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Walden University

College of Education

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Carolyn Marsha Prato

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Administrators' Perspectives on Teacher Attrition in Large Urban Public School Districts

by

Carolyn Marsha Prato

MA, Barry University 2014

BS, Florida International University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

Teacher attrition is higher than the national average in various large urban public school districts in the United States and some districts lose teachers every year, which makes teacher attrition a legitimate concern for many public school districts. The purpose of this study was to explore school administrators' perspectives on why teachers leave large urban public school districts and to identify strategies and approaches that might be used to decrease teacher attrition. This study's conceptual framework was Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which explains human motivation and determination. The first research question focused on school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition, and the second research question explored strategies that school administrators use to decrease teacher attrition. The methodology for this study was a basic qualitative study, and data were collected through interviews with eight school administrators who worked in various large urban public school districts for at least two years. Thematic analysis was used to organize and analyze the data. The key results for this study indicated that relationship building, teacher motivation, positive school climate and culture, and aligned professional development were essential aspects to help decrease teacher attrition. The results of this study may have increased the awareness regarding teacher attrition and its associated causes, leading to positive social change. For instance, school administrators may increase their level of support for teachers leading to an increase in their motivation and determination, which, in turn, might affect their work productivity with students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my maternal great aunt, Laurette Louis, and paternal grandfather, Galvi Prato, who were my pioneers of true educators and dedicated scholars. They defied the odds by always going above and beyond.

Aunt Laurette, you defined love and what it means to be and give love. Thank you for instilling love inside of me and knowing how to be love for the people around me. Grandpa Galvi, thank you for showing me what it means to be a true genius and lifelong scholar. I carry within me your drive and dedication. I set foot on this journey because of you.

This journey has been my above and beyond, and I know they are incredibly proud of me. I would not have completed this journey without the support of these two ancestors. Thank you.

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It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge God, my mother, Marie Louis, and my father, Joseph Prato, for being my biggest supporters and motivators throughout this journey. I am blessed to have God and my parents who saw the power in me that I could not see for myself. Without their encouragement, I would not have completed one of the most significant accomplishments for myself and my family.

I also want to thank my chair, Dr. Felicia Blacher-Wilson, and my second committee, Dr. Kathleen Kingston, for reminding me that I am worthy of accomplishing such a prestigious degree. They were in my corner through every trial I experienced while on this journey. I am grateful for the support that they provided to me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

For the past 30 years, teachers in the United States who worked in various public school districts have left the profession before the average age for retirement, resulting in teacher attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016). Teacher attrition in the United States has increased from 5% to 8% since the mid-1980s (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, 2017). A 3% increase meant districts hired about 90,000 new teachers every year, which is costly for many school districts (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). One expense associated with hiring new teachers includes providing the difference in salary between the departing teacher and the replacement teacher (Papay et al., 2017). Some of the reasons teachers have reported for leaving the profession included dissatisfaction with salary, not having success with student achievement, or having a large workload (Towers & Maguire, 2017).

Through their research, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) have identified that school administrators play a prominent role in a teacher's decision to remain within a school. Holmes et al. (2019) found that some teachers left their places of employment because their intrinsic motivational needs for being appreciated in the work environment or being recognized for their work were unmet. Many teachers in various public school districts left the profession because of school administrators' lack of collaboration and support (Young, 2018). Teacher attrition is increasing, which has become a challenge for many school administrators to retain qualified teachers (Redding & Henry, 2018).

In addition to administrator-level and other influences on teacher attrition, school location also impacts attrition levels. According to Craig (2019), teacher attrition is more prevalent in large urban public school districts than in suburban and rural school districts. Some challenges that teachers who work in large urban public school districts may face that are not as prevalent in suburban and rural school districts include having large numbers of students living in poverty, a large number of English language learners, or having high student mobility (White et al., 2017). Some large urban public school districts are further impacted by teacher attrition because some teachers are inadequately prepared to teach in high-poverty schools in urban communities (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). These challenges may be potential reasons teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years.

The impact of teachers leaving public schools could disrupt the educational process for many students. Significant turnover of teachers might result in teachers in classes unfamiliar with the subject matter they are teaching (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Redding & Henry, 2018). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that all students within a school, not just the students in a new teacher's classroom, are affected by teacher turnover. The students are affected by the disruption in school stability as the new teacher must become acclimated to the new school climate and culture. Furthermore, teacher turnover creates a widespread effect, which may be a burden for teachers who stay. This effect can cause reduced time spent with students to support new colleagues and disrupt curriculum planning for student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). These

effects impact student achievement, especially if students receive instruction from inexperienced or uncertified teachers.

Researchers such as Ansley et al. (2019), Bonato (2019), and Hammonds (2017) have conducted studies into teachers' perspectives about the various reasons they leave the profession. Although teachers have explained the reasons for leaving, there is limited research on how school districts and school administrators understand the reported issues. School districts and school administrators need to understand why teachers are leaving to help decrease teacher attrition. This information may increase teacher attrition awareness and provide solutions to decrease teacher attrition for school districts and school administrators. Additionally, school districts and school administrators might implement changes in school policies to promote teacher retention. Therefore, in this study, I explored school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition within their schools. This study of teacher attrition could potentially support school districts and school administrators in identifying strategies that could help decrease teacher attrition.

In Chapter 1, I review the background, problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, and conceptual framework. Additionally, I discuss the nature of the study and provide definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study. Finally, I conclude Chapter 1 with a summary of all main points related to the study.

Background

Teacher attrition continues to increase across the United States because many teachers leave the profession (Sutcher et al., 2019). Researchers have found various

reasons reported by teachers as their motives for leaving the profession. Some reasons include not having success with student achievement, experiencing job dissatisfaction, or having a large workload of differentiating student work (Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018; Papay et al., 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017). Additional reasons reported by former teachers include having no opportunity to advance professionally, not having any input in school policies, or dissatisfaction with school leadership, salary, and school climate (Kelchtermans, 2017; Young, 2018). While much is known about teacher attrition, there is a gap in the literature regarding school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in large urban public schools.

Attrition rates can vary for many professions. Aldeman (2017) shared that teacher attrition is lower than other professions in the United States. The U.S. national average rate for teacher attrition is about 8%, which is lower than the attrition rates for nursing, law enforcement, and banking and finance. The average attrition rate for nursing is about 9% (Nursing Solutions, Inc., 2020), for law enforcement is about 14% (Beard, 2019), and for banking and finance is about 18.6% (Ufer, 2020). Although teachers' attrition rate is lower than the three professions mentioned, teachers are still leaving large urban public school districts. Current guidelines recommend that schools quickly hire qualified teachers to fill current vacancies; however, that is rarely achieved in practice (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). For this reason, I explored the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. This study's results might assist school administrators in understanding

the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools and to help develop approaches to decrease teacher attrition in their schools.

Problem Statement

The problem is that teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts is higher than the national average for teacher attrition in the United States (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Teacher attrition is a concern, as schools cannot quickly fill vacancies with qualified teachers. The U.S. national average for teacher attrition was near 8% in 2017 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Therefore, it is valuable for school administrators to examine the reasons for teacher attrition to develop approaches that could reduce teacher attrition in their schools.

Teacher attrition can create ongoing challenges throughout school systems in the United States (Craig, 2019). Some researchers have found that some schools are experiencing difficulties retaining teachers, especially in large urban public school districts (Bonato, 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Some of the difficulties included were unsafe work environments, dealing with student discipline problems, and having a lack of administrator support (Thompson, 2018). Additionally, teachers leave their careers when their needs are unmet based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Hammonds, 2017). Teacher attrition significantly affects school administrators, teachers, and students physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs, especially in large urban public school districts. Some causes of teacher attrition can include the high demands that teachers might receive from working in large urban public school districts (Craig, 2019),

increased class sizes (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), and a decline in student achievement from receiving instruction from unqualified teachers (Towers & Maguire, 2017).

Attrition can affect many professions, such as nursing, law enforcement, and banking and finance. According to Nursing Solutions, Inc. (2020), the top three reasons nurses leave the field include having no opportunity for career advancement, being unable to relocate to different facilities, or dealing with personal matters. In law enforcement, attrition occurs when employees are dissatisfied with their pay, are experiencing unexpected job stresses such as irregular work hours, or are involved in traumatic events (Beard, 2019). Ufer (2020) stated that banking and finance experience attrition because of low employee engagement, lack of flexibility with work–life balance, and the reputation that banking and finance received from the 2008 financial crisis. While attrition impacts the teaching profession, it also significantly impacts student learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. Researchers, such as Caruso (2019), Ford et al. (2018), and Dahlkamp et al. (2017), have conducted studies that explore the reasons teachers leave the profession. Some of the reasons include elevated levels of teacher burnout, dissatisfaction with the working environment, and lack of collegial support. In this study, I sought the perspectives of various school administrators

to explore reasons for teacher attrition in their schools and create strategies to address the causes in their schools.

Research Questions

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. The following research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

RQ1: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools?

RQ2: What strategies can school administrators use to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that closely aligns with this study is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs connected with this study to provide explanations for teacher motivation and determination. Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs is a theory of human motivation with five categories of needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety and security, (c) love and belonging, (d) self-esteem, and (e) self-actualization. The first three needs are lower-level needs that teachers fulfill through food, shelter, and community. The higher-level needs are more abstract and complex views, such as self-worth and personal growth. Some examples of lower-level needs include teachers having the opportunity to be with their families after a day of work or practicing self-care routines to maintain a healthy work–life balance (Green & Muñoz, 2016). Some

examples of higher-level needs include advocating for ownership of courses or having healthier teacher–parent communication (Fisher & Royster, 2016). Although adults rarely achieve the need for self-actualization, Maslow (1948) explained that individuals tend to strive for gratifying experiences to fulfill their lower-level and higher-level needs. A thorough explanation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is provided in Chapter 2.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been the framework for different research studies regarding teacher job satisfaction and motivation. Maslow's theory is a needs theory that relates to motivation (Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). Motivation is determined by an individual's attitude towards their work and the working environment (Sachau, 2019). Shoshani and Eldor (2016) indicated that teachers are satisfied at work when their sense of autonomy and well-being is acknowledged. Green and Muñoz (2016) rationalized that teachers remain within the field when they commit to their work and have a sense of loyalty. Hammonds (2017) stated that teachers whose needs are unsatisfied are more likely to leave the profession than teachers whose needs are satisfied. Maslow's hierarchy of needs related to this study's research questions and approach by exploring teacher motivation and determination regarding teacher attrition. I interviewed school administrators to understand how teacher attrition might affect their school and strategies to reduce it. For this reason, it can be beneficial for school administrators to identify resources that might increase motivation and job satisfaction for teachers. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the framework used to support the data collected regarding school administrators' perspectives.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a basic qualitative design. In most qualitative research studies, researchers collect data through interviews, observations, field notes, and focus groups (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Data collection allows a researcher to gather and draw together themes from the research questions. Some strengths in using qualitative research include participants describing their experiences of a particular phenomenon in detail, building on existing data from previous research, or having a flexible approach to conducting research. Some weaknesses in using qualitative research include a small sample size or the time it might take to analyze and interpret the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that basic qualitative research is used to construct beliefs and meaning from various experiences through people's world views. A basic qualitative study allows people to create their worlds, interpret their experiences, and provide meaning to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. This methodology allowed me to understand and analyze how school administrators understand teacher attrition in their specific schools.

