the participants' decision-making process to leave their educational leadership role. Table 10 shows participant endorsement for the themes in the lessons learned category.

Table 10

Lessons Learned Endorsement

Themes	Number of participants endorsed	Percentage of participants endorsed
Burnout	6	30%
Respectful work environment	2	10%

Burnout

Six participants experienced the challenges of exhaustion and burnout from stressful workplace conditions. Participant CA006 stated "during that summer break I realized the school lacked the necessary funding for adequate school materials which made the workplace even more hectic than what it already was…I complained to the school board and others and did what I could before the school year to gather some funds, that was not easy…I found myself working just about every day and my motivation to

keep this type of energy up was draining...there were unsettled issues from the previous school year dealing with some of the kids there and teachers I had to address… I was just fed up with the exhaustive amount of time and energy it took out of me to deal with really needy students and uncertified teachers in the school. I just resigned after 6 months." Participant AA04 described how extensive daily work hours caused him to become burned out when he shared, "I neglected my health when I avoided medical appointments because I was working so much….I was wiped, turned me ill for almost 2 months...I needed a mental break and less stressful workplace. So, I looked at government leadership positions." Participant CA04 acknowledged that he experienced burnout early on in his educational leadership due to career-related mental and physical exhaustion stating "in the beginning I stayed [working] around the clock, averaged 55 hours in the work week to show them I was fit for the job…my wellbeing, family life suffered from all that time away from home and eliminating my hobbies…towards the end of my vice-principal term I figured out when to say no. So, I don't get burnt out from that place anymore." A similar description was conveyed by participant CA07 who stated, "I dealt with, on a daily basis, complex, intense, emotional demands, and I felt a personal responsibility to spend all this time being a heroic leader to handle everything. That wore me out over time…I definitely learned not to pursue a career that would need 60-80 hours a week. I was burnt out each week." Participant AA02 stated, "I attended just about every extra-curricular activity held. That meant being at the school four to five nights a week and [I] missed out on my own kid's sports and school events…being a principal allowed me to be honest with myself on what I really wanted for my professional life…I knew I

could no longer be in a school setting dealing with mental exhaustion." Additionally, participant AA03A stated, "The main lesson I learned from my career was that I was not going to stay in education…I was overwhelmed with stress to stay organized in handling student disciplinary issues, assisting teachers daily, parents' meetings to hear their concerns, pressure from the district superintendent…these constant dealings plus many others were hard on me and absorbed the majority of my time."

Respectful Work Environment

This theme was endorsed by two participants. During Participant AA14's interview, he discussed his experiences of being disrespected by students, faculty and parents at his schools and by other external administrators at a turnaround school in Maryland during his last three years of educational leadership. He stated "One of the important lessons learned is to engage with everyone in a respectable and professional manner regardless of how I may feel or perceive them... I've received many unpleasant comments from teachers, parents, students and other administrators outside the school, and still treated each of them with respect…I demanded respect and I believe that helped make the situations less volatile... these experiences sort of motivated me in the direction of [career] change." Participant CA10 expressed similar feelings when he responded, "Make the best out of your place of work to have a productive and respectful work environment…There was one particular school year where I had to deal with numerous disciplinary actions for several teachers' misconduct in the classrooms…during the process I made sure each was given the utmost respect and they did the same in return…we went on to have a fairly productive school year too…that was a difficult

school year for me and the same year I decided to entertain my senior management position I'm currently in."

Summary

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented how the study was conducted by exploring the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The open-ended telephone interviews conducted by the researcher provided audio recordings in which 20 participants described the lived experiences that influenced their decision to pursue non-educational careers. An analysis of the data collected was presented in this chapter.

The overarching research question guided the study, and the emergent themes from six interview categories were consistent with each other and the literature review presented in Chapter 2. The main themes of data collection on lived experiences of job satisfaction were: (a) need collaboration, (b) work achievement recognitions, and (c) financial increases. Participant feelings were sorted into three categories: (a) positive, (b) neutral, and (c) negative. The themes about the challenges of educational leadership were: (a) school improvements, (b) work commute, and (c) workplace bullying. The themes about lessons learned were: (a) burnout and (b) respectful work environment.

