

2022

Administrative Support in Student Violence Directed Toward Teachers in K–12, Urban, Southern Louisiana Schools

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Paula T. Johnson

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Walden University

2022

Abstract

Administrative Support in Student Violence Directed Toward Teachers in K–12, Urban,

Southern Louisiana Schools

by

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M.Ed., Our Lady of Holy Cross College, 2011

MA, Southern University at New Orleans, 2007

BS, Southern University at New Orleans, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

November 2022

Abstract

The number of teachers working in urban educational settings who have experienced student violence has increased yearly. Despite reporting these violent incidents, many teachers leave the profession between their first 5 years of teaching, identifying the limited support from school administrators as a major reason for their departure. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of administrative support in student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern school districts in Louisiana. Great man theory, trait theory, contingency theory, transformational leadership theory, transactional leadership theory, and laissez-faire leadership theory constituted the conceptual framework of this study. Data were collected from interviews with eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators from two separate K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts who have observed student violence directed toward teachers or have provided support to teachers who have experienced violence from students. The organization of the data through NVivo identified four themes: teachers receiving school-based counseling support, school district regulations hindering the administrative support to teachers, administrative leadership style determining the type of support teachers receive, and type of violence determining the level of support received. The results recognized the need to establish policies that would guide school administrators when dealing with student violence directed toward teachers. The study findings may lead to positive social change by providing school administrators and district policymakers with guidance on the teachers' perceptions of support, which could improve the school's culture and decrease the number of teachers leaving the educational profession.

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Dedication

To my Heavenly Father for allowing me to finish this phase in my life and protecting me during the challenges and downfalls. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends, and mentors, who supported and encouraged me throughout this process. I would be remiss if I did not mention my parents who encouraged all their children to get an education. To my ten siblings (living and deceased), who endured tough life lessons, just to teach me to be the person I am today. To my supporters and sisters, Dr. Cheryl Williams–Jackson and Dr. Arlisha Pratt–Mason, who provided me with guidance and encouragement when I felt like giving up. Lastly, thank you for your love and patience to my husband, children, and grandchildren, who supported me in completing this study.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my committee, Drs. Felicia Blacher–Wilson and James Bailey, and University Research Reviewer, Dr. Cheryl Burleigh, for the hard work, dedication, and support they have provided me throughout my entire doctoral process. I want to acknowledge the teachers and administrators participating in my study. Without your input, this study would not have been possible. Teachers are often overlooked for the work they do for the students. Likewise, administrators are disparaged for their attempts to make learning environments that are conducive to learning for teachers and students. I would like to encourage teachers and administrators to continue to be advocates for the educational system.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Student violence directed toward teachers is an issue in education that has received attention across the United States (Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). Regardless of the increasing incidents of student violence against teachers, policymakers have failed to acknowledge its dangerous effect on teachers' safety in the educational community (McMahon et al., 2020; Reddy et al., 2018). Although the official collection of U.S. statistics on student violence did not begin until 1989, data has shown a steady increase in student violence throughout the years (Carlton, 2017). Studies conducted in the 1990s by the National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences revealed that 326,800 (111,200 male and 215,600 female) or 12.8% of K–12 public school teachers reported being threatened by students, while 112,400 (28,700 male and 83,700 female) or 4.4% of public school teachers reported being physically attacked (Carlton, 2017). By the 2011–2012 school year, the number of K–12 public school teachers reporting threats from students increased to 338,400 (79,800 male and 258,600 female) or 10.0%, and 197,400 (29,500 male and 167,900 female) or 5.9% of K–12 public school teachers reported being physically attacked by students (Musu et al., 2019). By the end of the 2015–2016 school year, 373,900 (94,100 male and 279,800 female) or 9.8% K–12 public school teachers had reported being threatened with injury, while 220,300 (35,100 male and 185,200 female) or 5.8% public school teachers reported being physically attacked by students (Musu et al., 2019).

The rising amount of student violence directed against teachers prompted researchers to investigate the educational system's components to identify the causes of

these violent incidents. These studies focused on why teachers leave the profession during the first 5 years of service (Wronowski, 2018) and examined the causes of students' violent tendencies (Muslu et al., 2020). Further studies focused on teachers' ability to prevent violent incidents (Anderman et al., 2018) and the need for professional development so teachers would learn to de-escalate violent occurrences (Volungis & Goodman, 2017). In each study, the researchers indicated the need for school administrative support in responding to these teacher victimization incidents (Moon et al., 2019). Though studies concerning student violence directed toward teachers identified the need for administrative support, the researchers failed to identify the type of help. What are the perceptions of teachers in a K - 12 urban southern Louisiana school district as to the role and leadership style of administrators when responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers? Therefore, Moon et al. (2019) identified the need for further research to understand the school administrators' reactions to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Conley and You (2017), who focused on administrative support, recognized the need to understand the effectiveness of administrators' responses in incidents involving teachers and the support provided to those teachers.

In this study, I examined the leadership styles of K–12 urban, southern Louisiana school administrators to understand their response to supporting teachers in incidents of student violence directed against teachers. This study was also focused on exploring teachers' feelings of nonsupport from their administrators after an incident of student violence. This study revealed the misconceptions that lead to teachers' dissatisfaction

with administrative support and identified whether transactional, transformational, or laissez-faire administrative leadership styles directly affected the type of support teachers receive in student violence incidents. The goal of this study was to guide discussions focused on establishing policies and procedures to guide K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school administrators in addressing teachers’ concerns who were involved in student violence. Identifying the K–12, urban, southern Louisiana administrators’ leadership styles in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers could raise awareness of the need for policy changes that promote the creation of strategies or techniques that support teachers. Advocating for these changes may increase teacher retention and decrease teacher attrition.

Background

Bounds and Jenkins (2018), in a study on student violence directed toward teachers, suggested adequate administrative support as an indicator to decrease the number of occurrences and repeated offenses. Volungis and Goodman (2017) provided school administrators with options for addressing student violence directed violence toward teachers, such as improving the school culture by decreasing class sizes and using school counselors as mediators for teachers whose students violently attacked them. Bounds and Jenkins (2018) suggested administrators use school psychologists to document violence-related incidents in schools to establish support systems for teachers. In their study of student violence directed toward teachers, Anderman et al. (2018) indicated the need for school administrators to create a support network for teachers. In similar studies, Bounds and Jenkins (2018) and McMahon et al. (2020) supported school

administrators' need to create policies that assure teachers' safety and define the administrators' role in student violence directed against teacher incidents. These researchers also identified the frustration teachers experienced with administrative responses and suggested administrators seek outside resources to support teachers. Although each study discussed the frustration of the teachers in the reaction of the school administrators, the researchers failed to identify the reasons for the teachers' dissatisfaction with the type of administrative responses received when dealing with student violence incidents (Çalık et al., 2018; Moon et al., 2019).

The school administrator's role in an educational setting establishes relationships between faculty members, students, parents, and the community. School administrators are responsible for steering the instructional agenda, hiring teachers, and making critical decisions that lead to student achievement (Versland & Erickson, 2017). Additionally, school administrators must employ faculty with a vested commitment to the school's vision and mission as well as the student's academic success (Khumalo, 2019). Due to the school administrator's importance in the school setting, administrators are expected to exhibit strong leadership skills that promote a safe and positive learning environment for everyone associated with the facility (Conley & You, 2017). School administrators must select the most appropriate leadership style that creates a safe and conducive learning environment. Despite the importance of the administrator's role, many teachers feel they are not supported in student violence directed at teacher incidents. In a study on administrative support, Conley and You (2017) found that teachers felt school administrators did not provide them with the support they expected. Opposing the

teachers' views, school administrators felt teachers were being supplied with a high support level (Conley & You, 2017). These differences regarding the levels of support given and received between school administrators and teachers highlighted a disconnect in the understanding of support teachers receive concerning incidents of student violence directed at teachers.

In this study, I examined school administrators' leadership styles in determining the support provided to teachers involved in student violence incidents. I explored the viewpoints of teachers who have observed student violence and school administrators who have addressed teacher reports of student violence directed at teachers to identify the source of the dissatisfaction experienced with administrators' responses. Additionally, the responses from the school administrators and teachers were examined to identify the gap in understanding the concept of support when addressing student violence against teachers incidents.

Problem Statement

The problem is that K–12 urban, southern Louisiana teachers feel school administrators have failed to provide support in student violence directed toward teacher incidents. This violence and the lack of administrative support have negatively affected many K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schoolteachers' safety. Despite the increase in reported incidences of student violence directed toward teachers, many teachers still fail to report these incidents due to their lack of confidence in school administration (McMahon et al., 2017). Moon et al. (2019) indicated the absence of rapport between teachers and school administrators in schools as one reason many teachers failed to report

student violence directed at teacher events. The findings from Moon et al. align with McMahon et al.'s (2017) research, which also concluded that the scarcity of administrative support placed nontenured teachers who reported these incidents at a higher risk of losing their jobs or being labeled as ineffective teachers. Additionally, they found that teachers who chose to report the noncooperation of the school administrator to their teacher union felt mistreated by union representatives, and tenured teachers who had rapport with the school administrator rarely reported student violence incidents to their school administrator. When tenured teachers reported student violence incidents, they reported being satisfied with the administrators' responses and benefitted from their interactions with the union (McMahon et al., 2017). Although Moon et al. and McMahon et al. focused on the lack of administrative support teachers received, these researchers also expressed the importance of the school administrator taking an active role in the prevention of these violent incidences and supporting teachers by directly addressing the violent incident after its occurrence (Çalık et al., 2018). While McMahon et al. indicated the need for support from school administrators, they failed to outline the administrators' role in adequately supporting teachers who have been subjected to student violence. As the number of incidents of student violence directed against teachers increases, limited studies have addressed the school administrators' defined role in supporting teachers.