Eight school administrators, who were the principals and assistant principals with at least 2 years of experience as a school administrator, participated in one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions. The school administrators came from elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. The selection of school administrators came

from various large urban public schools in the United States. The interviews were recorded, and each interview was transcribed, coded, and analyzed with researcher notes and comments.

Definitions

The following definitions for this study were used:

High-poverty schools: When the student population has at least 75% of the students on free and/or reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

Large urban public school district: When the school district's city population has at least 250,000 residents (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs: A theory with five categories of needs that explain human motivation and determination: physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1948).

School administrators: Individuals identified as a principal, assistant principal, or the head of school within public or private educational institutions (Craig, 2019).

School climate and school culture: School climate is the attitude, beliefs, and relationships of the school as related by the staff, students, and parents. School culture is how the school operates and functions (Hill, 2018).

Teacher attrition: When a teacher leaves the teaching profession altogether (Evans, 2017) or leaves the teaching profession before retirement (Kelchtermans, 2017).

Teacher burnout: When a teacher fails to perform all job duties satisfactorily (Bryan, 2018).

Teacher retention: When teachers remain within their schools or the teaching profession (Laymon, 2018).

Teacher turnover: When a teacher moves from one school to another or when there is a change in teaching assignment (Hill, 2018).

Assumptions

A researcher believes assumptions to be true about a study without evidence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The assumptions for this study were necessary to help determine the data collected were significant and consistent. Additionally, the assumptions are necessary for readers to evaluate the study's trustworthiness. There were three assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that all school administrators in this study would provide honest and authentic answers to the interview questions. The second assumption was that the selected school administrators fully understood the interview questions. The last assumption was that the selected school administrators would remain in the study.

Scope and Delimitations

The research questions determined the scope of this study. This study covered school administrators' perspectives in various large urban public school districts in the United States. These schools experienced higher than the national average teacher attrition of 8%. This study was specific to school administrators with at least 2 years of school administration experience whose schools have experienced teacher attrition. Although this study was specific to school administrators whose schools are experiencing teacher attrition, some school administrators that may not be experiencing teacher

attrition were included in the study to provide their perspective regarding teacher attrition. This study did not include teachers or individuals becoming school administrators because it was specific to current and former school administrators.

Potential transferability included the perspective of school administrators who might not have experienced teacher attrition. Their perspectives may assist other school administrators in identifying strategies and approaches to reduce teacher attrition. The perspectives of school administrators were analyzed to address the reasons for teacher attrition within their schools. The study results may support other school administrators in the represented school districts by identifying strategies to help reduce teacher attrition in their schools. Additionally, the results of this study may support surrounding school districts experiencing higher than average teacher attrition. Lastly, school administrators might identify strategies that can support teacher retention within their schools.

Limitations

Limitations are conditions that can impact a researcher's ability to study the scope of the project effectively. Some limitations in qualitative research include being time-consuming, labor-intensive, or not statistically represented because of the perspective-based method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data collected for this study were relatively small because they were gathered from interviews with eight school administrators. The participant sample was not a substantial representation of large urban public schools in the United States. Another limitation was the perspectives of the school administrators, as their perspectives might not represent all school administrators who work in large urban public schools.

Significance

Teacher attrition is a concern for many school districts, particularly in large public school districts (Hammonds, 2017). Most teachers leave the teaching profession within the first 5 years (Bonato, 2019). The reasons for leaving reported by former teachers vary; however, the most common reasons include salary, lack of administrative support, and poor working conditions (Towers & Maguire, 2017). For this reason, this study may assist school administrators by understanding their perspectives regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools. The perspectives of school administrators regarding teacher attrition have not been studied. Therefore, in this study, school administrators explored the reasons teachers provided for leaving the profession. This study allowed school administrators to understand teacher attrition better. The reasons may be used to find possible strategies to decrease teacher attrition in their schools.

The results from this study might support school administrators in various school districts in identifying approaches and strategies to retain teachers in their schools, especially if teacher attrition is a challenge. Furthermore, school administrators might increase their support for teachers to remain in the classroom. This support might include having more opportunities for relationship building, providing consistent and positive feedback, or giving teachers different opportunities to grow professionally and personally. Therefore, this study may promote positive social change by impacting students and their learning. Teachers receiving an increase in support could impact their work productivity with students and their achievement. An increase in teacher motivation and determination might decrease teacher attrition.

Summary

Some school districts are experiencing teacher attrition that is higher than the national average. Teacher attrition can create challenges for school administrators because it can be difficult to hire teachers who are qualified to teach. Teacher attrition occurs when a teacher decides to leave the profession or transfer to a new school before retirement (Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016). Former teachers have reported various reasons, such as having a lack of school administrator support or dissatisfaction with salary, that can explain teacher attrition (Glazer, 2018). However, the perspectives of school administrators about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools was unknown. This study aimed to provide a deeper look into school administrators' perspectives regarding the reasons for teacher attrition within large urban public schools for this study.

In Chapter 1, I provided the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, purpose, research questions, and conceptual framework. I explained the nature of the study, definitions of key concepts, assumptions, scope and delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, and the significance of the study. In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed and comprehensive review of the literature that supported the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

School systems in the United States are experiencing challenges with teacher attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In this study, the problem was teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts is higher than the national average for teacher attrition in the United States (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The national average for teacher attrition in the United States is 8%. Some schools cannot quickly fill the vacancies, which poses a concern for school administrators. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States.

In 2005, the national teacher attrition average was 8%, compared to 5% in 1992 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Although the 3% increase seems relatively low, about 90,000 teachers are hired every year, which is costly for many school districts (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teachers leave their schools within the first 5 years of their careers (Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016). The increase in teacher attrition creates a disadvantage for school administrators to maintain stability in retaining teachers, especially in urban schools (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Many teachers across different grade levels and subject matter areas have provided several reasons for leaving their careers. Some of those reasons include the lack of school administrator support, salary, not feeling wanted/needed in their schools, or the lack of support with student discipline (Olsen & Huang, 2018). Also, teacher attitude, knowledge, and skills are some factors that can affect teacher attrition (Schwartz et al., 2019). If teachers are ill-prepared to work

in their current school setting, their motivation or enthusiasm to work with students may be affected. Therefore, it was critical for school administrators in this study to clearly understand the specific reason or reasons that affect teacher attrition in their schools. The challenge school administrators were experiencing with teacher attrition was explored to help them identify strategies to decrease teacher attrition in their schools.

In Chapter 2, I provide the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and key variables and concepts related to the literature. The literature search strategy lists the library databases and search engines, the terms used to identify the study, and the process to explain how the terms were used. Lastly, I provide a summary and conclusion of the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The research articles used in Chapter 2 were gathered using the Walden University library database and Google Scholar. The search databases included EBSCO Host, ERIC, Education Source, Expanded Academic ASAP, Google Scholar, Social Sciences Citation Index, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Complementary Index, SAGE Journals, Science Direct, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Academic Search Complete, Research Starters, Learning Policy Institute, and Taylor and Francis. The articles in this literature review were peer reviewed and published within the last 5 years. Research dissertations were used for Maslow's hierarchy of needs and future recommended research. The key search terms used included *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*, *teacher attrition*, *school administrators*, *teachers*, *teacher retention*, *teacher turnover*, *large city school district*, and *urban schools*. The iterative search process

included the first terms of *teacher attrition* and *large city school districts*. The second term was *school administrators*, and the third term was *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. While researching Walden University's library database, I used the Boolean search function while using the operators of *AND* and *OR*. Some of the Boolean searches that produced results were *teacher attrition* and *school administrators*, *large city school districts* and *school administrators*, and *teacher turnover* and *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. These functions provided me with various resources that supported teacher retention, teacher turnover, and urban schools.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory of human motivation, which has five categories of needs that provide explanations for human motivation and determination: (a) physiological, (b) safety and security, (c) love and belonging, (d) self-esteem, and (e) self-actualization. The physiological need is the need for bodily maintenance and survival, such as sleep, food, and shelter. Safety and security is the need for safety from any physical and emotional harm. Love and belonging is the need for social and intimate relationships. Self-esteem is the need to gain respect and recognition from others. Finally, self-actualization is the need for growth and development and finding one's purpose in life.

Maslow continued to evolve the hierarchy of needs by dividing the needs into two groups: deficiency needs and growth needs. The deficiency needs are physiological, security, social, and self-esteem. The growth needs are cognitive, aesthetic, and self-

actualization. Maslow included cognitive and aesthetic as additional needs to support one's human growth and development. The cognitive need is to acquire, comprehend, and investigate one's environment. The aesthetic need is to value, pursue, and strive for balance in one's environment. Maslow shared that human motivation can be a combination of the needs met to fulfill the desired request of the individual.