In Chapter 5, the interpretation of the findings and limitations of the current study will be presented. Also, in the next chapter, the researcher presents recommendations for future research and implications for positive social change. Chapter 5 will close with the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the qualitative, descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district who chose to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths. The nature of this study was a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach to explore, collect, and analyze data from the experiences that influenced male educational leaders in the Maryland school district to pursue non-educational leadership roles. The results of this study could be used to guide the development of gender diversity initiatives to address critical issues and needs from an educational leadership perspective in school settings. Findings from this study may be used by the Maryland school district, educational leaders, and other school faculty to gain an understanding of how experiences in educational leadership career paths may influence school leaders' pursuit of non-educational leadership roles. In this chapter, I present my interpretation of the findings, limitations of this study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Interpretations of Findings

The presence of males in educational leadership roles within school districts has decreased due to their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles. Male educational leaders leave their roles for personal and professional reasons (Anthony, 2016; Dahling & Librizzi, 2015; Ford et al., 2018). Further, male school leaders encounter challenges and other influences that impact their decision-making process toward non-educational leadership roles. As described in Chapter 2, some influences to pursue non-educational

leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths include the desire

for job satisfaction, new career opportunities in corporate sector, higher paying jobs, and

reduced workplace stressors. In this current study, the participants' experiences are

consistent with the literature. The major themes identified in six categories from the

findings were used to answer the overarching research question: What are the lived

experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district that may

influence their pursuit of non-educational leadership roles? The interpretation of the

findings for each category will be discussed separately in the following sections.

Category 1: Job Satisfaction

Need Collaboration

This theme refers to the necessity of collaboration in the workplace to achieve

goals. I discovered that male educational leaders' job satisfaction depends on the abilities

of the people within the workplace to work well together in support of the goals and

initiatives of the school. The literature on collaborative work environments indicated that

poor or good workplace adjustment is an important determinant of job satisfaction, and

poor work adjustment had a detrimental impact on job satisfaction that could lead a

school leader to change careers (Neto, 2015). The participants also shared that staff in the

school settings often did not demonstrate collaborative behavior conducive to a

productive work environment and essential for them to achieve job satisfaction. But

school employees must be capable of getting along with one another to increase the

likelihood of establishing a cohesive work environment. When school leaders and faculty

work together as a team, they can communicate more effectively with one another and

maintain collaborative work environments (Poon-McBrayer, 2018). The need for collaboration was stated by many participants as a factor in job satisfaction that influenced their decision to pursue non-educational leadership careers. Participants also characterized their educational leader careers as not being as successful as they would have liked due to the lack of collaboration they experienced. Participants noted the importance of being a team member with other staff within the school to achieve school goals. Continuous collaboration promotes effective communication between educational leaders and faculty.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature. Existing literature indicated that collaborative work environments are essential not only for educational leaders but for schools as a whole (Bush et al., 2019). School workplace issues are reflected in the reduced motivation to collaborate, which has led male school leaders to shift their careers to the corporate sector (Torres, 2016). School settings that lack collaboration among faculty make it difficult for male educational leaders to work well with them and to successfully accomplish all their school duties (Dahling & Librizzi, 2015). The absence of collaboration also makes it difficult for male educational leaders to lead schools in the right direction (Khumalo, 2015).

Work Achievement Recognition

The work achievement recognition theme refers to acknowledgement for services, contributions, and achievements made in the work setting. I found that to attain job satisfaction, male educational leaders must receive recognition for their hard work and achievement in school settings. Individuals feel satisfaction when they are recognized for

their accomplishments in the workplace (Herzberg, 1959). The participants indicated that lack of recognition for their contributions and hard work toward school achievements led to their dissatisfaction, and those who did receive recognition felt appreciated in their role. Additionally, educational leaders are more motivated in performing their work duties when their achieved goals are acknowledged and recognized in a positive manner by faculty (Wieczorek, 2017). Work achievement recognition was mentioned by several participants as a form of job satisfaction that influenced their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership positions. Receiving work achievement recognition helps school leaders build a sense of security in their value. The results of this study are consistent with existing literature. Existing research confirms past workplace experiences are a determinant factor for how much male educational leaders expect their job performances should be acknowledged (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Male school leaders expect that their hard work and achievements will result in desirable rewards and recognitions presented to them on a consistent basis (Vroom, 1964).