Despite the many studies that have concluded the need for school administrators to properly support teachers in student violence incidents, the understanding of support between teachers and administrators differs. Conley and You (2017) found school administrators felt they were providing above average level support to their teachers;

however, teachers thought they were not supported by the school administrator, negatively affecting teacher retention. In a study on student violence directed at teachers in urban schools, Moon et al. (2019) identified the need for further research to better understand school administrators' responses when addressing teacher victimization incidents. This suggestion also aligns with the thoughts of Conley and You (2017), who recommended further research to address the administrators' responses in incidents of teacher victimization and to provide support to teachers whom students victimized. The current research identified an apparent gap between the views of teachers and administrators on the support provided in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Observing school administrators' leadership styles assisted in explaining how administrators responded to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Purpose of the Study

In this basic qualitative study, I examined the effects of school administrators' leadership style on the support teachers received regarding incidents of student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. The participants were eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators from two separate K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts. The inclusion criteria for participation in this study were that the teacher or administrator had three or more years of experience and either observed or responded to student violence directed at teacher incidents in their schools. While teachers expressed their concerns regarding administrative support, I also explored the administrators' response to student violence incidents and determined whether an administrator's leadership style was an indicator of

the support teachers received regarding incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Research Questions

Research Question (RQ) 1: What are the perceptions of teachers in a K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school district as to the role and leadership style of administrators when responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

RQ2: How do administrators in a K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school district perceive their role and leadership style in responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

Conceptual Framework

This basic qualitative study was guided by leadership theory. Leadership theory stemmed from research studies on behaviorism conducted by Pavlov, Skinner, and Watson (Guercio, 2020). Because teachers expressed concerns about not receiving administrative support when dealing with incidents of student violence directed at teachers, there was a need to identify the administrator's effectiveness in supporting teachers involved in these incidents. In behaviorism, the actions and behaviors of humans and animals are observed in different situations (Lim, 2019). In behaviorism theory, it is suggested that behaviors, traits learned from observing others, can be modified given the right stimulation (McLeod, 2017). Style theory, a component of the behaviorism theory, focuses on leaders' actions or behaviors in given situations (Bashir et al., 2022). Researchers of style theory believe the leader's effectiveness is based on their behavior

rather than their qualifications (Indeed, 2021). Research surrounding behavior leadership theory has identified specific styles of leadership administrators possess, such as a transactional (i.e., autocratic), transformational (i.e., democratic), or laissez-faire style.

Learning the administrators' leadership style assisted in better understanding their behaviors and actions in supporting teachers in incidents of student violence directed at teachers. In this study, I collected data from interviews with teachers' observations, administrators' reactions to student violence directed toward teachers, and the administrative leadership style used to respond to these incidents. This study was focused on identifying the causes of teachers' dissatisfaction with the support received from school administrators. In Chapter 2, I will provide further details on the theories and their connections to the research questions.

This study's conceptual framework helped me develop the research questions and open-ended, semistructured interview questions. The research questions of this study were relevant to the behavioral theory because they related to the school administrators' perceptions of supporting teachers involved in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. The questions also addressed the teachers' perceptions of the school administrator's role in supporting teachers involved in student violence incidents and how the administrator's leadership style directed the administrator's actions in responding to the incidents of violence. The research questions also addressed how district policies affected administrators' responses to incidents of student violence directed at teachers. With the open-ended, semistructured interview questions, I sought to

gather responses from teachers and administrators to identify the behavior styles that supported teachers involved in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Nature of the Study

The focus of this basic qualitative study was to understand how school administrators' leadership styles effectively supported teachers involved in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. I selected this methodology because it allowed me to understand the participants' perceptions and events related to the study goals (see Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Because of the district's size, I enlisted eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators from two separate K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts as participants in this study. The participants were selected based on their willingness to participate in the interview process and whether they observed or responded to student violence directed toward teachers. Using the qualitative method allowed me to use open-ended, semistructured questions to obtain the participants' perceptions of the school administrators and teachers in supporting teachers involved in student violence directed at teacher incidents. Additionally, using the qualitative method permitted me to create a visual model of the interviewees' reactions to the open-ended, semistructured questions when analyzing their responses (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I held the open-ended, semistructured interviews on the Zoom conferencing platform, which was the most accurate way to receive participants' responses. Each participant signed a letter of consent before participating in the interview process. I audio-recorded the participants' responses and transcribed the

interviews using Otter.ai. Once the transcription process was complete, I sent copies of their interview responses to the participants so they could ensure the accuracy of their transcribed responses. The participants were allowed to add or remove information from their responses.

Conducting online interviews allowed me to communicate with persons unwilling to talk publicly in person (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In the case of this study, I chose online interviewing due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Rubin and Rubin (2012) depicted online interviewing as a slow process, but it allows the interviewer time to create interview alignment questions that can enable them to gather more data. Online interviewing assures the interviewees' privacy and frees them from possible ridicule and criticism (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Definitions

Behavioral leadership theory: A management perspective that evaluates the leader's workplace actions (Indeed, 2021). Supporters of this theory believe effective leaders naturally learn by observing other behaviors and then implementing certain behaviors (Indeed, 2021).

School administrator: An educational leader who governs the daily function of the school (Bruens, 2020). School administrators serve as the public relations for their schools, conduct teacher evaluations, execute disciplinary actions, and serve as positive supporters of the school faculty. School administrators are responsible for creating a safe learning environment for teachers and students (Bruens, 2020).

School violence: This term describes violent acts that disrupt learning and hurt students, schools, and the broader community (Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, 2019). School violence consists of physical violence, corporal punishment, bullying, and behaviors intended to harm others at school or on school grounds (Capp et al., 2017).

Assumptions

In this basic qualitative study, I gathered data from K–12, urban, southern Louisiana teachers who have observed student violence directed toward teachers and K–12, urban, southern Louisiana administrators who have responded to teachers’ reports of student violence directed toward teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a school administrator’s leadership style related to providing support to teachers involved in student violence. The first assumption was that teachers would respond honestly to interview questions concerning their school administrators’ support. Once provided with the characteristics of various leadership styles, I assumed the teachers would identify the styles of their school administrator and openly discuss how their administrator’s characteristics affected the support they received. The second assumption was that administrators would be honest in answering interview questions concerning their role in assisting teachers involved in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. The third assumption was that administrators could identify their leadership style and openly discuss how it affects the type of support teachers receive from them in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. These assumptions were necessary because the participants’ honesty was essential in identifying misconceptions about the support teachers receive in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Scope and Delimitations

In this basic qualitative study, I gathered data from teachers and administrators who witnessed or responded to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. Ranging from various backgrounds, all participants had been involved with the public school system for 3 or more years. I conducted this study to determine whether the school administrators' leadership style credibly supported teachers involved in student violence directed toward teachers.

Limitations, Challenges, and Barriers

In conducting this study, I risked potential barriers, challenges, and limitations if the limited sample size did not represent the views of teachers and administrators in urban southern Louisiana schools. The second limitation involved the limited number of research studies regarding administrative support to teachers involved in student violence. Since data collection on violent incidents did not occur in the United States until 1989 (Carlton, 2017), research articles pertaining to student violence toward teachers in this country were limited. As I began my research, the more in-depth articles I found on this topic were published in other countries. The third limitation was the inability to perform in-person interviews adequately due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. As a result of the nationwide pandemic, the U.S. government's restrictions made face-to-face and group interviews difficult. These restrictions included stay-at-home orders, limited grouping capacity, and mandated facemask-wearing, which resulted in remote interviewing to obtain information for this study. Lastly, administrators and teachers involved in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers may have

been unwilling or hesitant to provide truthful information despite the level of anonymity assured in the study.

Significance

This study could lead to positive social change by identifying the need for policies and guidelines on how administrators support teachers in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. Creating guidelines and policies can decrease the number of teachers leaving the profession and help establish a school environment where teachers feel safe and protected. This study's findings show the differences between the views of support teachers and administrators regarding incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Additionally, administrators could use the information provided in this study about their leadership style to better understand teachers' needs and develop routines to support teachers in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Summary

Administrative support in student violence directed toward teachers is an essential component of school safety and teacher retention. In this study, I examined the perceptions of teachers and administrators to identify whether the administrator's leadership style and district policies influenced the administrator's actions in responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Additionally, I determined if a school administrator's leadership style was an indicator of whether teachers felt supported by the administrator in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

In this chapter, I provided background information that outlines the research questions' alignment with the problem and purpose statements. The conceptual framework of behaviorism, behavioral, or style leadership theory was presented. Definitions and key terms were provided so the reader could understand the terminology used in this study. I also discussed the study's assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations. In the significance section, I described how the results of this study could lead to positive social change by guiding school administrators and district policymakers to develop guidelines that could contribute to improving the culture of schools when handling incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. In Chapter 2, I will review the literature on the topic of the study and further explain the conceptual framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The focus of this study was to ascertain the level of administrative support received by teachers upon reports of incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Teachers who felt their school administrators did not protect them from student violent incidents felt unsafe and, ultimately, decided to leave the teaching profession (Peist, et al., 2020). In this literature review, I discussed the style theory, a component of behavioral theory researched by Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner. In addressing leadership style theories, I described the concepts such as great man, trait, situational, behavior, transactional, laissez-faire, and transformational leadership.

Student violence toward teachers has become an issue affecting school systems globally (Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). Since violent incidents data collection first began in 1989, teachers reporting incidents of physical and verbal violence have increased each year (Carlton, 2017). The last recorded student violent incidents report, occurred in 2016 and indicated that 73,900 (or 9.8%) teachers disclosed being threatened with injury, while 220,300 (or 5.8%) teachers proclaimed being physically attacked by students (Musu et al., 2019). Teachers recounting these incidents felt they received limited support from their school administrators, which left them dissatisfied and more likely to leave the teaching profession (Wronowski, 2018). Although research studies indicated school administrators felt they provide excellent support to teachers involved in student violent incidents, teachers maintain an opposing view.

In searching for journal articles to support this study, I used Walden University's Library and Google Scholar to find peer-reviewed articles representing primary and

secondary resources. I also searched other databases, such as ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE, and EBSCO, to find peer-reviewed articles published between 2017 to 2022. The following keyword search terms were used to find literature relevant to this study: *student violence toward directed teachers, student violence directed on teachers, student violence on school personnel, administrative support of teachers, type of support teachers need administrators, preventive measures for school violence, violence in schools, teacher retention, violence against school employees, teacher victimization from students, state laws that protect teachers, district laws that protect teachers, behaviorism, style theory, behavioral learning theory, transactional theory, transformational theory, situational theory, laissez-faire theory, great man theory, trait theory, situational theory, and contingency theory*. At the beginning of my searches, I found a few articles regarding student violence against teachers. I changed search parameters and searched for articles on student violence in other countries.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework comprised behavioral leadership theory, a concept based on the theory of behaviorism that was initially researched by Pavlov, Skinner, and Watson (Guercio, 2020). In behaviorism, researchers observed and measured human behaviors based on their reactions to different external environmental situations, and in focusing on these reactions, researchers believed the human response was based on initial reactions to the same stimuli (Learning Theories, 2020). Researchers further believed humans learned their reactions from observing others in similar situations and that they could be modified or changed given the right conditioning

(Learning Theories, 2020). Three common behaviorisms were identified: methodological, analytical, and psychological.

Methodological behaviorism focuses on human behavior, not the stimulus that caused the behavior. Studies conducted by Watson identified this form of behaviorism focused mainly on the individual's mental state and less on their reactions to certain conditions (Graham, 2019). Psychological behaviorism, a component of the research of Pavlov, Thorndike, Watson, and Skinner, concentrates on human behavior as they react to external stimuli (Graham, 2019). Analytical behaviorism, the focus of Ryle, Wittgenstein, and Place, is centered on the human mental state condition (Graham, 2019). Graham (2019), describing analytical behaviorism, believed that human behavior is based on family members' observations or other influential individuals. Based on these three behaviorisms, other researchers sought to clarify the dimensions of behaviorism, which led to the creation of more leadership theories.