Several researchers, such as Alfonso (2018) and Hammonds (2017), have used the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to study teacher motivation related to job satisfaction. Alfonso (2018) revealed that teacher job satisfaction increased when their basic needs were met. The basic needs of security allowed teachers to feel comfortable with their job security. The level of comfort was achieved through the leadership of school administrators. Hammonds (2017) identified that teacher satisfaction arrived through the opportunity of planning and collaborating with colleagues and school administrators. The opportunity for teachers to plan and collaborate with colleagues and school administrators demonstrates the social need, which is indicated by the feeling of belongingness to loved ones and colleagues (Maslow, 1948).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the selected conceptual framework for this study. A teacher's individual needs are related to human behavior, which builds on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors (Alfonso, 2018). The concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was developed by a psychologist named Ivan Pavlov, who experimented with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through classical conditioning (Repovich, 2018). Pavlov determined that motivation is fulfilled when human needs are satisfied. Some employees receive intrinsic motivation through a pleasant and ethically

sound work environment, learning while at work, or having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues (Froiland, 2017). Extrinsic motivation related to job satisfaction can include a desired salary, an increase in workers' performance, or enjoying the leadership style of school administrators (Froiland, 2017).

Maslow (1948) explained that the hierarchy of needs is an ongoing process that changes over time through a series of events. This process is similar to a teacher's career because the needs of that individual will vary. For instance, teachers experiencing a heavy workload or having an elevated level of stress could display that their needs are unmet. The example of teachers experiencing a heavy workload could show neglect in the teachers' cognitive needs. As previously explained, the cognitive need is to acquire, comprehend, and investigate one's environment. If the environment is hectic and chaotic, then teachers might not be successful in that environment. School administrators must recognize when teacher needs are unmet so that they can provide the necessary support and tools to allow teachers to be successful again. School administrators can analyze the environment and consult with teachers to identify their needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs applied to this study because it can provide explanations for teacher motivation and determination. Previous researchers concluded that some teachers leave their careers due to unmet needs within their schools (Olsen & Huang, 2018). Some examples of unmet needs can include not having enough evidence-based resources to support student learning, being in a hostile or aggressive school environment, or experiencing higher than average school administrator turnover, which can mean having to adjust to frequently new leadership styles (Levy, 2018; Moore,

2016). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this study might provide school administrators with insight into identifying strategies to retain teachers within their schools. Maslow's hierarchy of needs could be used as a map to guide school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition within their schools. An alternative benefit could be assisting school administrators in recognizing and finding innovative approaches to support teacher needs while increasing teacher retention. Lastly, this study could contribute to positive social change by suggesting changes to school policies that will decrease teacher attrition, especially in large urban public school districts.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

In the existing body of literature regarding teacher attrition, researchers have reported that teachers leave the profession for several reasons, such as feeling deprived of professional support from school administrators and school districts, feeling unheard as a professional, or being overwhelmed with work caseload (Raymond, 2018). Teacher attrition can occur when teachers do not feel invested in their current school setting or feel that their beliefs conflict with school policies (Glazer, 2018). Also, former teachers have reported they leave the profession if they are dissatisfied with the school's climate and culture, the salary, or not having opportunities to advance professionally (Kelchtermans, 2017; Young, 2018). Building on previous research, teacher attrition is a challenge for many school districts, especially in large urban public school districts.

Most previous studies were constructed using a methodological approach to qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach that allows researchers to learn

about the experiences, opinions, or perspectives of research participants on a particular subject matter (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This approach allows different researchers to examine teacher attrition using case studies, narrative research, or grounded theory.

For this literature review, factors regarding Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the working conditions in large urban public school districts, teacher job satisfaction, teacher attrition, the impact of teacher attrition on students, school administrator support, and school climate and school culture were provided as related to the study. The concepts were identified as common themes from previous research studies. Exploring these concepts is necessary to understand the problem addressed in this current study. Although the identified concepts were reviewed, what remained to be studied included obtaining additional views from school administrators in other large urban public school districts regarding teacher attrition.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory based on human motivation, directly affecting teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Teachers are motivated through the work environment, which can include teacher autonomy, genuine connection with colleagues, or effective collaboration (Shoshani & Eldor, 2016). Teachers who feel welcomed and dedicated to the school team and school community might have a higher level of motivation. As related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, teachers who have positive emotions regarding their careers are more likely to be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated than teachers dissatisfied with their careers.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can directly affect teacher job satisfaction through teacher autonomy, collaboration, the working environment, and support from school administrators (Hammonds, 2017). Teacher autonomy refers to teachers' independence in what and how they teach students (Fisher & Royster, 2016). Collaboration refers to teachers' positive working partnership with other colleagues in the field (Hammonds, 2017). The working environment refers to whether the school climate and culture promote support and encouragement to allow teachers to work and learn together (Shoshani & Eldor, 2016). In various studies, researchers have found that teachers who are motivated, receive support from school administrators, and have their job satisfaction fulfilled are more likely to stay within the teaching profession than unsatisfied teachers (Green & Muñoz, 2016; Hammonds, 2017). School administrators can apply Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a vehicle to meet teacher job satisfaction needs throughout their careers. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used as a guideline to shape how teacher motivation can increase over time.

In a teacher's career, the level of needs can change over time (Fisher & Royster, 2016). For example, the physiological need as a first-year teacher can be providing that teacher with resources such as school supplies, working classroom equipment, or updated curriculums. In contrast, the physiological need for a veteran teacher can be attending professional development tailored for the job duties. Furthermore, a first-year teacher's need for love and belonging can be receiving mentoring support to enhance their teaching skills, whereas a veteran teacher might want to be more involved with the school community. Teacher needs cannot be compared because many factors, such as age and

gender, can directly affect their level of needs according to job satisfaction (Green & Muñoz, 2016). School administrators should connect with their teachers to identify the required resources to help fulfill their needs. The fulfillment of needs for a teacher might change according to the working conditions of a school, especially for a school in a large urban public school district.

Working conditions in large urban public school districts

Large urban public school districts are areas where the city population has at least 250,000 residents (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Large urban public school districts provide educational services to students in primary and secondary grade levels. The classification of large urban school districts includes a high concentration of students from low-income backgrounds who are on free and/or reduced lunch, a high rate of minority groups, or a high proportion of students who are limited in English proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Large urban public school districts differ from rural and suburban school districts for the following reasons: rural school districts fall outside the metropolitan definition of having a city population of at least 250,000 residents, and suburban school districts tend to have a high percentage of White students who are not on free and/or reduced lunch and have schools that are highly ranked academically throughout the district (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017).

Some of the reasons teachers leave suburban, urban, or rural public school districts include family changes, pregnancies, or health concerns (Thompson, 2018); however, about 50% of teachers leave large urban school districts (Green & Muñoz, 2016). Additional reasons that teachers leave urban public school districts may include

having large class sizes, the school's location, the student demographics, the type of school (public or charter), and the working condition of the school environment (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Some large urban public school districts experience poverty, violence, and crime within the school community, which causes teacher attrition. Living and working in a large urban public school district experiencing poverty, violence, and crime could impact teachers and students. Teachers working in a large urban public school district can have multiple roles, such as being a facilitator, counselor, or parent to the students, which can add to their required job duties (Brittian, 2018). Students living in high-poverty areas can be impacted by having emotional issues, academically performing below grade level, or being at a higher risk of dropping out of school (Adams & Mrug, 2019). Some of these reasons could cause teachers to be ill-prepared to work in large urban public school districts.

Teachers who are ill-prepared to work in large urban public school districts might have a preservice experience that does not reflect the real working environment of an urban school (Kuriloff et al., 2019). Most teachers obtain their preservice teacher experience in higher-performing schools, which might differ from schools in large urban public school districts where they may be assigned (Kuriloff et al., 2019). Comparatively, some teachers leave urban schools due to their racial identity and that of the students. If the teacher does not racially identify with the students, it might create a disconnect between the teacher and students (Olsen & Huang, 2018). This experience might be frustrating for some teachers because of the lack of familiarity with the school setting; thus, creating teacher attrition.

Some large urban public school districts face teacher attrition from the lack of available resources to support student learning (Green & Muñoz, 2016). Some of those resources can include outdated instructional curriculum, the lack of having qualified teachers, or the lack of evidence-based intervention programs to promote student learning (Schwartz et al., 2019). Green and Muñoz (2016) expressed that the lack of available resources such as instructional material and evidence-based interventions creates complexity while working with students. Teachers might not have success with student achievement if the means to support student learning are limited. The lack of available resources might cause teachers to leave urban public schools because of the limited access to resources. If there is a lack of resources to support student learning or a lack of adequate instruction from qualified teachers, then the means to support student achievement is limited (Schwartz et al., 2019). The lack of resources and instruction can be stressful for many teachers working in large urban public school districts.

The working condition of large urban public school districts can be one factor regarding teacher attrition. Teachers should receive adequate training to reflect what they might experience while working in an urban school (White et al., 2017). Some of the training can include dealing and understanding how to work with students and their trauma (Hernández, 2017), learning the effects of community violence on students (Adams & Mrug, 2019), or understanding how student learning is affected by living in an urban city (Wronowski, 2018). The training might help school administrators decrease teacher attrition while promoting teacher job satisfaction and a positive school climate and culture.

Teacher job satisfaction

In many research studies, teacher job satisfaction is a commonly reported theme from current and former teachers (García Torres, 2019). Teacher job satisfaction can include the support of school leadership, inclusion in professional communities, and having teacher autonomy (Ansley et al., 2019). Additional reports show that teachers are satisfied with their work when their stress level is low and feel included in their school (Ford et al., 2018). On the contrary, if teachers are dissatisfied with their working environment, there can be increased teacher absences and teacher effectiveness (Ford et al., 2018). A teacher's emotional reaction to the working environment can be a crucial indicator in identifying whether that individual is satisfied with the job. Brittian (2018) stated that school administrators could encourage teacher job satisfaction by checking in on teachers' safety and well-being, providing professional development, or creating collaborative professional learning communities.

Teacher job satisfaction is essential because a teacher's happiness can play a role in the school's effectiveness and efficiency (Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). Teacher happiness can be essential for school administrators because they can use teachers' emotional reactions to pinpoint their desired needs. Teachers are more satisfied at work when stress is low and interpersonal relationships are productive and constructive (Ansley et al., 2019). Olsen and Huang (2018) shared that school administrators should explore different strategies to promote a favorable working environment. For this reason, school administrators can use the information about teacher job satisfaction to identify

whether the working conditions of their schools are affecting the happiness of teachers. This process might decrease the risk of teachers experiencing teacher burnout.