Financial Increases

The financial increases theme refers to obtaining compensation increases from higher salaries as non-educational leaders. The findings from this current study are consistent with those of previous studies that indicated the importance of higher paying jobs for males to achieve job satisfaction (see Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). The participants stated that pay increases enhanced their lifestyles and gave them a sense of pride in their career roles as well as a sense of financial security. Thus, non-educational leadership positions offering higher salaries than educational leadership positions

influence male school leaders' decision to leave their jobs. Male school leaders have emphasized receiving higher salaries than their educational leader positions as indicators for job satisfaction (Murakami et al., 2016). Financial increases were mentioned by a few participants as a form of job satisfaction that influenced their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership careers. Participants stated the importance of receiving salary increases because it helps build their financial wealth. Salary increases improves financial security among non-educational leaders.

Findings in this current study are supported by previous literature. Rogers (1957) stated that people desire growth and development to achieve their highest potential. Previous research has indicated that male educational leaders achieve congruence between how they perceive themselves and their actual behavior by pursuing a career that is deemed more prestigious, influential, and offers a higher salary than a career in educational leadership (Ifat & Lyal, 2017; Pulliam et al., 2017; Shaked & Blanz, 2018).

Categories 2–4: Positive, Neutral, and Negative Feelings

Participant feelings were described while serving as an educational leader and non-educational leader. The participants shared negative, positive and neutral feelings while working in educational leadership roles. I found that the interactions with the staff, parents, students, and external school leaders impacted the feelings male educational leaders experienced while in their roles. Forty percent of the participants provided at least one positive word, and 10% provided at least one neutral word that described their feelings as school leaders. Eighty percent of the participants described negative feelings they experienced while in school settings. The findings from this study support existing

literature that negative self-views influenced male school leaders' decision-making process to leave their careers in education for non-educational leadership roles. The negative, positive, and neutral feelings are consistent with the existing literature discussing them as indicators of male school leaders' role alignment with their job requirements, which influences poor and good work adjustments and intent to leave their job (Dawis & Loquist, 1984). Additionally, catering to individuals' diverse feelings and needs are crucial for developing healthy relationships (Rogers, 1959). I found that male educational leaders' feelings had a direct relationship to the types of behaviors and communications expressed toward them in the workplace.

The participants also stated positive and neutral feelings while working as non-educational leaders. All participants stated at least one positive word, and 5% of the participants provided one neutral word that described their feelings while working in the corporate sector. I found that positive work alignment and career optimism play key roles in the feelings former male educational leaders express in their current non-educational leadership roles. The findings from this study support existing literature that positive career motivations influenced former male educational leaders to have positive feelings toward their corporate sector careers (Hussain & Suleman, 2018). Individuals express positive feelings toward their jobs when they have met their career development goals and when they are being supported by others in the workplace while performing their duties (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016). The positive and neutral themes are all consistent with existing literature and have been discussed considerably by various researchers and scholars. Rogers (1959) stated that people have the innate tendency to strive for growth,

development, and independence. Achieving the state of congruence allows individuals to

possess unconditional positive regard towards their career experiences (Rogers, 1959).

Statements by participants in this study included descriptive words regarding their

positive and neutral feelings that support this existing literature. Feelings from positive

and neutral experiences in the workplace indicate how well former male educational

leaders have aligned to their non-educational leadership career roles (Dawis & Loquist,

1984).