I designed this study's research questions based on the behavioral leadership theory components to examine school administrators' perceptions of providing support to teachers affected by student violence. Several leadership theories are associated with behaviorism and behavioral leadership: great man theory, trait theory, contingency theory, situational theory, and behavioral theory. Although behavioral leadership theories are widely discussed, I prominently focused on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles of leadership in this study. Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership concepts began to surface during the 20th century (Kahn et al., 2017). In comparison, McGregor Burns introduced transforming and transactional

leadership in 1978, and Bass investigated laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional leadership in 1985 (Brown et al., 2019). For the current study, I created the research questions to identify the perceptions of teachers and school administrators of which leadership theory aligns with their ideas on the type of support provided to teachers in student violence incidents.

Great Man Theory

In 1841, Carlyle created the great man theory to describe male figures who influenced historical events in the world (Mouton, 2019). According to Mouton (2019), during the Napoleonic wars, Carlyle's studies of heroes during this era led him to create a series of speeches focused on great men, such as prophets, poets, kings, and men of letters. Carlyle's speeches led to the creation of the book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*, which contained a discussion of the theory in the form of stories about the persistence and effectiveness of courageous warriors and chiefs (Mouton, 2019; Cockshut, 2021). Carlyle's version of the great man theory espoused a belief that individuals were born with extraordinary abilities which came from God (Cockshut, 2021).

Using the idea of great men receiving their ability to achieve from God, Freud continued the focus by contending great men could also be created through a sense of need (Cockshut, 2021). Freud, studying Moses's role in history, believed that great men could be created by a sense of need (Cockshut, 2021). According to Cockshut (2021), Freud believed that a great man could be an ordinary individual driven by a sense of responsibility or love for others and that this responsibility would drive this person to

serve as the protector or leader of a group of members and family or otherwise to change their thinking or guide them in an alternative direction. Critics of the great man theory have rejected this concept because it lacks scientific evidence. Spencer, an avid critic of this theory, lambasted the great man theory, stating that great leaders are products of the society in which they were born (Studious Guy, 2019). Tolstoy also criticized the great man theory, arguing that it was based on one's imagination (Mouton, 2019). Cherry (2019) further postulated that great men are created through education, experience, and empowerment from others.

Trait Theory

Trait theory is a part of Carlyle's concept of the great man theory. In trait theory, people inherit characteristics or traits that make them suitable for leadership (Kumar, 2018). Although Carlyle believed that man was born with the ability to lead, in trait theory, leaders are believed to have inherited personal and behavioral characteristics that separate them from non-leaders (Aalateeg, 2017). Stogdill's (1948, as cited in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022) studies on trait theory identified five traits that identify a leader. Although leaders possessed above-average intelligence, dependability, participation, and status, Stogdill concluded these leadership traits varied depending on the situation (as cited in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022).

The University of Ohio conducted other research studies on the trait theory in 1945, and the University of Michigan, years later, identified additional traits found in leaders (Roy, 2020). The University of Ohio's study identified two leadership behaviors: (a) initiating structure, or the leader working to meet guidelines and conform to

standards, and (b) consideration or the leader has mutual respect and understanding (Roy, 2020). The University of Michigan's study concluded that leaders must be employee-oriented, focused on interpersonal relationships, and production oriented, or focused on work and structure (Roy, 2020). Continued research on the trait theory identified additional characteristics of influential leaders. Between 1949 and 1974, researchers identified 163 additional traits of influential leaders, resulting in Stogdill concluding that no definitive trait could guarantee a leader (Aalateeg, 2017; Hunt & Fedynich, 2018).

Contingency (Situational) Theory

The contingency (situational) theory proposes that leaders decide how they would handle situations after examining the conditions or circumstances (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Depending on the environment, a leader would choose one or more leadership styles to address a situation (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). The concept of this theory was influenced by the studies conducted by the Universities of Ohio and Michigan during the 1950s that arrived at different results when identifying an effective leader (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). The University of Ohio's results indicated that effective leaders exhibit initiative structure (e.g., meet guidelines and conform to standards) and consideration (e.g., have mutual respect, respect, and understanding); contrastingly, the University of Michigan's results showed that effective leaders must be employee-oriented, or focused on interpersonal relationships, and production oriented, or focused on work and structure (Roy, 2020). The inconsistent findings of the University of Michigan and the University of Ohio studies resulted in researchers shifting their focus to finding a more direct indicator of effective leadership.

The first researcher to examine the contingency theory concept was Fiedler, who in 1964 proposed a leader's effectiveness was based on their interactions with their employees and how situations influenced the leader's reaction (Aalateeg, 2017). Fiedler's theory was based on a rating scale of the least preferred coworker, which rates past employees' leaders. The survey questions and results identified how leaders were influenced in the areas of leader-member relations (i.e., confidence and trust in employees), task structure (i.e., job assignments), and position power (i.e., authority in punishing and rewarding groups; Aalateeg, 2017). Fiedler found that task-oriented leaders showed more effectiveness in high- and low-control situations. In contrast, relationship-oriented leaders were more effective in moderate control situations (Aalateeg, 2017). Although the model has been used to assess leaders' effectiveness, interest in the model has declined partially due to the advancement of leadership research and the criticism that the model's results promoted a leadership hierarchy (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022).

Other research on the contingency theory included House-Mitchell's path-goal theory, developed in 1971 and refined in 1974 (Aalateeg, 2017). In the path-goal theory, the roles of leaders and employees are defined to show that the leader directs and works alongside the employees to accomplish organizational goals (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). The 1973 leader-participation model, developed by Vroom and Yelton, was focused on the leader's decision-making ability (Aalateeg, 2017). The normative approach provided leaders with a guide on making decisions and how much participation should be included, depending on the situation (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). However, constant criticism and

ongoing research development in leadership have decreased interest in contingency theories (Day & Antonakis, 2018; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022).

Behavioral Theory

The behavioral theory concept was developed in the 1950s due to the inconclusive findings from various studies. Studies conducted by the Universities of Ohio and Michigan presented contradictory findings about ineffective leadership (Cherry, 2019). During this period, Day and Antonakis (2018) also reported conflicting evidentiary findings in their leadership research studies. Researchers could not propose a leadership style that would address all tasks or situations, and as a result of this confusion, they began shifting their focus from the behaviors or actions of the leaders to other specific leadership qualities and statuses (Kumar, 2018). Watson's research in 1913 on behaviorism caught researchers' attention and became an advanced study topic of behavioral and leadership thought throughout the 1950s (Cherry, 2019). The behavioral theory was developed based on the belief that people could be taught leadership skills through observation or training (Kumar, 2018).

The behavioral theory identifies two opposite leadership types: autocratic and democratic (Kumar, 2018). Dinibutun (2020) described an autocratic leader as a person who feels they are above their employee. These leaders feel they can control their employees by offering rewards and intimidation (Dinibutun, 2020). Opposite to the autocratic style, the democratic leader delegates authority and encourages employee participation (Dinibutun, 2020). Democratic leaders have employees who work diligently to accomplish a goal and are respected by their employees (Dinibutun, 2020). Leaders

who utilize the democratic leadership style have employees who express positive feelings and will continue working when the leader is absent (Kumar, 2018).

In the 1960s, McGregor drew from Maslow's hierarchy of needs to pose two theories in which leaders could motivate employees: Theory X and Theory Y (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018; Williams & Lumen Learning, n.d.). In Theory X, workers are controlled by the leaders; otherwise, the work assignment will not be completed (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). With Theory X, employees are dissatisfied with working, and job security is paramount to responsibility (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). Workers with Theory X leaders tend to be unhappy, express hostility, and work in the leader's presence (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). In McGregor's study, workers under Theory X leadership are motivated to work based on compensation or monetary rewards, and once the reward is achieved, employee motivation diminishes or ceases (Williams & Lumen Learning, n.d.). In Theory Y, the opposite of Theory X, employees enjoy their work and are self-motivated (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). Workers are not forced to take on responsibilities but enjoy and accept their leaders (Hunt & Fedynich, 2018). According to McGregor, Theory X leaders have employees who enjoy working and have an established commitment to the organization (Williams & Lumen Learning, n.d.). In 1980, Ouchi, using the concepts developed by McGregor, developed an additional leadership theory: Theory Z leaders (Williams & Lumen Learning, n.d.). Theory Z, which was also motivated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, was supported by the belief that an employee's motivation is proportional to the level of mutual trust from the employer (Williams & Lumen Learning, n.d.).

Modern Leadership Theories

Transformational Leadership Theory

Although Downton first coined the term transformational leadership in 1973, Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership (Brown et al., 2019). Bass (1980), using the concepts of Downton and Burns, was credited with developing the concept of transformational leadership after investigating the theory's psychological trend (Brown et al., 2019). According to Bass's studies, transformational leaders motivate followers to do better than expected and work diligently to achieve the desired goal (Metz et al., 2019). Brown et al. (2019) described transformational leaders as individuals who display attributes that stimulate their followers to exceed their standard capabilities and strive for excellent performance. In transformational leadership theory, leaders are proactive role models who empower subordinates (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2022; Metz et al., 2019). Kalsoom et al. (2018) believed transformational leaders could facilitate communication and logical stimulation, promoting individual thoughts in their followers. Khumalo (2019) identified transformational leaders as individuals who ensure their followers are committed to their goals. Additionally, transformational leaders work to increase subordinates' interest and performance (Khumalo, 2019).

School administrators who adopt the transformational leadership style are described as committed to the educational system and believe the employees are highly qualified and competent (Khumalo, 2019). Craig (2019) identified a transformational leader's traits as a person who takes a stand, remains curious, and is focused on the future. Leaders who promote the transformational leadership style believe in working

with others to commit to the overall vision (Craig, 2019). Kwan (2019) found that school administrators who promoted transformational leadership motivated teachers and exhibited interpersonal skills that reduced stress and anxiety in the educational setting.

Despite the positive impact transformational leadership can have on an organization, there are advantages and disadvantages to promoting this form of leadership. Critics have suggested that this form of leadership will only show positive results under certain conditions. Transformational leaders' vision must be communicated to motivate employees, but if the employees disagree with the vision, the leader's efforts will not succeed (Lindberg, 2020c). The transformational leader's goals can cause pressure on the employee, which will decrease the employee's desire to reach the goal (Gaille, 2018; Lindberg, 2020c). Transformational leadership is risky because the leader is expected to communicate openly with the employees (Lindberg, 2020c). If this does not happen, employees may begin to feel left out and will lose motivation in the vision (Lindberg, 2020c).