One definition of teacher burnout is teachers failing to perform all job duties adequately (Bryan, 2018). Teacher burnout can reduce personal accomplishments, create a lack of motivation, or be emotionally and physically exhausting (Caruso, 2019). Teacher burnout can impact work performance and student achievement, which can cause a teacher to leave the teaching profession. Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) and Ansley et al. (2019) expressed that some teachers leave because of the school environment and not because of the students. For instance, some teachers feel the pressure of meeting targeted state academic assessments, are not supported at work by school administrators or colleagues, or they deal with excessive school policies and rules (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). Some teachers with advanced degrees and teachers who teach specific subjects such as math, science, and special education experience teacher burnout because of the workload, which can cause teachers to leave the profession (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). For example, the workload can look like having a large caseload of students on various academic levels with differentiated work, having an unhealthy parent-teacher relationship, or feeling uncommitted to the job (Molero Jurado et al., 2019). School administrators can benefit from finding to reduce teacher burnout. The possible strategies might help increase teacher job satisfaction and decrease teacher attrition.

Teacher attrition

Teacher attrition has been an ongoing issue nationally and internationally since the early 1980s (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Some international countries experiencing higher

than average teacher attrition include countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Weldon, 2018). Although the teacher attrition for each country may vary, the data displays that teacher attrition is a challenge for many school districts.

Teacher attrition creates problems for many schools and can occur in many forms, such as when a teacher leaves the teaching profession altogether (Evans, 2017) or when teachers leave their current school (Bryan, 2018). Some teachers will leave their current school if they are inadequately prepared to work in their school environment, especially in large urban public schools. Some large urban public schools might deal with barriers such as lack of funding for school resources, an increase in the achievement gap compared to suburban or rural public schools, or dealing with neighborhood violence (Adams & Mrug, 2019). These barriers might cause a teacher to leave the school setting, which in turn creates teacher attrition. Another problem with teacher attrition is the cost of replacing teachers for some school districts (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2018). The expense of replacing teachers could interfere with the individual school budget, which might reduce the funds to obtain necessary school resources. Additionally, the interference with the school budget could reduce the number of qualified teachers that a school administrator could hire.

The high cost of replacing teachers can become a challenge to retain qualified teachers. A qualified teacher is an individual who has received at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited program and has passed state certification exams (Myers, 2017). The challenge of retaining qualified teachers can result in unqualified teachers entering the classroom. The lack of experience from an unqualified teacher can result in

lower student achievement where students can miss target grade-level academic goals or regress in academics altogether (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2018). The lack of qualified teachers can impact students in various ways, such as in academics, student learning, or student engagement (Frenzel et al., 2018).

The impact of teacher attrition on students

Through various research studies, it is known that teacher attrition can have adverse effects on students, especially students who attend schools in large urban public school districts (Ansley et al., 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). About 50% of teachers leave large urban public school districts because of the demands of working in high-poverty areas (Robinson, 2018). Some high-poverty areas might have students living in neighborhoods experiencing community violence, economic disadvantages, or other obstacles (Ansley et al., 2019). The neighborhood context, such as the neighborhood's safety and quality, can shape the students' experience (Wolf et al., 2017). The neighborhood experience of the students can impact them in the school setting by having low levels of school readiness, adverse health concerns, or distressed classroom behaviors (Wolf et al., 2017).

Most students who attend schools in large urban public school districts tend to live in high-poverty areas. Some of the schools in high-poverty areas are staffed with teachers who are inexperienced, unqualified, or do not racially and culturally identify with the students. Some teachers might have received their degrees from less competitive teacher programs, failed licensure exams, or have no teaching experience (Fuller et al., 2017). Being an inexperienced or unqualified teacher in an urban public school might add

to educational disadvantages for students who live in high-poverty areas (Campoli, 2017). Some educational disadvantages can include students who are not academically prepared to attend high-performing schools (Lampert et al., 2020), a decline in student achievement (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2018), or having fewer material resources for learning (Smith et al., 2016). When there is a high percentage of teachers leaving urban public schools, it might impact the students by having increased class sizes, having difficulties with instructional continuity, or offering fewer classes, such as honors and advanced placement courses, as compared to suburban and rural public schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). This can be very challenging for students living in high-poverty areas and teachers who work in urban public schools. Therefore, some of these issues can cause teachers to leave urban public schools, creating teacher attrition that could impact the students.

School administrator support

Several researchers have concluded that teacher attrition occurs when teachers feel dissatisfied with salary, are not successful with student achievement, or are not motivated at their workplace (Holmes et al., 2019; Towers & Maguire, 2017). In addition to those factors, school administrator support has been recognized as a top factor for teacher attrition (Young, 2018). The importance of school administrators recognizing their leadership abilities can impact teacher attrition.

School administrators can be identified as the head of school, principal, or assistant principal within a public or private institution (Craig, 2019). As the school leaders, they support the day-to-day operations of a school, which can include creating

and maintaining the school budget, recruiting staff, or leading schools to high academic standards (Gonzalez, 2017). School administrators are viewed as individuals who provide direction and influence staff to achieve their personal and professional goals. Evans (2017) shared that school administrators who foster a collaborative school culture tend to have lower teacher attrition. The demonstration of effective organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills from school administrators can make teachers feel supported, especially from novice teachers (Evans, 2017). Novice teachers can be individuals who have entered their first year in the teaching profession or are teaching a new subject for the first time (Gholam, 2018).

Some reasons for teacher attrition are linked to school administrator support (Olsen & Huang, 2018). In 2017, 40% of teachers reported that they left their schools because of the lack of support from school administrators (Papay et al., 2017). Holmes et al. (2019) shared that teachers leave schools because of ineffective school administrators. One description of an ineffective school administrator is someone who does not have precise control of the school, does not provide support to the school staff, or does not have a solid foundation to operate a school (Holmes et al., 2019). As related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, having an ineffective school administrator could affect a teacher's need for self-actualization. Self-actualization is the need for an individual's growth and development according to that person's gifts and talents (Maslow, 1948). If school administrators are not providing support for teachers, then it is a possibility that the need for growth is unfulfilled.

Lack of school administrator support can lead to a decrease in job satisfaction. The decrease in job satisfaction may create other issues such as a lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, lack of self-efficacy to support positive outcomes, or lack of worker performance, which can cause a teacher to leave (Repovich, 2018). A decrease in job satisfaction can occur when teachers feel isolated and secluded from receiving support from school administrators (Bonato, 2019). The decrease in job satisfaction could decline student achievement as teachers might become tired or burnout from the job duties. Job satisfaction is extremely critical for many schools, especially in high-poverty schools, where teacher attrition is a concern. For this reason, school administrator support is an essential component of teacher job satisfaction.

Current and former teachers shared through research studies that school administrators are leaders who can promote and establish a school culture and school climate that is geared towards safety and learning (Walent, 2018). An effective school administrator would have a vision and direction aligned with the school's goals (Walent, 2018). Some teachers are willing to remain in the career if school administrators foster appreciation to the staff, including providing feedback, mentoring, or setting goals (Morettini, 2016). Additionally, teachers respected school administrators who promoted personal and professional development, recognized staff performance, or provided rewards to the staff (Wronowski, 2018; Young, 2018). In different research studies, it was concluded that schools with effective leaders tend to have fewer discipline problems and increased self-efficacy in teachers. Schools operating through the leadership of

effective school administrators is ideal because it might cause teacher attrition to decrease.

School climate and school culture

School climate and school culture can be interchangeable; however, school climate and school culture have different definitions. One definition of school climate is the school's safety, engagement, and environment (VanLone et al., 2019). Safety refers to the social, emotional, and physical aspect of all students within the school, engagement refers to the relationships of the school community, which includes the students, parents, school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders, and the environment refers to the physical and instructional layout of the school (VanLone et al., 2019). One definition of school culture refers to the school community's beliefs, practices, values, and actions (Fletcher et al., 2019). Although school climate and school culture have different definitions, any school setting should have both concepts.

School climate and school culture can affect teacher attrition. If teachers do not feel supported or feel they do not belong to the school community, they are more than likely to leave the school (Dahlkamp et al., 2017). With the increase of school diversity and minority populations, it can be meaningful for school administrators to allocate ways to keep a collective and positive school climate and school culture. This process can include allowing teachers to be autonomous with their classes, providing useful and constructive feedback to teachers, or challenging and mitigating biases and prejudices that do not serve in the daily work of the school (Minkos et al., 2017). Zahed-Babelan et

al. (2019) stated that creating a collective effort to promote a positive school climate and culture can lead to higher teacher retention and lower teacher attrition.

School administrators are the best people to shape a positive and supportive school climate and culture (Harris, 2018). School administrators can shape an encouraging school climate and school culture by having the principles of trust, respect, and professionalism established for all school community members (Niehoff, 2019). Building a healthy system of support and creating a guideline for all school community members to adhere to can aid school administrators in retaining teachers (Castro et al., 2018). Advocating for a positive and supportive school climate and culture and creating a platform to maintain the process might decrease teacher attrition, which can be favorable for school administrators.

Different sources have concluded that teacher attrition is a concern for many school districts, some sources state otherwise. After the early 2000s, there was a decrease in teachers leaving the profession compared to the previous years (Aldeman, 2017). Reported data for teacher attrition omitted private school teachers who are twice as likely to leave private schools than public school teachers (Aldeman, 2017). Antonucci (2017) believes that it is unfair for the United States to compare teacher attrition to Finland and Singapore since those countries have a smaller population than the United States. Nonetheless, teacher attrition continues to be a topic of study for different researchers.

Summary and Conclusions

Since the 1980s, researchers are still addressing issues related to teacher attrition (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016). Previous research has revealed that large urban public

school districts face higher teacher attrition rates than suburban and rural public school districts. Approximately 40% to 50% of teachers leave schools because they feel that they have not been successful with student achievement, cannot relate to the racial and cultural background of the school's population, and have not received encouragement from colleagues (Papay et al., 2017). Additional issues include lack of support from school administrators, low salary wages, insufficient resources for student achievement, or heavy workloads.

Most of the studies conducted have focused on teachers and their reasons for leaving the teaching profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teacher job satisfaction and the school's working environment, including school climate and culture, can affect a teacher's decision to stay or leave a school. Some researchers, such as Walent (2018) and Fisher and Royster (2016), have identified how teachers' needs related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs have affected their decision to stay or leave a school. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the identified conceptual framework for this study because it addressed human needs and motivation. There are five categories of human needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety and security, (c) love and belonging, (d) self-esteem, and (e) self-actualization. Each need has a category of items that describe where people might be in their lives.