Category 5: Challenges of Educational Leadership

School Improvements

I found that male educational leaders struggle with challenges in trying to

implement and execute school improvements. Participants described the negative impact

criticism from staff in the school settings had on their school improvement effort as a

major factor contributing to their job dissatisfaction. Receiving support from teachers and

parents plays an important part in the success of school improvement initiatives. Some

participants shared that school improvements that are aimed to improve student test

scores and literacy factor into student academic performance. This is consistent with

previous research indicating that students' overall performance is impacted by whether

school leaders can carry out their respective duties effectively such as working toward

school goals (Eboka, 2016; Imazeki, 2015; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Wieczorek, 2017).

Based on the results from the current study, when school improvements had low student

participation and interest, there was also a lack of parental support and involvement,

making it challenging for educational leaders to carry out their school improvement

plans. These constraints on achieving school improvements influenced male school

leaders' decision to leave their roles.

Work Commute

I found that work commutes play a role in the decision-making process to pursue

non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths

since they require male school leaders to spend more of their time and money. Ten

percent of the participants indicated that lengthy commutes to their school locations was

a factor for leaving their school leader roles. Previous research highlighted that poor work

adjustment will cause educational leaders to leave their positions (Neto, 2015). The

findings of this current study contribute to existing knowledge by identifying work

commutes as one of the challenges of educational leadership roles. Commuting pose

challenges that conflict with male school leaders' ideal desires such as working closer to

home and not spending a lot of money on vehicle expenses for commuting.

Workplace Bullying

I found that workplace bullying had a direct impact on male educational leaders'

decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of

educational leadership careers. Participants stated that they were the victims of workplace

bullying, leading them to resign and not return to work in educational settings. Previous

research has highlighted that when discord exists between a person's needs and their

work environment, their adjustment could result in a turnover due to voluntary departure,

forced departure such as termination, or by an attempt to increase their alignment with

the work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Existing literature identified that

adverse workplace behaviors leads to unharmonious work environments forcing male educational leaders to leave their professions (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2015; Hill 2018). In this study, I found that workplace bullying happened between male educational leaders and school faculty members. The findings of this current study have contributed to existing knowledge by identifying workplace bullying towards male educational leaders as a significant challenge within their work environment.

Category 6: Lessons Learned

Burnout

Burnout plays an important role in the lessons learned in educational leadership. In this study, I found that burnout had a direct negative impact on male educational leaders' personal and professional growth. Existing literature confirms that educational leadership is a highly stressful profession that can lead to burnout and other adverse professional effects such as depression and increased absenteeism from work (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Thirty percent of the participants indicated that an overload of work tasks caused them physical and mental exhaustion. Participants reported that high stress levels in school settings led to their lack of motivation to continue working in their educational leadership career paths. This is consistent with previous findings that reduced passion occurs in educational leaders when they are overcome with low motivation to continue in their duties (Torres, 2016). Thus, reducing burnout is critical to the success and retention of educational leaders.

Respectful Work Environment

Respectful work environments play an important role in the lessons learned in educational leadership. I found that respectful work environments evolve when male educational leaders' work ethics, values, and attitudes are aimed toward cultivating a productive atmosphere in the workplace. The participants stated that they demanded respect and professionalism from everyone in the school settings. These findings are supported by existing literature. Male educational leaders are perceived as strong symbols of authority held in high regard within the school environment (Ifat & Eyal, 2017). Some participants reported that respect shown in the workplace is essential to resolving issues and problems in a productive manner. School leaders play an important role in ensuring sound school discipline practices (Curran, 2017).

Summarizing Interpretations

Major themes in six categories emerged from the data collected and analyzed for this study. Supportive literature discussed in Chapter 2 highlighted themes identified in this study. My interpretations were justified based on the participants' experiences and the findings that aligned with themes and concepts in the literature. The study findings extended knowledge in the discipline by identifying work commutes as a challenge experienced by male educational leaders that influenced their decision-making process to leave their roles for a non-educational leadership roles. There were new insights on how work commutes caused male educational leaders to spend extensive time on the road and additional money for vehicle expenses. Additionally, the findings from the current study contributed to the body of knowledge by identifying the role workplace bullying played

in the decision-making process of male educational leaders to pursue career paths in non-educational leadership. New insights emerged about male educational leaders being bullied in school settings by school staff. Findings from the current study contributed to the body of knowledge on how influences of negative feelings are experienced by a significant amount of male educational leaders when deciding to leave their roles and pursue non-educational leadership roles. New insights emerged that the interactions with the staff, parents, students, and external school leaders has an impact on the feelings male educational leaders experience while in their roles.