Transactional Leadership Theory

The concept of transactional leadership theory was initially developed in 1947 by Max Weber (Duemer, 2017). Later in 1981, Bernard Bass further developed the concept based on the psychological phenomenon (Brown et al., 2019; Duemer, 2017). Duemer (2017) described transactional leadership as a form of leadership that promotes compliance from the followers. In the transactional leadership style, employers use rewards or punishment as a tool to gain employees' compliance (Duemer, 2017). According to Bian et al. (2019), transactional leaders motivate employees by providing a

reward-based system for completing assignments. In transactional leadership, leaders propose their goals to the followers and require them to comply with the set goal. To ensure the followers' compliance, the transactional leaders consistently monitored the employee's performance and applied corrective actions to address deviations from the outlined goal (Duemer, 2017). To gain the followers' momentum, the transactional leader used rewards to motivate followers to complete tasks and worked to get employees to follow the organization's rules (Bian et al., 2019). According to Al Khajeh (2018), transactional leaders provide followers with tangible and intangible rewards when they achieve the organization's goal and consequences when the goal is not met. The approaches taken by the transactional leader assure the employees accomplish the task and remain focused on the organization's goal (Al Khajeh, 2018). The transformational leader avoids unnecessary risks and focuses on improving organizational efficiency (Duemer, 2017).

School administrators who adopted the transactional leadership style focused on supplying their faculty with clear and comprehensive instructions. The transactional leader operated with the expectation that the faculty would not deviate from the directions without facing administrative consequences (Bian et al., 2019). In this form of leadership, the administrator believes in a management-by-exception mindset (Erdel & Takkac, 2020). Erdel and Takkac (2020) identified the transactional leader as an administrator who monitored the faculty's actions and passively waited for faculty deviations from the behavior before intervening. As a result of this form of leadership, the faculty was more focused on accomplishing the goals assigned to receive awards.

Bian et al. (2019) concluded that transactional leaders negatively affected the work environment's safety and climate.

Leaders who exercised transactional leadership could effectively motivate employees through rewards and compensation. The employees were always aware and understood that consequences would be applied if the goals were not accomplished (Gaille, 2018). Using the transactional leadership style assured goal achievement and limited the number of errors (Gaille, 2018). Since everyone was aware of the steps involved in accomplishing the goal, there was an overall understanding of what must be done. This understanding made it easier for workers to support instructions and follow the rules. Following directives and achieving goals made transactional leaders more productive, with a better chance of achieving goals.

Critics of transactional leadership felt the strict rules and regulations eliminated productivity in the work environment by hindering the workers (Lindberg, 2020b). Gaille (2018) stated that the transactional leader limits the employee's freedom by enforcing strict guidelines. These strict guidelines made the workers fear termination if they deviated from the outlined plan. Additionally, the transactional leader would blame the workers if the organization's goal was not met. Since transactional leaders believe their guidance and instructions were dictated, the employee is blamed for the failure of the goal and usually faces negative consequences, resulting in low engagement and low self-esteem (Lindberg, 2020b).

Laissez-Faire Leadership Theory

The term *laissez-faire* is a French term meaning “allow to pass” or “leave it be” (Kramer, 2019). The term *laissez-faire* has existed since the early 1700s when the term was associated with schools of economists called the physiocrats, who were against government policies concerning natural economic laws (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014). Kurt Lewin developed the association of *laissez-faire* in leadership in the 1930s. It was related to a style of leadership that was considered the opposite of autocratic, dictatorial leadership (St. Thomas University, 2018).

Laissez-faire leaders, who are the opposite of transformational and transactional leadership, relinquish their subordinates’ supervisory duties (Kalsoom et al., 2018). *Laissez-faire* leaders lack guidance, give employees complete freedom to make decisions, and will not offer opinions on handling vital issues (Carlin, 2019; Kalsoom et al., 2018). School administrators who adopt the *laissez-faire* form of leadership provide little or no effort in school functions (Erdel & Takkac, 2020). According to Erdel and Takkac (2020), *laissez-faire* leaders do not take an active role in making decisions and renounce their authority. These leaders do not express their views, avoid responsibilities, and show no level of authority (Lunenborg & Ornstein, 2022). *Laissez-faire* leaders have high expectations for their employees to solve problems and provide them with all the tools and resources needed to solve those problems (Carlin, 2019).

Fiaz et al. (2017) believed that *laissez-faire* administrators taking non-leadership roles could positively or negatively affect the school environment. According to Fiaz et al., the administrator’s noninvolvement could stimulate highly skilled faculty members to

become engaged in school operations, motivating faculty members. This form of leadership could also show the faculty and the administrator have trust in their decision-making skills. The negative aspect of this form of leadership resulted in reduced job performance. Laissez-faire leaders had minimal retention problems because their employees' made decisions and solved their problems (Carlin, 2019).

Although the laissez-faire leadership style empowered the employees, this leadership form also caused additional stress and anxiety to employees. Critics of laissez-faire leadership believed this form of leadership would lead to decreased motivation and the organization's failure to accomplish necessary goals (Lindberg, 2020a). Employees who worked under laissez-faire leaders were generally confused about assignments and created their assignments (Lindberg, 2020a). Nielsen et al. (2019) described laissez-faire's non-responsive, avoidance leadership style as destructive to an organization. Laissez-faire leadership can cause increased stress, health problems, reduced job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion to employees (Nielsen et al., 2019).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concept

Administrative support for teachers during incidents of student violence is essential to retention in schools. McMahon et al. (2020) studied student violence directed toward teachers and found that over 50% of new teachers leave the profession in their first year. In a study on student violence against teachers, Melinda et al. (2018) found that the teachers who reported violence from students also expressed dissatisfaction with their work conditions. Melinda et al. indicated the need to create public policies to address violence in schools directly.

Teachers who failed to report violent incidents thought they would not receive support from their school administrators (Anderman et al., 2018). McMahon et al. (2020), in a qualitative study focused on the reasons for repeated incidents of student violence directed toward teachers, noted that the lack of administrative support was associated with the number of repeated victimizations. The research findings indicated the need for school administrators to clarify their role in student violent directed incidents against teachers. Huang et al. (2017) indicated a direct correlation between active administrative support and fewer incidents of violence against teachers. Huang et al. further provided insight into the effects administrative support has on school climate and teachers' feelings about the school administrators' supportiveness.

Identifying the role of school administrators is essential in addressing the type of support teachers receive. To better understand school administrators' role in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers, it is crucial to identify each school administrator's leadership traits. By identifying the leadership traits, teachers and school administrators will better understand teachers' reactions to student violence incidents.

Administrative Support

McMahon et al. (2017) identified administrative support during student violence incidents against teachers as a critical determinant of teacher retention in the educational field. Some teachers subjected to violence from students failed to report the incident due to the fear of an administrator's adverse reaction (Anderman et al., 2018). After the event occurred, these teachers chose to cope with the incident, which ultimately resulted in the teachers blaming themselves for the incident and eventually leaving the teaching

profession (Anderman et al., 2018). In 2020, Al-Maghaireh and Al-Kawafha's research focused on the negative consequences of effective teachers who experienced student violence in Jordan schools. In this study, each teacher interviewed expressed the lack of administrative support as a notable negative impact on the educational environment (Al-Maghaireh & Al-Kawafha, 2020). One of the suggestions made called for school administrators to create stringent measures to assure school safety and protection of teachers and minimize violence prevalence. Bounds and Jenkins (2018) surveyed teachers to examine the type and frequency of teacher violence they experienced and identify the types of social support they sought when these incidents occurred. Since many teachers reported feeling uncomfortable reporting incidents to their administrator, the researchers suggested that creating these policies makes teachers feel safe in the work environment and would help them feel more comfortable reporting incidents to school administrators (Bounds & Jenkins, 2018). This study indicated the need for administrative support for the teacher involved in student violence incidents and the need to develop a system where teachers feel comfortable reporting incidents to their administrators.

Teacher Retention

School administrators are responsible for selecting teachers, retention, dismissing, and initiating directives from the school district (Versland & Erickson, 2017). Since the number of student violence incidents continues to rise, teachers who experience violence by students typically fail to report these incidents due to the administrator's adverse reactions (Anderman et al., 2018). This lack of rapport and basic communication between

the school administrator and the teacher has caused teachers to leave the educational field within their first 5 years of teaching (Moon et al., 2019). Versland and Erickson (2017), in a study on teacher longevity in urban public schools, stated that one of the significant components of why teachers stayed in under-resourced schools was their relationship with the school administrator. The study also identified that over 70% of the teachers leave schools and districts within the first 5 years of teaching, which doubles the attrition rate each year. As a result of the attrition rate, schools across the country seek to find teachers to fill positions vacated by those who have either transferred to another school or left the teaching profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Versland and Erickson, in a study on teacher attrition and retention, said that teachers who desired encouragement and acknowledgment from their administrator often were left unacknowledged, creating feelings of low morale (Versland & Erickson, 2017).

Teacher Victimization

School violence is a social problem that has recently received much attention (O & Wilcox, 2017). Typically, when school violence is discussed, the discussion is focused on students victimizing or bullying other students and rarely on violence against teachers. Will (2018), in a study focusing on student violence against teachers, concluded that over 5.8% of the 3.8 million teachers reported being attacked by a student. Yang et al. (2019) indicated the number of male teachers reporting physical victimization outnumbered the number of female teachers reporting non-physical victimization. Although the reasons students attack teachers were unknown, research studies discussed students' lifestyles, activities, gender, and age as violence indicators. O and Wilcox's (2017) study on student

victimization of teachers further noted that students targeted their teachers for many different reasons. Teachers' limited physical strength, size, or status, or the teacher's ability to antagonize the student, are also factors that make them victims of their students (O & Wilcox, 2017).

Teacher victimization from students has become one reason teachers leave the teaching profession (Moon et al., 2020). In a study on teacher victimization, Moon et al. (2020) examined the negative behaviors based on Agnew's general strain theory. Moon et al. indicated that all types of victimization were predictors for teacher transfer or exit attrition. The researcher further indicated that despite the teacher's level of victimization, their decision to leave the profession or transfer was based on the school administrator's lack of support and ineffective intervention (Moon et al., 2020). The results of Moon and McCluskey's (2020) study align with previous studies conducted by McMahon et al. (2017), which determined that in the cases which involved student victimization, the teachers were dissatisfied with the administrators' response.

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 began with exploring the administrative support of teachers involved in student violence incidents. The literature research strategy was defined by searching for terms utilizing different databases to explore this topic's literature. The theories of this conceptual framework were teacher retention, teacher victimization, and administrative support. The literature review emphasized the significant need to provide support to teachers who were involved in student violence. The research focused on teachers and

administrators in urban schools to better understand the school administrator's leadership style in supporting teachers victimized by a student.

The literature review topics were selected to improve understanding of the need for teachers to be supported by school administrators in incidents of student violence and how school administrators' leadership style affects the support teachers receive. Teachers affected by student violence failed to report the incidents because of the fear of negative repercussions from their administrators. As a result, many teachers leave the teaching profession altogether because they feel the school administrators do not adequately support them. The disconnect between employer and employee is directly attributed to communication, as is expected with their management style. Furthermore, understanding and adjusting the administrator's leadership style could increase teacher attrition and retention rates in school systems.