This information can be important for school administrators because they can assist teachers who might need support with intrinsic or extrinsic motivation and support in recognizing the personal or professional needs that teachers might want to accomplish. Human motivation influences an individual's actions to move intrinsically and

extrinsically (Alfonso, 2018). However, additional research was necessary to fill in the gap of identifying and understanding the perspective of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools in large urban public school districts. In this study, I explored the reasons for teacher attrition so that school administrators can develop approaches that could decrease teacher attrition in their schools.

The literature in Chapter 2 supported the qualitative research methods for Chapter 3. In Chapter 3, I expand on the qualitative research design and rationale, define and explain the role of the researcher, provide an in-depth description of the Methodology process, clarify and justify any issues with Trustworthiness, and expound on the ethical procedure of the study. School administrators participated in one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions to collect their perspectives regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools. The data collected is analyzed and explained to help fill in the gap in knowledge as related to teacher attrition in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. In Chapter 3, I expand on the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, the data analysis plan, issues related to trustworthiness and ethical procedures, and I conclude with a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

RQ1: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools?

RQ2: What strategies can school administrators use to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools?

The conceptual framework that aided this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which addresses human motivation and determination through five categories. Some teachers are more than likely to stay in their schools when their level of motivation, job satisfaction, and opportunity to collaborate are met (Hammonds, 2017). Alfonso (2018) stated that teachers whose basic needs are met, such as job security and having access to school supplies, could increase their motivation to stay in their schools. Froiland (2017) explained that working in a pleasant environment can increase teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Therefore, some teachers will leave or stay in a school, depending on their needs.

The research tradition selected for this study was a basic qualitative study because school administrators constructed their meaning and interpreted their experiences regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools. Through the research questions, I explored how school administrators perceive the reasons for teacher attrition and developed approaches to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools. The research tradition of a basic qualitative study aligned with this study because individuals sought to understand and develop meaning about their experiences in the world they lived and worked in (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A researcher who selects a basic qualitative study is interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, construct their worldviews, and define their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). However, other traditional methods can be considered to conduct research studies.

Other qualitative research traditions considered include phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and case studies. A researcher who selects a phenomenology study is interested in collecting data from several individuals who share a common phenomenon and wants to focus on the commonalities the individuals experience through the phenomenon; an ethnography study is focused on culture-sharing groups to examine, describe, and interpret patterns of values, behaviors, and beliefs; grounded theory is used to build on previous theory and focus on a process that has occurred over time; a narrative inquiry uses stories shared from people about their daily lives as data; and a case study involves investigating a phenomenon that cannot be separate from a case (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A basic qualitative study was appropriate for this study because the research participants could share their perspectives regarding the reasons for teacher attrition. A phenomenology study was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore an unusual phenomenon that occurred with the participants. Although teacher attrition is a phenomenon, it is not unusual in education. An ethnography study was inappropriate because I did not observe teachers' behaviors in the school setting. I interviewed school administrators to obtain their perspectives regarding teacher attrition. A grounded theory study is used to focus on developing a theory from previous theories, which was not the purpose of this study. A narrative inquiry study uses personal stories to collect and obtain data which was also not the purpose of this study. Lastly, a case study was not appropriate because the focus was to attain a variety of perspectives from school administrators in different large urban public school districts.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I conducted individual open-ended interviews with school administrators from various large urban public school districts in the United States. As the researcher, my role in this study was conducting the interviews and interpreting and analyzing the data. My professional relationship with the participants was as an educator colleague. I am a school counselor who did not work in the same school as the participants, and I did not hold any supervisory position over the participants. I managed any researcher biases by writing memos throughout the research process. Writing memos throughout the research process allows a researcher to have an audit trail. An audit trail is a detailed log of a researcher's steps about data collection, development of categories,

and decisions about the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In the memos, I wrote reflections, questions, and decisions about the data collection process, ensuring consistency and dependability. Additionally, I managed researcher biases by member checking to ensure that all data collected were accurate. Member checking allows the research participants and the researcher to review any information from the interviews (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Methodology

The chosen methodology for this study was a basic qualitative study.

Participant Selection

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that having various perspectives for qualitative research can yield different results because there is no suggested sample size for qualitative studies. The sample size for this study was eight school administrators who work in various large urban public school districts in the United States. The sampling strategy was purposive sampling because purposive sampling determines the essential selection criteria. The criteria included school administrators who work in public traditional or charter schools for either elementary, middle, or high school. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that having an intentional sample will allow the researcher to receive the best information from the participants. I used criterion-based logic and included individuals who have been school administrators for at least 2 years. Current and former school administrators were included to provide their perspectives from their experiences. Teachers and individuals becoming school administrators were omitted because this study was specific to school administrators. I sought approval from the Institutional

Review Board (IRB) to conduct my study. Once IRB approval was received, I sought school administrators through Walden University's participant pool via an email posting. Then, I contacted the school administrators after receiving their approval to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Two research questions guided this study. RQ1 asked for school administrators' perspectives about teacher attrition, and RQ2 asked for strategies to help decrease teacher attrition. The data for this study were collected through interviews to explore school administrators' perspectives regarding teacher attrition. I conducted semistructured interviews with school administrators whose schools were experiencing teacher attrition. The interview questions were developed from the literature sources.

I developed an interview protocol that guided the interview questions through probing and building on the conversation with the research participants. The purpose of the interview protocol was to ensure the research questions yielded data that addressed the problem and purpose of the study. The interview questions consisted of nine open-ended questions to guide and further probe responses. Interview Questions 1–4 allowed the participants to provide their professional background regarding their years of service as school administrators and teachers. Interview Questions 5 and 7 focused on RQ1 related to teacher attrition. Interview Questions 6, 8, and 9 focused on RQ2, which asked the participants to name strategies that school administrators might use to address teacher attrition in their schools. Data collection continued until saturation was reached.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that researchers purposefully identify participants or sites for their study to yield the best results. For this study, the preselection procedures included eight school administrators in various geographical locations in the United States whose schools might have experienced teacher attrition. With IRB approval from Walden University, I contacted the selected school administrators via email. I emailed the participants a letter asking for their participation that included a description of the study and the IRB requirements for informed consent regarding the study. The letter of consent included the background of the study, procedures to participate in the study, the risks and benefits, and the procedure for protecting the participant's privacy. I provided the participants with information about the interview, such as the interview questions, the approximate length of the interview, and the agreement to be audio-recorded. The participants provided consent via email.

The interviews took place via videoconferences that were audio-recorded and lasted approximately 45 minutes for each participant. The interviews took place at a convenient time for each participant. At the end of each interview, I requested contact information from the participants to provide them with a copy of their transcription for member checking. The participants exited the study once their final analysis of member checking was accurate and complete. As a follow-up plan, if I did not reach the desired number of participants during the initial selection, I would have continued to recruit through the Walden University participant pool to meet the study criteria. I would have followed the original protocol to contact additional school administrators. However, I did

not have to continue to recruit as I reached the desired amount as stated in the consent form.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis requires multiple steps to help a researcher make the most sense of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) explained data analysis as an interconnected and spiral process of analyzing data, including organizing, coding, and representing the data. The steps involved in analyzing data also include gathering and reviewing the data collected. I began the data analysis process by organizing the data obtained from the interviews in a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software named NVivo. NVivo can export files, write memos, transcribe audio, create topics, and includes a research journal. A journal allowed me to track my thoughts throughout the research process. I reflected on my experiences regarding the interview and the participants' reactions to the interview questions. I was able to create codes and themes within NVivo. I reviewed a transcript approximately six times before finalizing the results of the data. The instances included reviewing the transcripts, writing memos, creating initial codes, reviewing the initial codes for patterns, reorganizing the new codes, and identifying the themes. Some of the initial codes included terms such as *advancement opportunities*, *extensive workload*, and *teacher efficacy*.

The initial step in analyzing data using NVivo included reviewing the problem statement and research questions. After reviewing the problem statement and research questions, I read all transcripts of the interviews and wrote memos about each interview. To receive the transcripts for the interviews, I audio-recorded all videoconferencing

interviews and transferred the recordings into NVivo. I wrote the key issues summarized from the interviews to create initial codes in my research journal. The initial codes included data that were expected, surprising, or interesting patterns and were categorized and labeled with a term. When the initial codes were created, I generated descriptions of actual accounts of information and reviewed the transcripts for patterns and broad topic areas. After reviewing the transcripts for patterns, I updated the codes by creating nodes. Nodes are holding containers for the broad topic areas. The broad topic areas created four themes and five subthemes as major findings.

After organizing the themes, I represented the data using diagrams such as figures and tables to visualize the themes. This information included detailed discussions about themes, perspectives, and interconnecting themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I created a table that provided a visual representation of the coding process and a figure that displayed the themes and subthemes related to the research questions. Lastly, I interpreted the data and provided an analysis of the interpretation. The interpretation included the overall summary of the findings, comparing the findings to the literature, stating the findings' limitations, and recommending future research. While analyzing and interpreting the data, there were no discrepant cases. To finalize the data analysis process, I reviewed all the data collected with the conceptual framework for this study to support the results.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness has five criteria to reduce risks in a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. Credibility refers to the

certainty of the research results. Transferability refers to the research results being transferred to other settings. Dependability refers to the stability of research findings over time. Confirmability confirms the research findings by other researchers based on the original data. Lastly, reflexivity is the process of self-reflection of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Triangulation and peer review can be used to establish credibility. Member checking and rich, thick descriptions can be contributors to establish credibility. Triangulation is used to examine data from the participants' perspectives. Peer review is the process of checking a researcher's work from another researcher in the same field. Member checking allows the participants to review the final report of the data to check for accuracy. Rich, thick descriptions provide the reader with a shared study experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, I used two strategies: member checking and peer review to check for accuracy. When all interviews were coded and analyzed, I wrote the final data analysis, including the themes and subthemes. I provided each participant with a copy of their transcript and the results of the study for their review. For member checking, the participants had the opportunity to have a follow-up session to share additional insights on the analysis.

For the peer review, I used an external auditor to check for accuracy. A peer review involves using someone to review the study and ask questions to the researcher about the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This process allows a researcher to determine whether the study relates to other people. An external auditor is an individual who is unfamiliar with the study and provides an objective overview of the study

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This process confirms whether the study is free of researcher biases and that the results connect with the purpose of the study. I used peer review to ensure that my study provided quality information, built on the knowledge regarding teacher attrition, and was original. The peer review process allowed me to determine the credibility of the study.