Limitations of the Study

There were four limitations for this study. First, the study was limited to its participants who voluntarily agreed to participate. The researcher did not have the ability to determine the truthfulness of their interview responses or if their statements were biased. The researcher informed the participants that the interviews were confidential and that no disclosure of their identities will occur. Secondly, the study was limited to the amount of years and months the participants served in their educational leadership roles. This study was not dependent on using the duration of the participants' educational leadership careers. The researcher did not have the ability to determine the participants' years of experience prior to their voluntary consent and interviews. The third limitation was the restricted demographic data of the participants. This study was not dependent on including the demographic information of the participants, so there was the likelihood the participant pool could consist of all African Americans or all Caucasians or a mixture of multiple races and ethnicities. The fourth limitation was that the study involved

participants who voluntary agreed from only Maryland. For this study, I did not recruit or permit participants from other states or geographical areas.

Recommendations

The researcher formulated recommendations for further research based on the results of the current study. These recommendations could be considered by future researchers in the study of related topics. The recommendations were based on considerations for future researchers to further investigate the educational leadership challenges that have impacted school environments.

The research approach of this study was not designed to quantify data related to male educational leaders' demographic influences on their decision-making process. The participants shared unique experiences of their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership career paths. A recommendation is for future researchers to conduct similar studies that are quantifiable by examining male educational leaders' attitudes regarding career roles in the workplace and how they impact the students and teachers at their schools. Future researchers could consider using different populations and geographies.

In this current study, the need for job satisfaction was a significant finding. As previously discussed, the participants revealed they had the need for increased pay, collaboration, and work achievement recognition in the workplace. Future researchers should examine the correlation between educational leadership requirements and attributes of job satisfaction. It is also recommended that researchers consider a model of educational leadership competencies for individuals deciding to pursue principalship.

Although Gray and Taie (2015) examined statistical data on the principal attrition rates from 50 states, I recommend these attrition rates be examined for male principals by geographic regions of the United States and counties within each state. All participants in this current study believed that most of their job satisfaction needs were not being met in educational leadership. For Lindqvist and Nordänger (2016), the retention of male educational leadership is influenced by the existence of leadership training courses that enable such leaders to link their job descriptions to the broader purpose and goals of the institutions. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) suggested that rewards offered to individuals should correspond to their values which will in turn promote job satisfaction in performing and accomplishing work duties.

Another significant finding of this study was the extent to which male educational leaders experience negative feelings about the role of educational leadership. Majority of the participants shared negative feelings while serving in their educational leadership roles, which influenced their decisions to seek non-educational leadership career paths. A recommendation would be for future researchers to investigate the connection between teachers' professional competencies and principal retention in schools. By investigating the correlation between these factors, researchers could gather feedback from both teachers and principals, and further evaluate positive and negative responses. Future researchers should also consider increasing the sample size to gather more unique perspectives of this study's phenomenon. A larger sample size may reveal a deeper degree of thickness and richness in the data. Again, sample size is one of this study's

limitations because a phenomenological study's sample size can be smaller than sample sizes required for qualitative studies.

Examining the advantages of educational leadership, appreciating the benefits to the students and staff, and perceiving the potential long-term job satisfaction that can be achieved, may increase male school leaders receptiveness to remain in an educational leadership career. The actual lived experiences of the research study participants, along with the study's themes, may help future male educational leaders better understand the issues and challenges they will face in their roles. Given the significant findings of this study, further research may be useful if conducted to determine the perceptions of former male educational leaders on how school system leaders can build on the overall positive feelings and mitigate the negative feelings.