Research showed teachers who had established rapport with their school administrators were more likely to remain at their school, despite other adverse conditions. The literature identified the effective leadership styles that promote the school's academic success while promoting a safe learning environment. Although school administrators' styles were discussed, which leadership style effectively provided the teachers with the support and safety they desired is unknown. The methodology used to gather information from school administrators and teachers to understand the leadership styles and how they support teachers involved in student violence incidents is explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This basic qualitative study was focused on the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding teacher support in student violence incidents. In this chapter, I describe the research design and rationale for the study; my role as the researcher; and the methodology used, including the participant selection logic, instrumentation, data analysis, trustworthiness, and other ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

This basic qualitative research study addressed two research questions to determine the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the provision of teacher support in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. I designed the questions to identify the leadership style of the school administrator and its connections to the type of support teachers receive in incidents of student violence. The research questions were:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of teachers in a K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school district as to the role and leadership style of administrators when responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

RQ2: How do school administrators in a K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school district perceive their role and leadership style in responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

In this study, I identified inconsistencies in the perceptions of support between teachers and school administrators regarding incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) described qualitative research as a study that views an individual's experiences and perspectives. The qualitative research process involves viewing individuals' contexts and how their context shapes people's lives and individual interpretations of their world (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Merriam and Grenier (2019) described qualitative research as an approach derived from real-world needs; therefore, the collaboration between the researcher and the participants is important because the information generated produces a new understanding of the concept and the need for changes in policy, programs, and practices. To ensure that problem-solving collaboration between the researcher and the participant is evident, qualitative design methods must show the study's validity and reliability (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

In this study, I conducted Zoom, open-ended, semistructured interviews to allow teachers and administrators to elaborate on their perceptions of support in incidents of student violence. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that successful, responsive interviews must include components where the researcher and the interviewee establish a trustful relationship. Creating a trustful relationship encourages open, honest, and detailed responses from the interviewees (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Using the qualitative interactive method, I developed interview questions that helped me identify the common themes among the perceptions of teachers and administrators. Applying this qualitative interactive method allowed me to select a specific sample size of teachers and administrators who could provide the necessary information for this study's success. I

then coded, analyzed, and reported the information from the participants' interview responses.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated the methodological approach of a study stems from the researcher's epistemological leaning, existing theory, and research. The shaping of a qualitative study is based on the methodological approach and the study's conceptual framework (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Since this study focused on the perceptions of teachers and administrators in examining the type of support teachers received in incidents of student violence, I chose to use the basic qualitative research approach. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the purpose of basic qualitative research is to examine how people make sense of their life experiences based on an interview, observation, or document analysis. In analyzing the data obtained from the interview responses of teachers and administrators, I hoped to inform the educational system at the district and state levels of the effect that school administrators' leadership styles have on the teachers' perceptions of support in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

I also considered other qualitative research designs for this study. The narrative research inquiry approach was disregarded because Clandinin et al. (2017) described this design as focusing on a phenomenon through individual experiences. Based on Dewey's theory of understanding experiences, narrative research/inquiry draws attention to a person's past events by focusing on the reactions, conditions, and contextual forces (Caine et al., 2018; Clandinin et al., 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because the

narrative research approach draws attention to an individual's life experiences in a story form with a beginning, middle, and ending, it was not suitable for this study.

Similarly, I did not select the case study design for this study because this approach mainly concentrates on the observations, interviews, and artifacts from one direct source (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although the case study design is generally used to examine a person's real-life encounters, it focuses solely on one individual's experiences. Because this study addressed the viewpoints of teachers and administrators from various backgrounds and grade levels, using the case study approach would not have adequately addressed this study's needs or scope.

The phenomenology approach was not selected because it delves into individuals' subjective realities, insights, motivations, and actions (see Qutoshi, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described phenomenology as a research design that describes an individual's life experiences' basic structure. The phenomenological study's results provide a deeper understanding of human consciousness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, I investigated the perceptions of teachers and administrators, so the phenomenological approach was unsuitable.

I did not select the grounded theory design because the focus of this study was on the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding providing support in incidents of student violence directed against teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools and was not on developing a new theory. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that grounded theory was based on qualitative research from observations, interviews, and data sources important to developing a new theory. Although I acquired data from interviews in this

study, the information obtained was used to better understand the administrative support provided to teachers in student violence incidents and was not used to develop a new theory.

Role of the Researcher

As an African American educator with 19 years of experience, I have held many positions in the educational system. As a classroom teacher, I began my years in academia at an elementary school. As the years progressed, so did my career. I transitioned into the middle and high school setting, where I advanced through the rankings and eventually held leadership positions. In each of these leadership roles, I was placed in a situation where I experienced a form of violence from students and, as an administrator, had to provide support to teachers involved in student violence. The knowledge obtained from these experiences has given me an understanding of the administrator's role and the teacher's feelings of receiving inadequate or nonsupport from administrators.

In this study, my role as the researcher required me to assure my position and social location. Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) described positionality and social location as the central and essential components in understanding the researcher's role. Positionality identifies the researcher's role and relationship with participants based on the study's setting, topic, and context (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Regarding social identity, the researcher should express that they are cognizant of the interactions and other identity markers at play in the study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Although I did not have direct communication with the employees in the schools

represented in this study, my role as the researcher was to select participants, conduct interviews, and collect and analyze data.

Methodology

In this section, I describe the instrumentation and collection instruments used in this study, as well as provide the procedures used to recruit participants and collect and analyze the resulting data. In interviews, I asked the participants semistructured, open-ended questions to gain their perceptions of the support provided to teachers regarding incidents of student violence. The section begins with a discussion of the participation logic selection.

Participant Selection Logic

I created a field journal to keep a steady record of my progress and notes throughout the study. As such, there is a steady audit trail of all data and findings from project initiation through conclusion. This journal was potentially the most important tool for organizational and data collection purposes.

The participants of this study were eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators employed at two separate K–12 urban, southern Louisiana district schools. Teachers selected for this study had 3 or more years of teaching experience and observed incidents of student violence directed toward teachers in their schools. The administrators chosen for this study had 3 or more years of experience and addressed incidents of student violence directed toward teachers.

After receiving Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this study, I recruited participants by emailing teachers and administrators through their

school district-assigned email addresses. The participants' names and places of employment are not identified in this study. In the study data, I identified school administrators and teachers by the positions they held at the time: Teachers working in Grades K–12 in urban southern Louisiana were identified by the letter T followed by alphabet letters A to H, while administrators working in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools were identified using the letter A followed by alphabet letters A to H.

Based on the interest received, I contacted the prospective participants to provide each with the informed consent form and asked that they establish a time for an online meeting through Zoom. Once interviews were conducted, I audio-recorded participants' responses and transcribed the responses with Otter.ai to identify common themes and subthemes. After transcribing the responses, I emailed each participant a copy of the interview transcript to review to ensure its accuracy and allow them to add additional responses or make any necessary changes.

Instrumentation

The research instrument I used in data collection was semi structured, open-ended interview questions about the participants' perceptions of the support teachers receive from school administrators in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. To ascertain the sentiments of support from teachers and school administrators, I created interview questions that focused on school administrators' leadership styles and how these leadership styles affect the perception of support teachers receive in student violence and incidents directed toward teachers. I first created two research questions focused on the opinions of teachers and school administrators. Based on these research

questions, I designed seven interview questions to better understand the participants' perceptions of the teacher support received from administrators in response to student violence.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I provided participants for the study with an allotted time and an online link to participate in the face-to-face interview via Zoom. Each participant was allowed 40 to 45 minutes for each interview, which was extended to 60 minutes based on the follow-up questions. I audio-recorded all interviews using Zoom online conferencing. After completing the interviews, I transcribed them using Otter.ai and sent each participant a copy of their responses for their review and to add additional information. After I received the participant's final approval of the transcription, I used NVivo to code the transcripts to identify common themes. There was no compensation offered for participation in this study, but I did send each participant an email thanking them for participating.

Data Analysis Plan

The semi structured, open-ended interview questions I created for this study helped to understand the perceptions of school administrators and teachers of the provision of administrator support regarding incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. I transcribed the participants' interview responses using Otter.ai and coded the transcriptions using NVivo. According to Saldaña (2016), coding with NVivo provides a real-time method of concepts from the participants' language. NVivo coding uses words or short phrases to outline cultural codes (Saldaña, 2016). Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl

(2016) stated that coding is a process of translating data that explains or describes analytic ideas.

Although there are no right or wrong ways to approach qualitative research, it is crucial to analyze coded data to identify its common themes to confirm validity (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). While coding organizes and breaks down data into identifiable themes, there is the need for additional coding to ensure the behaviors and processes of coding responses are grouped into a smaller number of codes. The second coding method I used in this study is member checking. Member checking can be used as a stimulus in developing statements and describing significant themes, action patterns, and theoretical constructs (Saldaña, 2016). I maintained an audit trail of the data analysis and progress by maintaining field notes.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is vital to enhancing a qualitative study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Checkpoints of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability ensure the research study's trustworthiness (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) described credibility as a researcher's ability to consider the study's complexities and address difficult-to-understand patterns. The strategies I used to maintain credibility included member checking, which allows participants to review their interview responses, peer examiners, and a field journal for cross-verification of events and notes (see Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016).

Dependability identifies the stability of the data collected in the study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). I assured the adequateness of the data collection plan as a

strategy for assuring this study's dependability (see Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Another trustworthiness component, transferability, identifies the research study's ability to be applied to a broader context. To ensure transferability for this study, I provided detailed descriptions of the data to allow readers to compare the data to other contexts and use the researched data in other related areas (see Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016).

Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) described confirmability as how the research study's data are relative and free of bias and prejudices. For the study to meet the criteria of confirmability, it is essential to utilize peer examinations and external audits (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). By incorporating strategies such as detailed data description, member checking, and peer examination, I structured the study so that the measuring instruments confirmed the trustworthiness of this study (see Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). Furthermore, I was able to cross-check the participant responses with the notes in my field journal, thus conducting internal audits and leaving a trail of the data.

Ethical Procedures

Ravitch and Mittenfelner-Carl (2016) described ethics in a qualitative study as multifaceted, complex, contextual, emergent, and relational, which requires researchers to consider their roles with humility and understanding. I sought approval from the Walden University IRB before beginning the study as an expression of my humility and understanding of this study. Once I received IRB approval, I sent email invitations to school administrators and teachers in the districts seeking participants and detailing the

study's criteria. After the participating school administrators and teachers were selected, they received consent forms to sign indicating their agreement to participate in the study.