Transferability implies that the study results can be applied to other studies when a researcher has provided enough information related to the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The information obtained from the study's results can allow other researchers to transfer the concept to other contexts or settings. To ensure transferability, I provided detailed descriptions of the research problem, design, and participants. This information can allow other researchers to visualize the study's overall purpose, including the study's limitations. The detailed descriptions for each component can determine where the information could be applied to other researchers' studies.

Dependability relates to the trustworthiness of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that qualitative research needs to be true for readers, practitioners, and researchers to feel confident about the study. Therefore, I provided details about the procedures of the study. Throughout the study, the participants had the opportunity to review and provide additional insight into their responses for accuracy. I remained objective, honest, and truthful when conducting and transcribing the interviews. I wrote memos after each interview to reflect on any biases that I might have regarding the data, my experiences during the interviews, and how the participants

responded to the interview questions. Each research process step was outlined with details to support the study's stability and ensure confirmability.

Confirmability allows other researchers to confirm whether the data collected from the study were precise from the detailed procedures of the study. To determine confirmability, I used the strategy of intracoder reliability, where I coded the data on multiple occurrences. This process allowed me to refine and analyze the data to chunk it into categories, themes, and subthemes. Lastly, reflexivity refers to how the researcher's background, which includes culture, experiences, and biases, can affect the interpretation of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I clarified my biases by sharing my personal experiences about the study and how my interpretations could affect the results. However, I emphasized that the results of the study were developed through the data collected from the participants. I kept a journal to log my interpretations and compare those notes with the memos written in NVivo.

Ethical Procedures

Once IRB approved this study, I began the data collection process. The approval for this study included the selection of the participants, the invitation for participants, informed consent, and the research design. The invitation included the informed consent, the purpose of the study, the reason for the selection, and the interview protocol. The informed consent outlined the rights of the participants, the opportunity to withdraw from the study, and the treatment of the data. Each participant had the right to remain confidential and be given a pseudonym for this study. Additionally, the participants knew the study's risks and benefits as outlined in the consent form. Lastly, the participants

understood that access to data would be available to the researcher and committee members, be stored in a password-protected computer, and discarded after 5 years per the university's policy.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I outlined the research design, my role in this study, and the participation selection. I explained the instrument used to collect data, the process to recruit the participants, and how the data were analyzed. I clarified the trustworthiness and the ethical procedures in the study. This study was a basic qualitative study where I conducted interviews to collect data. I used an interview protocol and NVivo to collect and analyze the data. I used a researcher journal to notate my observations and feelings regarding the study. With approval from IRB, I recruited the participants through Walden University's participant pool and provided the participants with the outline of the study. I used various strategies such as member checking, peer review, and an external auditor to ensure trustworthiness. Upon completion of all interviews and data collection, the result of this study is described in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. The following research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

RQ1: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools?

RQ2: What strategies can school administrators use to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools?

Chapter 4 includes the setting, data collection, data analysis, results, evidence of trustworthiness, and summary regarding this study. The setting includes any conditions that might have influenced the participants' experiences and demographics relevant to the study. I provide detailed information regarding the data collection and analysis process, including collecting and recording the data. Additionally, I address each research question by presenting data to support the findings in the results section. In evidence of trustworthiness, I discuss any implementations or adjustments made for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in this study. Lastly, Chapter 4 is concluded with a summary and a transition to Chapter 5.

Setting

The participants in this study were eight school administrators who were either principals or assistant principals. The participants worked in various large urban public school districts in the United States. The participants were identified as P1 for Participant

1, P2 for Participant 2, etc. Table 1 indicates the demographics of the participants. There were no organizational conditions that influenced the participants' experience in this study. All participants agreed to complete their interview through videoconferencing, as stated in the letter of invitation. However, there were changes to the criteria for participation selection as there were recruitment challenges. The original criteria included having at least 5 years of school administration experience and having teacher attrition at or above 8%, the national teacher attrition rate. I updated the criteria by eliminating the teacher attrition rate and changing the experience requirement to at least 2 years.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participants	Gender	Race	Position	Experience (years)
1	Female	African American	Assistant principal	2
2	Male	African American	Principal	13
3	Female	African American	Assistant principal	8
4	Female	African American	Principal	4
5	Male	African American	Assistant principal	5
6	Female	African American	Principal	20
7	Female	African American	Assistant principal	3
8	Female	African American	Assistant principal	7

Data Collection

After receiving Walden University's IRB approval, I collected data by interviewing eight school administrators. The interviews took place via videoconferencing and lasted for 45 minutes. I used an interview protocol that consisted of nine questions, and the videoconferences were recorded to ensure all responses were captured. No variations or unusual circumstances were encountered during the data collection.

Data Analysis

Analyzing data includes organizing, coding, and representing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were collected through the responses of the participants regarding their perspectives about teacher attrition. There were multiple steps taken to analyze the data in this study. After completing all interviews, the first step was developing deductive codes, which are initial codes developed after examining the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I created the initial codes according to Interview Questions 5–9 by highlighting key terms. There were over 16 initial codes that included key terms such as *qualified teachers*, *coaching*, and *surveys.*

Additionally, inductive codes were developed to complete the three cycles of the open coding process. The first cycle of the open coding process included identifying important words aligned with the research questions and framework. Some of those terms were *lack of support, performance pressure*, and *coaching*. The second cycle of the open coding process was to group the terms into different categories. The categories were *support with the workload, communication, job satisfaction, salary and benefits,* and *climate and culture.* The third cycle of the open coding process was axial coding, where the first and second cycles are linked together to form themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). There were two themes for RQ1: relationship *building* and *teacher motivation*. Additionally, there were two themes for RQ2, *positive school climate and culture* and *aligned professional development*. Table 2 provides the overview of the data analysis process. While analyzing and interpreting the data, there were no discrepant cases.

Table 2

Data Analysis Process

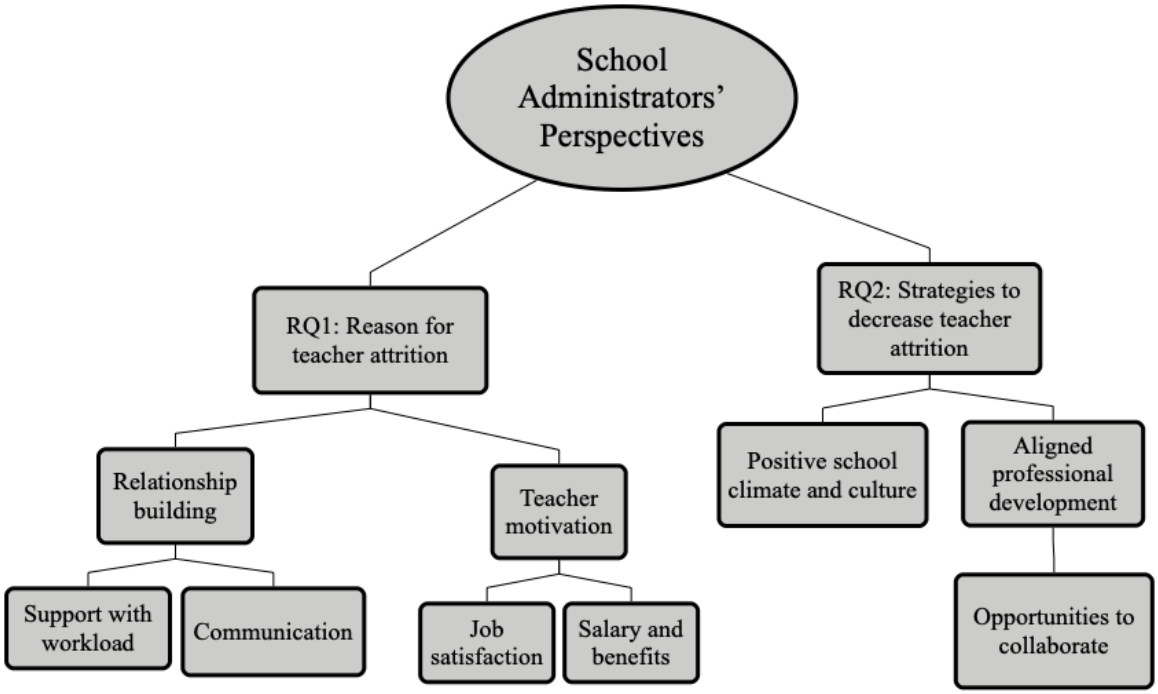
First cycle coding	Second cycle coding	Third cycle coding
Lack of support Having multiple building leaders Having support with students Relationship building	Support with workload	Relationship building
Start with mindset and teacher efficacy Having low teacher and student efficacy Praise Two-way dialogue Mentors/mentees No communication or having communication	Communication	Relationship building
Personal and professional goals are unmet Lack of clarity around expectations Evaluations are objective Workload can be extensive Performance pressure from administrators and school district Advancement opportunities are limited Teacher turnover at the end of the year Teacher surveys Trends on evaluations Surveys to gauge retention	Job satisfaction	Teacher motivation
Lack of pay and competitive benefits Promote for higher pay	Salary and Benefits	Teacher motivation
Building a positive climate and culture Having a positive climate and culture Understanding the dynamics of the school	Climate and Culture	Positive school climate and culture
Having professional learning communities Hiring unqualified teachers Participating in unaligned professional development Having weekly school-wide professional development Participating in mentor programs Having weekly coaching/coteaching, observations, and feedback meetings Soliciting feedback from staff Modeling expectations	Opportunities to collaborate	Aligned professional development

Results

The results of this study were produced from data collected in interviews with eight school administrators. According to the two research questions, the data formed four themes and five subthemes. RQ1 was asked seeking school administrators' perspectives regarding teacher attrition within their schools. RQ2 was asked to identify strategies that can support school administrators in decreasing teacher attrition in their schools. After analyzing the data gained from the interviews, subthemes were generated. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the themes for the two research questions for this study.

Figure 1

Overall themes of the Research Questions



Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools? This question led to interview questions that allowed the participants to discuss their views about what creates teacher attrition in their schools. The overall themes that derived from the responses included relationship building and teacher motivation.