Implications

The results of this study reveal that male educational leaders of the Maryland school district are very likely to be influenced by their feelings about their career roles in the workplace during their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership careers. The results of this study may produce significant implications for positive social change for male educational leaders, their families, organizations, and society. Also, the results of this study may have methodological and theoretical implications through application in organizational and educational areas of practices.

The lived experiences of male educational leaders provide significant and invaluable information about their reasons for deciding to leave their roles within the Maryland school districts. The participants' experiences, influences, and decisions

allowed them to strengthen their aptitude and confidence as careerists in determining their non-educational leadership career paths that could lead to positive social changes. Taking advantage of non-educational leadership opportunities may assist male educational leaders in achieving job satisfaction through reduced stress and burnout, increased compensation, shorter commutes, and collaborative work environments. The results of this study reveal that many of the participants benefited from the lessons learned from educational leadership with useful insight for promoting productive and respectful work environments, reducing burnout, and maintaining positive attitudes towards their careers.

The participants identified work environment as a critical influence on the decision-making process for their career roles. Eight participants provided statements on collaborative work environment being a requirement for their job satisfaction. A strategic workplace collaboration program could be a tool used by the school systems for decreasing the attrition rates of male school leaders. Principal retention may help school systems reduce the negative impacts of turnover and provide the schools with continuous leadership. Ten percent of the participants identified workplace bullying as a factor which influenced their decision to leave their educational leadership role. Based on this finding, the key decision-makers of the school systems will be aware that this issue impacts male educational leader retention and may identify and implement strategies to eliminate bullying. The male educational leaders' experiences identified in this study could be beneficial to schools that are seeking to improve their organizational culture.

Based on the findings of this study, minimizing the attrition of male educational leaders may be essential to improving schools. Many of the participants indicated that they pursued educational leadership to foster and implement effective changes in the schools. However, the participants' critical concerns about burnout in educational leadership still need to be addressed. If educational leaders rejected optional tasks presented to them that would significantly minimize or eliminate their lack of interest and burnouts. By refraining from performing optional tasks, educational leaders will have reduced stress and fatigue and that will enable them to better serve the schools and communities. There were also challenges regarding the distance to commute to and from the school locations. This study may influence key decision-makers in the school system to reassess and improve the school placement process for educational leaders so that educational leaders are not negatively impacted. The school system could offer travel reimbursement and relocation packages to promote positive attitudes in school leaders.

Further, the results of this study could influence key decision-makers in the school system to develop initiatives and strategies that could minimize the negative and increase the positive feelings educational leaders experience in their roles. Educational leaders could be offered professional development opportunities, compensation increases, perks, bonuses, and recognitions that would promote job satisfaction. This compliments the positive reinforcement and socioeconomic statuses of educational leaders in schools and communities thus contributing to the economy. These specific findings and implications will benefit the overall school system and in turn positively impact society.

The constructive findings of this study may be useful in expanding the existing literature about experiences in educational leadership. The study is unique because the researcher employed the actual lived experiences of former male educational leaders, and according to Goldring and Taie (2018), there is limited phenomenological research about this topic. The results of this study may help close the research gap on lived experiences of male educational leaders' career paths and the decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership careers.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the theory of personality (Rogers, 1957) and the Minnesota theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The study's themes provide insights of how the experiences of male educational leaders in the Maryland school district influenced their decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership career roles. All the participants described at least one positive feeling they experienced as non-educational leaders, and the majority described some negative feelings as educational leaders. The results of this study also revealed that the participants' non-educational leadership roles could help them achieve self-actualization as described by Rogers (1957).

Participants felt that job satisfaction is dependent on financial increases, work achievement recognitions, and collaborative work environments. Participants provided unique insights into the job satisfaction needs of male educational leaders. This study could also assist in minimizing the frustration and discouragement levels of current and future male educational leaders concerning the work environment by documenting the need for more collaboration, more work achievement recognitions and increased

compensation. The results of this study revealed that the participants' pursuit of non-educational leadership roles could help them achieve good work adjustment as described by Dawis & Lofquist (1984).