As the interviews were conducted, I ensured the participants understood that in my role as the researcher, I would remain neutral and that they could trust that their audio-recorded interview responses would remain confidential and be stored in my home office on a password-secured laptop and USB drive for 5 years. To make the participants comfortable communicating their thoughts, I informed them that their responses would be identified by specific codes, which I would not divulge to anyone unless they agreed. I also created safe environments for participants by holding the interview sessions through Zoom conferencing. Adding to the personalized experience, participants were sent an individualized invitation code asking them to be in an area where they felt safe before logging into the session. This also increased their overall sense of comfort with the proceedings. I, as the interviewer, was also in an area where there were no distractions so that the participants knew they had my full attention.

During the interview process, participants had the opportunity to ask questions, provide additional information, and withdraw from the study. In the case that a participant chose to withdraw from the study, I would have sought additional participants to maintain the study's guidelines and meet the sample size requirements. Participants were informed that their audio-recorded interview responses would be stored in my home for 5 years on a password-secured laptop and USB drive. I also guaranteed that I would be the only person with access to the laptop and that this laptop would only be used to access the software to transcribe their responses. Before each interview, I provided the

participants with a copy of the informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study and reminded them that the information they provided in the study would be destroyed after 5 years.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I outlined this research study's design, research questions, and concepts. The chapter also includes a discussion of the interview process, the methodology, and ethical issues that assured this study's trustworthiness. The study results and the data collection and analysis processes are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

In this basic qualitative study, I examined the perceptions of teachers and school administrators on the administrative support provided regarding incidents of student violence. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of teachers in a K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school district as to the role and leadership style of administrators when responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

RQ2: How do school administrators in a K – 12 urban southern Louisiana school district perceive their role and leadership style in responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

In this chapter, I describe the setting, data analysis, data results, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Setting

The participants in this study worked in two neighboring urban school districts in the southern portion of Louisiana. According to the U.S. News and World Report (2022), one district educates over 49,800 students, has an 80% ethnic group enrollment, and provides services to 45.4% of the economically disadvantaged students in the area. The neighboring school district serves approximately 5,900 students, has a 90% ethnic group enrollment, and serves 45.1% of the district's economically disadvantaged students (U.S. News and World Report, 2022). The administrators and teachers had 3 or more years of experience in the educational field and were willing to provide their perceptions of student violence directed toward teachers. At the time of the study, no personal

experiences or organizational conditions influenced the participants' responses or affected my interpretation of the study results.

Data Collection

After obtaining Walden University IRB approval (Approval No. 08-17-21-0743768), I began the recruitment process for this study. All the participants were employed in urban K–12 schools in southern Louisiana, had 3 or more years of experience, and either witnessed or responded to student violence directed toward teachers. Eight K–12 teachers and administrators responded to my recruitment email. Once the participants replied to the email, I sent a return email that included the informed consent form and a request for a time to schedule their interview. Due to scheduling conflicts and participants altering their decision to be interviewed, it took 11 to 20 weeks to get consent from the eight K-12 administrators and eight K-12 teachers. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, my data collection process was limited to Zoom interviews. I collected data from the participants using separate interview questions for teachers and administrators to identify their perceptions of student violence directed toward teachers. Approximately 45 to 60 minutes was reserved for each interview, and the interviews were audio-recorded with audio only to uphold the confidentiality of the participants.

Before beginning the interview, I introduced myself and thanked the participant for taking the time to participate in the interview. For the Zoom interview, a PowerPoint presentation was created to explain the purpose of the study and outline the different forms of student violence the study would spotlight. The participants were informed that their interview responses were being audio recorded only for transcription purposes. I

further notified each participant that I would email them a copy of the transcript to allow them to make changes if necessary. Participants' names and identities were kept confidential with pseudonyms, and all the collected data remained private. The participants were further advised that the collected data would be used for educational purposes only, and they had the option to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Before asking the first interview question, participants were asked if they had any questions and wished to continue the study. Each participant wanted to continue with the study and had no questions.

During the interview, I provided clarification of the interview questions and follow-up questions to the participants. After each interview, audio recordings were transcribed using Otter.ai. I listened to each interview recording to confirm the accuracy of the interviewees' responses and emailed copies of the transcripts to the participants for member checking. While some participants added more details to their interview transcripts, all transcripts received participant approval. Since no participants asked for a follow-up interview or requested any additional changes to their interview transcripts, no variations to the interview transcripts were made aside from the initial adjustments. The transcripts and audio-recorded interviews will be kept in a file on my password-protected laptop, which will be kept in my home. All data collected for this study will remain in my home office for 5 years after the completion of this study. No participants were compensated for their participation in this study, but I did thank each participant and invited them to contact me at any time via email or phone with questions or concerns in the future.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I collected data by conducting the participant interviews via Zoom. I used NVivo to complete the coding process because this program's user-friendly interface allowed me to find trends and common themes from my interviews faster. There were no inconsistencies encountered during the data collection process. If any inconsistencies had been encountered, I would have discussed them in the findings.

Data Analysis

I assigned all participants a coded pseudonym to protect their identity. Each teacher and administrator was given a leading letter (i.e., teachers were given the letter T and administrators the letter A) followed by a referring letter (i.e., TA, TB, AA, AB, etc.). The inclusion criteria for this study were that the participants must be administrators and teachers with 3 years or more of experience in the educational field and who had witnessed or responded to student violence directed toward teachers. The teachers' years of experience ranged from 4 to 49 years. A summary of the participants' demographics is shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Teacher Participant Demographics*

Participant (Code)	Gender	Years of Experience	Highest Level of Education	Grade Levels(s)	Race
Teacher A (TA)	Male	15 years	Masters	Elementary K–8	African American
Teacher B (TB)	Female	26 years	Masters	Elementary 3–5	African American
Teacher C (TC)	Female	4 years	Bachelors	High 9–12	African American
Teacher D (TD)	Female	49 years	Masters	High 9-12	African American
Teacher E (TE)	Female	4 Years	Masters	Middle 6-8	African American
Teacher F (TF)	Female	9 years	Bachelors	High 9-12	African American
Teacher G (TG)	Male	28 years	Bachelors	Elementary K–6	African American
Teacher H (TH)	Female	4 years	Bachelors	High 9–12	African American

The administrators' years of experience ranged from 3 to 18 years. A summary of the administrator participants' demographics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Administrator Participant Demographics*

Participant (Code)	Gender	Years of Experience	Highest Level of Education	Administrative Grade Level	Race
Administrator A (AA)	Female	14 years	Masters	Middle/High 8-12	African American
Administrator B (AB)	Female	9 years	Masters	High School 9-12	African American
Administrator C (AC)	Female	3 years	Masters	Elementary K-8	African American
Administrator D (AD)	Female	3 years	Masters	Elementary K-8	African American
Administrator E (AE)	Female	5 years	Masters	Middle 6-8	African American
Administrator F (AF)	Male	8 years	Masters	High School 8-12	African American
Administrator G (AG)	Female	8 years	Masters	Elementary K-8	African American
Administrator H (AH)	Female	18 years	Doctorate	Middle School 6-8	African American

I used thematic analysis to analyze the data for this study. Once the participants confirmed their transcripts were accurate, NVivo was used to code the interviews. As I reviewed the transcripts, common codes and codes of key phases were identified and color-coded. After the coding and recoding process was completed, 22 distinct codes emerged from the interview responses of the administrators and teachers: supporting teachers, counseling support services, limited, non-existent, school-based support, school district regulations, gap, school administration, hindrance, leadership style, transformational leadership, laid-back leadership style, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, student behavior, level of violence, school-based violence, and student violence incidents. I then organized the codes, phases, and responses into themes that answered the research questions: teachers should receive ongoing administrative support, school district regulations hinder administrative support of teachers, leadership styles determine the type of support teachers receive, and the level of violence determines the type of support a teacher receives. Table 3 displays a thematic map of the codes and themes associated with the research questions.

Table 3*Thematic Map of Codes and Themes Associated With the Research Questions*

Codes	Themes
Supporting teachers, counseling support services, school-based support, limited, non-existent	Teachers should receive ongoing administrative support
School district regulations gaps, school administration, school district, hindrance	School district regulations hinder the administrative support of teachers
Leadership style, transformational leadership, laid-back leadership style, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership	Leadership styles determine the type of support teachers receive
Level of violence, student behavior, school-based violence, student violence incidents, special education teacher, regular education teacher	The type of violence determines the level of support received

Table 4 shows the additional correlation between the codes and the quotes (see Appendix). There was no evidence of conflicting data indicated in this study. If there was a case of any conflicting data results, I would have followed the procedures outlined in Chapter 3 that discussed the inconsistencies in the findings.

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of administrators and teachers in response to student violence in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. The codes and common themes generated from the interview responses of the administrators and teachers resulted in the basis for the thematic analysis used for interpretation. The four themes developed from the collected data were teachers should receive ongoing administrative support, school district regulations hinder administrative support of

teachers, leadership styles determine the type of support teachers receive, and the level of violence determines the type of support a teacher receives.

Theme 1: Teachers Should Receive Ongoing Administrative Support

The consensus of the administrators was that they perceived they provided teachers with support after a student violence incident. Administrators, such as AC, felt the importance of providing support to teachers to help them (i.e., teachers) feel nurtured and protected in the work environment. AA claimed, “Teachers wanted the administrator’s support, even if they [teachers] are at fault.” AH believed it was important for administrators to support teachers in ways that made the teachers feel safe in the classroom:

My perception of myself is that I have to support teachers in as many ways as I can. If the violent event were to happen on my watch, as an administrator, I would ensure that the teacher involved would have all support necessary. This would include counseling and comp time if needed. This is especially important because you hate to lose good effective teachers, but their safety is first.

AD stressed the benefits of providing support in making sure teachers are all right after incidents of student violence and can move on after the incident has occurred. AD stated,

The administrator’s role is to first try to prevent the incidents as much as possible. But if it does happen, you must provide teachers with strategies for handling the situation and support afterward. You need to make sure the teacher is all right and able to move on after the event. The type of support would be in the form of

professional development and modeling strategies for that teacher in that atmosphere with those students. Also, it is important to have an open-door policy to have teachers discuss concerns they might have.

When asked about the type of support provided to teachers after a student violence incident, although all administrators admitted they maintain an open-door policy, each stated their support comes in various forms. Recognizing that many schools do not have school counselors, AC expressed the importance of listening to the teacher's concerns and maintaining an open-door policy for teachers:

I would listen to their concerns and offer support for them to talk to someone outside of the school. Most schools do have counselors, our schools do not, but working in other schools, the counselors have volunteered to counsel students and teachers. I have said that my doors are open if you need someone to talk to. If we had an on-campus counselor for them to talk to and also offer training on conflict resolution to build relationships with students and parents.

AD further discussed that they checked on teachers on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the teacher, situation, and type of violence the teacher experienced:

I checked in with them daily if it is an extreme case. If it was not extreme, I checked in on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the teacher, person, and the situation. I would reiterate what we discussed before as far as different needs and strategies, coping mechanisms, or whatever they needed to move forward.