Relationship Building

The participants recognized that relationship building and teacher motivation are important factors to retain teachers. Relationship building looks like having open two-way dialogue, praising teachers' performance, providing constructive feedback consistently, and learning the needs of teachers. Participant 5 stated,

> I make it a point as part of my daily walkthrough to speak to every staff member in the building. The daily walkthroughs allow me to hear many of their concerns and issues that are important to them. It also allows me an opportunity to work with other administrators to fix some of the issues that teachers have expressed to me.

Participant 7 said, "I praise teachers every time they use any evidence-based practices that we discuss." Participant 3 was the only school administrator who mentioned that her school did not experience teacher attrition because she prioritized relationship building within the school's climate and culture. Additionally, participants recognized that relationship building included supporting teachers with their workload and understanding that communication is essential.

Workload Support. Workload support was a subtheme that appeared under relationship building. The participants recognized that teachers who receive support with their workload are more satisfied with their job duties. Workload support was identified as teachers having clear expectations and objectives from school administrators, school administrators assisting with student needs beyond the teacher's control, and teachers receiving assistance to fulfill their professional and personal goals. The participants noticed that teachers were willing to participate more in professional development, open to receiving constructive feedback, and eager to seek leadership opportunities. Additionally, the participants recognized that receiving workload support could increase teachers' job satisfaction creating a positive school climate and culture and increasing their motivation. Participant 2 said, "Workload is one of the reasons for teacher attrition in my school; however, I like to support my teachers by starting with their mindset and teacher efficacy. It allows me to see what is needed from me for them."

Communication. Communication was another subtheme that emerged under relationship building. Participant 2 said, "Praise and dialogue are two strategies that I use to build a positive school climate and culture. It allows me to communicate with the staff to learn what is needed from them." Participant 4 stated, "I listen to teachers to understand what they need and to learn how I can support them." Communication that is positive and open can be essential for school administrators because they learn about the wants and needs of their teachers. Additionally, communicating openly and positively could make teachers feel seen and valued within the working relationship.

Teacher motivation

Teacher motivation was the second theme for RQ1. The participants' responses regarding this question displayed that relationship building increases teachers' level of motivation, which can reduce teacher attrition. When teachers' level of motivation increases, their level of job satisfaction increases. Furthermore, teachers' motivation levels increase when they receive competitive salaries and benefits. Participant 5 said, "Compensation is also a major factor regarding teacher attrition. I try my hardest to advocate for higher pay. I believe that my teachers truly appreciate the efforts as my leadership team keeps them up to date about salary."

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was one subtheme under teacher motivation**.** When teachers are satisfied with their jobs, their level of motivation might increase, which would lead to advancement opportunities. Advancement opportunities can include leading and facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs), being a team lead, and being connected and promoted for leadership opportunities. Advancement opportunities allow teachers to be seen and heard, which can support their personal and professional needs. Participant 6 mentioned that sharing leadership opportunities with teachers can help decrease teacher attrition because they can assist with school decision-making. Participant 7 stated, "I actively chat with teachers about their goals and desires to promote teachers to seek advancement opportunities." School administrators could evaluate job satisfaction by using surveys throughout the school year. The surveys could include questions about the teacher's level of support engagement with school administrators and colleagues, the overall school's environment, or their feelings toward

advancement opportunities. In all, understanding teachers' level of job satisfaction could help decrease teacher attrition.

Salary and benefits. Salary and benefits were the second subthemes that emerged under teacher motivation. Salary and benefits are among the main reasons for teacher attrition; however, the participants recognized the importance of advocating for better pay for their teachers. Teachers who receive a reasonable salary are more than likely to stay in their schools than teachers who receive a less desirable salary. Participant 4 said, "School administrators should have consistent conversations with upper administrations regarding pay and benefits packages." Participant 5 stated, "Compensation is one factor that contributes to teacher attrition which is why it is important to advocate for higher pay." Participant 6 said, "Having a pay raise cycle could most likely keep teachers in schools." The participants explained the importance of having a competitive salary and benefits to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools. They stated that teachers are satisfied when paid well and benefit from support for their personal and professional goals. Additionally, Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6 mentioned that they noticed the change in their school's climate and culture when their teachers were satisfied with their salaries. In some instances, a competitive salary and benefits can retain teachers, especially if they are committed to their job and willing to make changes in their schools.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: What strategies can school administrators use to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools? This question led to interview questions that allowed the

participants to discuss strategies they have used or will use to support teacher retention in their schools. Two themes supported the participants' responses: having a positive school climate and culture and aligned professional development. All participants recognized that having a positive school climate and culture and aligned professional development could help decrease teacher attrition. The participants understood that teachers should feel safe while at work and have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues to learn and grow with each other.

Positive School Climate and Culture

The first theme for RQ2 is a positive school climate and culture. The overall response of the participants determined that teachers are satisfied with their job when the school's climate and culture is inviting, positive, and constructive. Collectively, the participants noticed that having a positive school climate and culture effectively decreases teacher attrition. Participant 3 said, "Our teachers are supported at our school, which is why our turnover rate is low. We provide mentors and mentees for our new teachers, conduct weekly PLCs, and ask for consistent feedback from our staff." School administrators could use surveys to evaluate the school's climate and culture, teachers' level of safety in the school, and to determine what changes are necessary for the school's climate and culture. The participants were aware that more teachers were willing to stay in a school with a climate and culture that is encouraging, supportive, and has the components to build positive relationships.

Aligned Professional Development

The second theme for RQ2 is aligned professional development for teachers. Participant 1, Participant 4, and Participant 5 mentioned that too many teachers have sat through professional development that did not cater to their subject area or grade level. Participant 1 said, "Teachers receive district wide professional development that is usually a one-size-fits-all approach." That statement was consistent with all participants because they recognized the level of frustration teachers experience when their professional development needs were unmet and unaligned. The unalignment of professional development could decrease teacher motivation, which could create teacher attrition. Therefore, the overall result for aligned professional development was to provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate through PLCs.

Opportunities to collaborate. Teachers can receive the opportunities to collaborate through PLCs, which is one subtheme for aligned professional development. The participants believed that weekly PLCs would allow teachers to collaborate, plan, and discuss topics that could support their personal and professional growth needs with other colleagues. Teachers would receive aligned professional development through their weekly PLCs related to their subject area or grade level. Additionally, weekly PLCs would allow the teachers to receive coaching, feedback, and mentoring to support their needs. Participant 8 said, "Having encouraging coaching conversations, written and concisely communicated expectations, and being transparent through PLCs could help decrease teacher attrition."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Evidence of trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to the certainty of the results of the research. Some strategies used to establish credibility include triangulation, prolonged contact, member checking, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To determine credibility, I used member checking, reflexivity, and peer review. I provided each participant with a copy of their transcript and the results of the study for their review. The participants were allowed to provide any additional insight on the data analysis. For reflexivity, after each interview, I wrote memos to reflect on my interview experience and identify any biases regarding the interview. I wrote notes regarding what I experienced from the interview and how that experience might affect the interview process for the next participant. During the peer review, I used a practitioner colleague to review my study for quality information, identify background knowledge regarding teacher attrition, and determine if the study was original.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that transferability is applied to other studies when the researcher has provided enough information related to the study to replicate the steps and processes used in the study. Some strategies to establish transferability include thick descriptions and establishing the participant criteria. To establish transferability, I provided detailed descriptions of the research problem, design, and participants. This detail can allow other researchers to see if this information can be transferred to other contexts, situations, or settings. Other researchers can use this detail to determine whether it can be applied to their studies.

Dependability refers to the trustworthiness and stability of the data collection and can be determined through audit trails and triangulation. To determine dependability, I used audit trails. Audit trails are detailed logs of a researcher's steps regarding the data collection process, development of categories, and decisions about the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I wrote about my reflections regarding the data collection process, any questions regarding the overall study, and my biases. Additionally, I wrote notes to examine any connections between the participants' responses and Maslow's hierarchy of needs that I recognized from the interviews.

Lastly, confirmability allows other researchers to confirm whether the data collected from the study is precise from the detailed procedures of the study. Reflexivity and intra- or intercoder reliability are some strategies used to determine confirmability. To determine confirmability, I used intracoder reliability and reflexivity. Intracoder reliability refers to the process of refining and analyzing data. I refined and analyzed the data on multiple occurrences to chunk the data down to categories, themes, and subthemes. For reflexivity, I wrote memos and notes for any researcher biases.

Summary

Teacher attrition can be a topic of discussion for many school administrators working in large urban public school districts. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. Eight school administrators participated in this study, allowing them to provide their perspectives on teacher attrition and strategies to help decrease teacher attrition.

The participants in this study collectively determined that relationship building, teacher motivation, having a positive school climate and culture, and having aligned professional development are factors for teacher attrition. The participants recognized that relationship building and teacher motivation are essential factors of teacher attrition. Relationship building includes supporting teachers with their workload and having clear and consistent communication with each other. Teacher motivation is influenced by teachers' level of job satisfaction and their salary and benefits. When teachers are motivated to stay in their schools, they are more than likely to receive support to fulfill their personal and professional goals and to seek advancement opportunities. The participants understood the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the working environment, advocating for competitive pay and benefits, and providing support with the workload if requested by teachers.

The participants provided two strategies to help decrease teacher attrition: promoting a positive school climate and culture and providing aligned professional development. The participants were aware that having a positive school climate and culture affects teachers' overall job satisfaction, especially when in an inviting and constructive environment. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged that their teachers would benefit from aligned professional development allowing teachers to collaborate in PLCs. While in PLCs, teachers would collaborate with other colleagues to receive coaching, feedback, and mentoring to support their needs. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I provide interpretations of the findings, the study's limitations, recommendations, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. The nature of the study was a basic qualitative research study that allowed eight school administrators to provide meaning to their experiences regarding teacher attrition. The school administrators participated in individual videoconferencing interviews that lasted for 45 minutes. The interview questions identified the participants' views regarding teacher attrition and strategies to decrease teacher attrition in their schools. Two research questions guided this study. The interview questions were designed for the participants to identify their views and reasons regarding teacher attrition and discuss strategies to decrease teacher attrition in their schools. The key findings of this study were that relationship building between school administrators and teachers is important because it can help school administrators identify teachers' needs and teachers' sources of motivation. Additionally, the findings of this study revealed that having a positive school climate and culture and developing aligned professional development for teachers could help decrease teacher attrition. In all, the key findings could assist school administrators and school districts to focus their efforts on strategies to decrease teacher attrition.