The current study could provide school system leaders with critical knowledge about the concerns of male educational leaders regarding their reasons for leaving their roles and identify ways to properly address those concerns. Addressing those concerns could ensure that male educational leaders will be motivated to sustain their career roles and experience desired levels of job satisfaction. Male educational leaders could bring forth positive role model opportunities and benefits for the school community. Once the school system leaders recognize the contributions male educational leaders could provide, they may be eager to further explore ways to retain them.

Conclusion

The Maryland School System has been faced with challenges caused by the attrition of male educational leaders in the school districts. Increasingly, male educational leaders are choosing non-educational leadership career paths and finding these paths to be greatly beneficial to them. The current study allowed for a deeper understanding of the experiences that influenced male educational leaders' decision-making process to pursue non-educational leadership roles instead of educational leadership roles. The lived experiences of this study's participants may contribute to initiatives and strategies school system leaders may implement to increase job satisfaction and decrease the attrition rate of male educational leaders.

By understanding the results from this study's overarching research question, key decision-makers of the school systems and other educational leaders may better understand male educational leader experiences. This study offers findings that should fill knowledge gaps within the educational discipline of leadership and organizational change. The results of this study are critical in revealing the need for effective ways to mitigate issues that lead to job dissatisfaction and demonstrate the need to implement strategies to promote the retention of male educational leaders. The results of this current study may contribute to positive social change for male educational leaders through enhancing the knowledge of school system leaders and key decision-makers on what males endure in their educational leadership career paths. Recommendations for future research include extending this study to other states and geographical areas, and quantitative examinations of gender influences on decisions to pursue educational and non-educational leadership careers.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Script

I will be capturing responses using handwritten notes on paper and by use of an audio recorder, and then typing those responses in an electronic format.

Your participation in strictly voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Thank you for your time and for agreeing to participate.

I have scheduled this telephone interview for 45 minutes and you can take a much time as you need in responding to the questions. During the interview, I will be asking you demographics and career role questions.

You have been invited today to participate in this telephone interview because you are a former educational leader in the Maryland school district who has valuable information to share. The research study focuses on former male educational leaders' career paths and your unique experiences on why you decided to pursue a non-educational leadership career path instead of an educational leadership career path. My study is not geared towards assessing or evaluating your knowledge or competency as a former educational leader.

I am trying to learn more about the lived experiences of former male educational leaders that may have influenced their decision-making process to pursue of non-educational leadership career paths instead of educational leadership career paths.

Date:_____ Time:_____

Interviewer: Natisha Murphy

Demographic Questions

Participant's Numerical Code:_____
Current Position of Participant:_____

- What is your race?

- How many total years have you served as an educational leader?

- What is your highest degree earned?

- Do you hold any certifications? If yes, is the certification related to a non-educational leadership role or educational leadership role?

- What types (elementary, middle, high, public, private) of schools did you work as an educational leader?

- How many years did you work at each school as an educational leader?

Career Role Questions

- Briefly describe your current leadership role:

- Why do you think male educational leaders in the Maryland school districts are pursuing non-educational leadership roles?

- What made you choose a career in educational leadership?

- Describe the decision-making process you used to pursue your non-educational leadership role.

- Tell me about any workplace bullying that might have influenced your decision-making process to leave the school setting and pursue a leadership career role in a non-educational setting?

- How has race and/or ethnicity factors influenced your decision-making process to leave the school setting and pursue a leadership career role in a non-educational setting?

- Describe your views on males in comparison females pursuing educational leadership career paths.

- How have your career experiences and formal education shaped the way you view educational leadership?

- Can you state 2 to 3 words that described how you felt while serving in an educational leadership role, and the same for the non-educational leadership role?

- What kind of job satisfaction do you need for a successful leadership role?

- How have any lessons learned about educational leadership affected your current career path decision?

Probing Questions

- Can you explain that further?

- Can you provide me with an example of what you just said?

- Can you give me more details about that?

- Can you explain how that works?

- Can you tell me how that was used?