AB articulated the significant impact and mutual benefit that can result from speaking with teachers person-to-person and felt that having open communication with

teachers allowed the teacher to self-discover what could have been done differently, providing an opportunity for growth and development. AB said,

We have conversations in terms of not as a leader, a teacher, or an administrator. I am speaking with the teacher person-to-person because what happened to them was personal. This violence attacked them personally, so we talked on a personal level. I then mainly let the teacher do more of the talking for self-discovery of what took place, and what could have been the best way to handle the situation. So, it's little things that matter and I always tell my teachers to come and talk to me because sometimes you just need to vent and get it all out. This is how I feel I support my teachers.

Although teachers agreed that administrators should provide school-based counseling support to teachers involved in student violent incidents, their views on the support received after a violent incident differ. While some teachers thought of their administrators as mentors and peer counselors who have created a safe environment, other teachers felt their administrators did not provide guidance or any form of support.

TG argued that administrators should be hands-on and actively involved in what is going on in the school:

My perception regarding the role of the school administrator in providing support in student violence incidents is they should be hands-on and actively involved in what's going on at the school. As a leader, it is their responsibility to provide safe areas, mentoring, conflict resolution, interventions to address issues, peer

consultations, counseling, and school-wide assemblies to support violence. The leader should be transparent, consistent, and fair in providing support.

TD suggested that the administrator should be fair in providing support and proactive in handling teachers' complaints:

My perception is the administrator should be a mediator and an investigator as to what caused the incident that was reported. As far as providing support, I think that they should provide support to both the teacher and the student without negating either person. They should be fair in their assessment deliberation when dealing with the situation. They should be more proactive in their approach to the discipline problem. They should have a system in place for handling these types of complaints.

Furthermore, TA believed administrators should be a buffer between the teachers and the students and have the ability to diffuse situations before they escalate:

I feel the school administrator should be the buffer between the students and the teacher. If a teacher comes to an administrator saying they are being bullied or the students are trying to do something, the administration should be able to know to diffuse the situation before it gets out of hand.

Teachers describing the type of support received after a student violence incident differed from the views of the administrators. While some teachers were confident that their administrators ensured their well-being, other teachers expressed feelings they received limited or no support. TC offered, "Although their administrator checked on the teacher throughout the day and did everything possible to assure the teacher's well-being,

the administrator only offered that the teacher only talked to a school counselor about the incident.” TB discussed the efforts the administrator made in stabilizing situations but indicated that the majority of the support teachers receive came from outside sources:

Well, they provided counseling support services as a resource through a third-party entity. He provided this type of intervention that tries to help, but it doesn't stop that student if they come back into the classroom and repeats the behavior.

He also tries to stabilize the classroom environment to reiterate the expectation for the learning to put everybody at ease. But the majority of the support after a violent incident occurs comes from an external support system that's brought in to help the teacher.

Other teachers also reported receiving limited support from their administrators.

TA discussed how their administrator provided no support and no empathy for teachers:

She was supportive, in a way, but it was someone she knew on a personal basis. I don't know how to answer this question, because I have never witnessed her assist a teacher, other than the one I mentioned. There were no discussions on what changes can we make so this will not happen again, no offers to take the day off, or no other forms of compassion. And if she did this to someone she knows, how would she act with someone whom she doesn't know? She has no empathy.

Other teachers reported they did not receive support from the administrators and conveyed the administrator's focus was on supporting students, which resulted in the teacher being suspended. TE elaborated on the concept of teachers receiving support from the school's counselor and not the administrator:

I have not seen any support and we do have students who have shown violence toward teachers (kicking, spitting, hitting). I have not seen anyone from the district other than the school counselor trying to assist the teacher with students who are being violent. I would think the leader would reach out to the district to receive support. There is no direct support from the administrator.

Theme 2: School District Regulations Hinders the Administrative Support to Teachers

Administrators and teachers discussed their perceptions of the school district hindering school administrators' ability to support teachers. All teachers and administrators agreed the school district hindered the ability of administrators to provide support to teachers involved in incidents of student violence. Furthermore, AB believed the restrictions placed on administrators were the cause of teacher burnout and one of the reasons teachers leave the profession after a violent incident.

AA felt the school district operated on behalf of the students and was more focused on limiting the legalities and lawsuits than on providing support for the teacher:

I do feel that district regulations guide decisions which sometimes is a hindrance to making sure that the teachers feel as safe and supported as they need to. I believe the district operates too much on the side of the student, who has committed violence against teachers. I don't think the teachers feel supported by the district in these incidents. I believe the administration, and the local administrators at the school, try to support the teachers. I don't believe the district

does enough to support teachers, they are more concerned about lawsuits and legalities.

Likewise, AC explained that the school district had regulations that were designed to address student discipline actions and do not address how to support teachers:

The school district regulates the discipline side of it. So, if this happens, this is what you do for the students, but I believe they are lacking on the teacher's side of it. What are you doing for these teachers' social and emotional well-being? I think that's lacking and when I deal with situations, I go on my personal experiences, and things I have read. But it is nothing that has been district-regulated.

AE believed the protocols the district placed on school administrators hindered the administrator's ability to support teachers.

Yes, we have protocols we must follow. For instance, if you bring a knife to school, the guidelines in the state's statute of discipline say it must be between a two-inch to two-in-a-half-inch knife. A child can bring a two-inch knife to school, they will receive disciplinary action. But if they bring a two-in-a-half-inch knife, and you must measure it, then those actions can lead to expulsion.

Teachers also agreed the school districts place limitations on administrators when providing support in student violence incidents and believed the district regulations were the reason many teachers are suspended and fired by the school district. Teachers thought the school district's focus was on protecting the students and limiting the number of lawsuits brought on by parents.

Similarly, TC feels the limitations the school district has placed on the administrators, caused them to encourage teachers to file police reports in incidents of violence:

The administrator liked to address students who were violent with someone on his campus, but their actions are limited because of the district's rules and regulations they must follow. Therefore, he tells teachers involved in these incidents, to file a police report and make sure to have their documentation. He does this because there are rules, he must follow. I am sure if it was up to him, he would make final decisions on students being expelled from school because the district has rules about these types of incidents, and his hand is tied on many occasions.

Ultimately, TG discussed the limitations the school district placed on administrators when handling the discipline of students who were involved in student violence incidents:

Yes, I most definitely feel that school district regulations guide the decisions made by school administrators in incidents of student violence toward teachers. Administrators can suspend or expel students in moderation. They are limited in what they can do and if you have too many students getting put out, administrators get called down. Therefore, you must deal with each situation differently and be mindful of your final results. They must adhere to the district's regulations in making their decisions.

Administrators and teachers expressed their ideas on how the school district regulations created disparities when providing support to teachers in student violence

incidents. TH felt the district was out of touch and did not have a pulse on what is going on in the schools. TH added the school district was busy sending down mandates and directives and they did not know what was occurring on a day-to-day basis.

AA discussed the restrictions placed on administrators when trying to support teachers involved in student violence incidents:

The school district made the school administrators and teachers feel that if I breathe, we are wrong. The child knows this and comes to school and causes havoc. We see it all too often on the news. The Tik-Tok type challenges going on right now for students to punch their teacher in the face because they know that the adult is not to touch the child back. That has been the battle cry from teachers and educators. What can I, as an administrator, put in place that says even if the child hits or incite violence on a teacher and the teacher reacts? What method of recourse do we have as a school or as a teacher? What protection do we have in the schoolhouse? What methods and protection do we have other than you are not supposed to hit a child?

Theme 3: Leadership Styles Determine the Type of Support Teachers Receive

Administrators and teachers provided their perceptions of their administrator's leadership style. The codes associated with this theme are leadership style, transformational leadership, laid-back leadership style, transactional leadership, laissez-faire, and leadership. All eight elementary, middle, and high school administrators perceived themselves as transformational leaders. They also admitted to altering their leadership styles depending on the incident and occasion.

AA expressed that as a transformational leader, it is important to lead by example and stimulate the faculty to strive for excellence:

I feel that I am more of a transformational leader. I believe I display attributes that stimulate my followers to exceed their standard capabilities and strive for excellent performance. But I try to lead by example and try to instill in the teachers and the staff to follow my example or to achieve more than they thought they could. Anyway, I try to get them to realize their full potential.

AD admitted although their leadership style is transformational, at times, it fluctuates to laissez-faire:

In my mind, I would like to say that I am transformational, with some characteristics of laissez-faire. I like to empower the teachers and anybody I'm employed with to make decisions on their own because we are all adults and graduated from some institute of higher learning. In my mind, transformational in the fact that I'm not trying to be a charismatic, verbal go-on microphone-type leader. I say laissez-faire because I want everyone to have ownership of their ideas. I'm not too laissez-faire, but I'm not going to stand over you and try to micro-manage you the entire time.

AB believed their leadership is situational, switching between transformational and transactional leadership, depending on the situation:

I think that in any given situation I show transactional or transformational leadership, but I rarely show laissez-faire leadership. It depends on the situation and which leadership style you must take, it's not like one size fits all. In

transformation, I'm always in the mode because you can be in a schoolhouse or an element where everything is going fine, but if you have expectations you don't want to plateau. But when it comes to how I would describe my leadership style I'm a bit of all three.

AC, who also acknowledged themselves as a transformational leader, felt it is important to be supportive and motivate teachers:

I would describe myself as a transformational leader. I am supportive and motivating toward my coworkers. When teachers are involved in student violence incidents, having that type of leadership helps me have a more personal connection with teachers. Being that I know that I was in that role, I know what it takes to be a classroom teacher. I know the steps of what it takes to support a teacher and motivate them to continue doing what they are doing.

Teachers professed to their administrators displaying all the leadership styles in varying degrees. Only two of the eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers identified their administrator's leadership style as transformational and supportive, while other teachers identified that their administrators displayed transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

TG describes their transformational administrator's leadership style as warm, sincere, and encouraging:

My perception of my school administrator's leadership style is positive and sincere. Her style is transformational, and I feel her style does allow us to have a voice. She focuses on what is important and the vision of our school. She's

enthusiastic and strives to have staff on board, but she doesn't make anyone do anything. She encourages us to be creative and watching her energy and how she is all over the place assisting wherever she's needed makes the staff want to go above and beyond the call of duty. She's not controlling and not out to get anyone. She gets in where she fits in and is eager to assist whenever anyone reaches out for assistance.

TH, who also identified their administrator as transformational, explains that their administrator values their input and implements their ideas in the school:

I would say my administrator has a transformational leadership style. I say this based on surveys that have been given and the actions that had taken place after surveys. The administrator values the input from the faculty and implemented ideas in the functioning of the school.

The remaining six teachers viewed their administrators' leadership style as either laissez-faire or transactional and provided limited or no support to teachers. TE, who identified their administrator as transactional, described the administrator as one who would not give support and would reprimand teachers in front of students.