Interpretation of the Findings

To interpret the findings for this study, I used the conceptual framework of Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs, a theory of human motivation. Maslow (1948) theorized five categories of needs that provide explanations for human motivation and

determination: physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the literature review supported the results of this study. Some of the reasons for teacher attrition include the lack of school administrator support, salary, or not feeling wanted/needed in their schools (Olsen & Huang, 2018). In the literature review, I noted that teacher attitude, knowledge, and skills could affect teacher motivation (Schwartz et al., 2019). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the results of this study concluded that teachers whose professional needs are unmet are more likely to be less motivated to work in a school, which could cause teacher attrition. I determined that relationship building, teacher motivation, positive school climate and culture, and aligned professional development can be essential aspects to decrease teacher attrition. Additionally, the results of this study confirm the literature review. In this section, I describe the connection between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the literature review.

RQ1 asked: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools? Two themes were developed through this question: relationship building and teacher motivation. One of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is love and belonging, which relates to relationship building. Some teachers are more willing to remain in a school when their needs for social and intimate relationships are met. Relationship building can include school administrators supporting teacher efficacy, providing mentorship opportunities, or having open and honest dialogue throughout the year. Teacher motivation can be related to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Alfonso (2018) stated that teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic factors are related to human behavior. Those

factors can include support around teacher workload, having professional and personal goals met, and increasing salary and benefits. Teacher motivation relates to self-esteem, which is one of the factors of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. When teachers' level of motivation increases, they are more likely to increase self-esteem. An increase in self-esteem could be attributed to job satisfaction. Therefore, if teachers are satisfied with their jobs, their level of motivation and self-esteem might increase, which can help decrease teacher attrition because they are more likely to stay in their jobs than unsatisfied teachers.

RQ2 asked: What strategies can school administrators use to address the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools? Two themes were developed from this research question: positive school climate and culture and aligned professional development. Some teachers have their basic needs met by working in a positive school climate and culture. A positive school climate and culture can include principles of respect, trust, and professionalism (Niehoff, 2019). A positive school climate and culture can be an environment that caters to teachers' needs, builds an effective communication system, or fosters respect for each other. This environment can allow teachers to feel wanted in the school community. Dahlkamp et al. (2017) stated that teachers who feel supported and have a sense of belonging are more likely to stay at that school. According to Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs, safety and security and love and belonging are lower-level needs that fulfill an individuals' basic need of food, shelter, and community. A positive school climate and culture can support a teacher's need for safety, security, love, and belonging. Therefore, teachers in a positive school climate and culture tend to have their

basic needs met. As previously stated, teachers who are satisfied in their working environment are more likely to remain in their school than unsatisfied teachers.

Furthermore, having aligned professional development allows teachers the opportunity to collaborate. Ansley et al. (2019) and Brittian (2018) stated that teacher job satisfaction could include teachers participating in aligned professional development that can happen in PLCs. Aligned professional development allows the teachers to receive constructive feedback, coaching, and mentoring. This opportunity can also support teachers' need for love and belonging because teachers can work and learn in a conducive and encouraging community. As Ford et al. (2018) mentioned, teacher effectiveness may increase when teachers are satisfied with their working environment. Therefore, the opportunity to collaborate with others can also increase an individual's self-esteem and self-actualization, which are higher-level needs in Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs. Collaboration can help teachers recognize their most significant potential, motivating them to stay in the profession. Having aligned professional development where teachers can collaborate with others might increase teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, decreasing teacher attrition.

Limitations of the Study

There were three limitations in this study, which included the demographics of the school administrators, the sample size, and the data collection process. All the participants in this study were African American individuals working in large urban public school districts. Having participants from other racial backgrounds participate in this study could have provided additional insight into teacher attrition in large urban

public school districts. The second limitation was the sample size, as only eight school administrators participated. There are many large urban public school districts in the United States. Therefore, a sample size of eight does not reflect a greater scope of perspectives for other school administrators. Lastly, the data collection process was very time consuming and labor intensive. The method of scheduling interviews, transcribing interviews, and coding took many days. To monitor and control my biases, I transcribed the interviews using NVivo upon their completion. I did not want to forget any key points that I captured through my memos.

Recommendations

This study explored the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition. My recommendation is for further research where school administrators can examine the effects of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and teacher attrition. Some researchers have shared that several teachers are more satisfied staying at their jobs when their working environment is pleasant and ethically sound (Alfonso, 2018; Froiland, 2017). Furthermore, from the results of this study, I determined that relationship building is an essential aspect for teachers. The first recommendation would be to study the effects of Maslow's hierarchy of needs on teacher motivation and determination to work in a school. The second recommendation would be to study the effects of relationship building between school administrators and teachers. The last recommendation would be to study the effects of school climate and culture and teacher attrition. Future research could allow school administrators to identify successful strategies that might foster teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Implications

This study can lead to positive social change by decreasing teacher attrition and increasing teacher retention. Teacher attrition might decrease if school administrators prioritize incorporating relationship building and promoting a positive school climate and culture to their daily duties. This process might encourage teacher motivation which could encourage teacher retention. A decrease in teacher attrition could impact students and their learning because more teachers, especially qualified teachers, might be willing to remain in the classroom. An increase in qualified teachers could potentially impact student success. Student success may include increasing in-class participation and student engagement, having fewer class disruptions, and maximizing time spent on instruction. Additionally, this study might support school administrators in finding strategies that will encourage relationship building, increase teacher motivation, promote a positive school climate and culture, and conduct aligned professional development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher attrition is a challenge for many public school districts, especially in large urban areas. Many teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years of their career (Bonato, 2019). This study explored the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition. The participants in this study identified that relationship building and teacher motivation could contribute to teacher attrition. Relationship building can involve supporting teachers with their workload and having open forms of communication. Teacher motivation can include their satisfaction about their job and salary and benefits. Additionally, the participants acknowledged that

having a positive school climate and culture and offering aligned professional development were strategies that can be used to decrease teacher attrition. The conceptual framework for this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs because it is a theory that relates to human motivation and determination. Teachers are more willing to stay in a school where they feel satisfied than teachers who are unsatisfied at their school. Lastly, the results of this study could support other school administrators in implementing the strategies discovered to help decrease teacher attrition in their schools.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Hello,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University, and I am conducting a qualitative research study exploring school administrators' perspectives regarding teacher attrition in large urban public schools. The title of my study is Administrators' Perspectives on Teacher Attrition in Large Urban Public School Districts. The purpose of my study is to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in various large urban public school districts in the United States. This study is specific to school administrators with at least 2 years of school administrator experience and has worked in schools experiencing teacher attrition. If you would like to participate in this study, please email me at carolyn.prato@waldenu.edu. Participation in this study will include a one-on-one interview with me. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. Generally, interviews are conducted in-person at a convenient location; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews will be online via videoconferencing. We can schedule a day and time that is most suitable for you. This interview may have minimal risk, such as minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life; however, being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing. Additionally, your identity and responses will remain confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration of participating in my study. Please feel free to contact me by email at carolyn.prato@waldenu.edu or by cellphone at 305-775-7365.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Prato

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Guide

Introductory Statement

My name is Carolyn Prato, and I thank you for your time and participation in this study. I appreciate your eagerness to help me to collect data regarding teacher attrition. The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition in large urban public school districts. The data collected from this interview could benefit other school administrators in identifying strategies that can help decrease teacher attrition, impact student achievement, and increase teacher retention. This interview should take no more than 60 minutes of your time. Your name will have a pseudonym throughout all documents to not be identifiable. To check for accuracy, I will email you a final analyzed transcription of the interview to read for your review and ensure that I have captured your responses accurately. Upon receipt, you will have 72 hours to review the transcriptions and email any corrections back to me. The review of your transcription should take no more than 20 minutes. I will store all data from this interview in a password-protected application on my computer. I am interested in hearing about your experiences, opinions, and perspective about teacher attrition in your school. Do you have any questions before we begin?

The Interview
Interview Guide

Research Questions:
Research Question 1: What are school administrators' perspectives about the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools?

Research Question 2: What strategies can school administrators use to address the reasons for teacher attrition in their schools?

Interview Questions:

1. What is your current title?
2. How many years have you been a school administrator in this district?
3. Were you previously a teacher? How long?
4. How many years have you been a school administrator in your current school?
5. What are your views about the reasons for teacher attrition in your school?
6. What strategies can school administrators use to address the reasons for teacher attrition in your school?
7. What do you think creates teacher attrition in your school?

8. What strategies have you used to decrease teacher attrition in your school?
9. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies for your school?

Closing Statement

Once again, thank you for your time and your willingness to participate in this study.

Appendix C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study about school administrators' perspectives regarding teacher attrition in large urban public school districts. The researcher is inviting school administrators with at least 2 years of school administrator experience to participate in the study. At least 6-8 school administrators will be interviewed for this study. This study is specific to school administrators as there is a substantial amount of research using current and former teachers; therefore, the perspectives of teachers are not warranted for this study at this time. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Carolyn Prato, a doctoral student at Walden University. The researcher is a school counselor, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of school administrators regarding the reasons for teacher attrition.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a videoconferencing interview and be audio-recorded that will last approximately 45-60 minutes; audio recording will be used to capture your responses to the interview questions
- Respond within 72 hours upon receipt to review final analyzed transcriptions and to provide corrections for the researcher via email; the review of your transcription should take no more than 20 minutes

Here are some sample questions:

- What are your views about the reasons for teacher attrition in your school?
- What strategies can school administrators use to address the reasons for teacher attrition in your school?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as becoming upset or feeling uncomfortable. Being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing.

The potential benefits of this study include finding strategies that can help decrease teacher attrition, create social change that can impact student learning, and increase teacher retention, especially for schools experiencing higher teacher attrition than the national average.

Payment:
There will be no payment for participating.

Privacy:
Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the study's location, will also not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. If the research procedures reveal any criminal activity or abuse, the researcher will follow the appropriate protocol to report any criminal activity or abuse. Data will be kept secure by participants receiving pseudonyms and all collected data stored in a password-protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at carolyn.prato@waldenu.edu or cellphone at 305-775-7365. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **03-08-21-0650815,** and it expires on **March 7, 2022.**

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, "I consent."