TD, who categorized their administrator as transactional due to the controlling attributes displayed, offered:

My most recent administrator was more of a transactional leader. By that, she was a person who had to control everything. Even though she would ask for your input, it was just a formality and not a reality. She would ask for your input but then she would implement her methods. So, she did not incorporate what her staff

felt would make the school a team. As a transactional leader, I feel that she did address short-term goals for the system, but not for the school to make the school a better functioning entity where people felt that were a part of a team and that they were working together.

TB acknowledged that their administrator's leadership style is laissez-faire and struggles to show transformative leadership qualities comments:

I would say my current administrator's style was laissez-faire, however, I think what he aspired to be is a transformative leader. He is struggling to balance out the two in terms of wanting to provide the support and due diligence to make sure that we need. But I do believe that because of some constraints that he may have, either from the community perspective or from his supervisor (district level), he has been temperate, where he has displayed a laissez-faire attitude. He is not respected for the transformational activities he wants to do at the school.

Teachers adding additional comments spoke about the limits of the administrative styles placed on the support they received in incidents of student violence. While TA, who described their administrators' leadership style as laissez-faire said there was no structure in the school, TD referred to their administrator as a transactional leader, who stifled the growth of the school because she felt intimidated by faculty members who had more knowledge than she did.

Theme 4: Type of Violence Determines the Level of Support Received

Finally, administrators and teachers discussed their perceptions of how administrators' leadership styles guide their actions and decisions in providing support in

student violence incidents. The codes for this theme were level of violence, student behavior, school-based violence, student violence incidents, special education teacher, and regular education teacher. Administrators agreed that their leadership style directs their actions when deciding violent student incidents. AA concluded that their leadership style sometimes embodied transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, or a combination thereof, depending on the type of violence experienced by the teacher.

AG, for example, based their decisions on district protocol and teacher's feelings:

Yes, it does, but I go by the books and follow the protocol when something like this happens. It is typically not their (the student's) first time, and it is not out of the blue that a student becomes violent. If a child is violent or verbally violent, they have had some type of other disciplinary action. So, when I'm making decisions, it's normally based on the habitual actions of the student and the teacher's feeling of coming to school every day and not deserving that violent offense.

AC admits that they make decisions based on a combination of their leadership style, personality, and the severity of the violent situation:

I think it does, but for me, as a person, I can always substitute myself, as far as in my mind, as far as the teacher, and say what I want to feel justified if I was that person and it happened to me. So as for my leadership style, it is hard to separate leadership style and personality when it comes to situations like this because

student violence is one of the highest forms of violating someone, so I take that very seriously. For me, I do not think about it for too long, as soon as I hear the action, I have a consequence in my head.

Teachers had conflicting views when discussing their perceptions of how their administrator's leadership style guides the way they make decisions. Generally, teachers, who identified their administrators as transformative leaders, felt that their administrator based their decisions on what was best for the staff. TG, for instance, described their administrator as observant and one who always puts their staff first. Conversely, those without transformative leadership felt a lack of support and what was received depended entirely on the level of violence and the student. TB believed their administrator's decision was based on the severity of the offense:

His leadership is situational as well in terms of specifically what is occurring with that teacher and that student. If it is a case where it is verbal interaction between teacher and student, depending on how that verbal transaction occurs and if it escalates, then that is something that they immediately come in and take care of. He is swift to call the action into question in terms of asking teachers to document what has occurred and pulling the students out of the room.

TD said their leader based their decisions on the student's reaction to a situation and would make decisions without feedback from the teachers:

This administrator based her decisions on what the student said or reported. She would listen very astutely to how the student described the situation. She would base her decisions, procedures, and interactions with the teacher upon what the

student said. She did not allow the teacher to give their point of view when she was listening to what the teacher said. She automatically took the stance that the student was right, and the teacher was wrong.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Lemon and Hayes (2020) described credibility as the replacement for internal validity, which is rooted in the truth value, which asks whether the researcher has developed and articulated a certain level of confidence in the findings based on the phenomenon under investigation. For this study, I interviewed eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and administrators who had 3 or more years in the education field and had observed or responded to student violence. Before the interviews, I sought participants by emailing prospective administrators and teachers through their school site emails. Once I received responses from the interested participants, I sent a return email with the study's consent form, interview questions, and a contact number. I used member checking and provided participants with the collected data transcripts to assure their interview accuracy. Participants confirmed the accuracy of their transcripts via email. Only one participant amended their interview transcript.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry, and qualitative research is only concerned with case-to-case transfer (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, I continuously mentioned the population, sample, setting, and methods using descriptions to accomplish transferability. I sought eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers

and administrators who worked in the K-12 urban southern schools and witnessed or responded to student violent directed incidents. The administrators and teachers had 3 or more years of experience in the educational profession. The administrator's experience ranges from 3 to 14 years; their highest degree was a doctorate. Teachers' experience ranged from 4 to 49 years; their highest degree was a master's. This study describes the participants' responses so that others may determine the transferability of the finding to their contexts.

Dependability

Dependability involves the participant's evaluation of the findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data received from participants (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Using a field journal, I maintained an audit trail recording the progress in data analysis and data collection. Throughout the data collection, all participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study without penalty. Virtual interviews were conducted synchronously via Zoom, and the audio recordings were saved on password-protected files on my laptop, which will be kept in my home. I used Otter.ai to transcribe the interviews and then personally reviewed them for accuracy. Once the transcription was complete, a copy of the interview was sent to each participant for accuracy. Each participant confirmed the accuracy of their interview via email. I used NVivo as a data analysis tool to identify the codes and themes for this study.

Confirmability

I used the audit trail process to establish confirmability to record the data analysis

and collection progress. Using thematic analysis, I ensured my study findings reflected the participants' perceptions of the administrators' support of teachers in student violence incidents. Progress of data analysis was maintained through NVivo from beginning to end and contributed to identifying the four themes related to the research questions.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the results from the study were presented. I discussed the setting, data collection, analysis, results, and evidence of trustworthiness. Twenty-two codes were discovered, in which four themes emerged. These four themes include: teachers should receive ongoing administrative support, school district regulations hinder administrative support of teachers, leadership styles determine the type of support teachers receive, and type of violence determines the level of support received. The research questions' results indicated that school administrators perceived their leadership style as largely transformational when asked. Although they felt their leadership style might fluctuate between transactional and laissez-faire, they considered themselves to provide support to teachers in incidents of student violence.

Conversely, teachers viewed their school administrators as displaying all leadership styles. While some teachers noted a level of support from school administrators, other teachers complained that support was lacking or absent. The evidence of trustworthiness was discussed in detail concerning credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the interpretation of the study's findings, limitations, and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this basic qualitative study, I investigated the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the provision of support for teachers in student violence incidents. The data collected from the teachers and administrators of K-12 urban southern Louisiana schools served to better understand how school administrators' leadership styles affect the support provided to teachers after a violent student incident. The conclusion of this study further outlines the need for further studies to increase the knowledge of leaders at the state and district level on providing teachers with effective support.

An analysis of the data collected indicated both teachers and administrators concurred that the role of the administrator was to support the teacher in violent student incidents. Although administrators assumed they provided adequate ongoing counseling support, teachers admitted they received more support from school counseling sources than administrators. Additionally, teachers indicated the type of support they received depended on the level of the violent offenses. Furthermore, while administrators largely identified themselves as transformational leaders, teachers felt their administrators possessed either transformational, laissez-faire, or transactional leadership styles. Teachers indicated that these differences in the administrators' leadership styles reduced the support teachers received in student violence incidents. Teachers and administrators agreed that school district regulations and other factors hindered the administrators' ability to support teachers in student violence incidents.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this study corroborated those from the literature review in Chapter

2. The study was based on two research questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts as to the role and leadership style of administrators when responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

RQ2: How do school administrators in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts perceive their role and leadership style in responding to incidents of student violence directed toward teachers?

The themes of this study indicated that teachers and administrators perceived the role of the administrator was to support the teacher in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers. Although administrators felt their leadership style was transactional, teachers identified different leadership styles that hindered the administrator's ability to adequately support the teachers in student violence incidents.

Theme 1: Teachers Should Receive Ongoing School Administrative Support

All eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and eight administrators agreed the role of the administrator was to support teachers in student violence incidents. Unfortunately, the perceptions of both teachers and administrators on how teachers are provided support after a student violence incident differed. All eight elementary, middle, and high school administrators testified that they support teachers by listening to their concerns, investigating incidents, and offering personal support to the teacher. The teachers who characterized their administrator's leadership style as transformational

agreed that the administrator provided school-based counseling support. For instance, TG stated, “She gives us much support; she is hands-on and supportive with violence from students.” The teacher described their administrator’s leadership style as a proactive role model, which Lunenburg and Ornstein (2022) explained empowers and stimulates subordinates. Alternatively, teachers who perceived their administrators as having transactional and laissez-faire styles reported receiving support from outside counseling sources or no support after a student violence incident. TB declared that most of the support after a violent incident occurs comes from an external support system and not the school’s administrator. TD specifically reported that their administrator did not provide direct support to the teacher, nor did she inform them where they could receive any support. In research on transactional leadership styles, Erdel and Takkac (2020) reaffirmed the passive leader characteristics and the nonactive role administrators take in leadership roles. The administrator’s nonresponsive and avoidant characteristics also support the findings of Nielson et al. (2019) on laissez-faire leadership styles. Similar findings by Lindberg (2020b) identified that employees of transactional leaders have low self-esteem and experience low engagement from their leader. Lunenburg and Ornstein’s findings on laissez-faire leaders affirmed the teachers’ expressions of their administrators avoiding responsibility and showing no level of authority.

Theme 2: School District Regulations Hinders the Administrative Support to Teachers

Although all administrators recognized the limitations the school district has placed on the ability of the administrator to provide support in student violence directed

against teacher incidents, only seven out of the eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers agreed with this statement. TD felt that the administrator blindly followed the commands of the district office without any opinion—personal, professional, or otherwise. AG agreeing with TD’s statement, added, “You have to follow policy, but there is a level of autonomy that most principals are given as long as they adhere to those guidelines.” The findings of the current study align with those of Bounds and Jenkins (2018), who identified the types of social support teachers sought from their administrators. They recommended the creation of policies that would make the teachers feel safe in the workplace. Bound and Jenkins’s findings also align with those of Anderman et al. (2018), who identified the need for a social network for teachers. Because teachers and school administrators do not have the authority to create policies, it is up to the school district to create and implement policies that will support teachers in student violence incidents.

Theme 3: Leadership Styles Determine the Type of Support Teachers Receive

All administrators self-identified their leadership style as transformational and felt they positively supported teachers in incidents of student violence. Teachers’ vie on this topic differed, and they described their administrators as exhibiting transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Teachers who perceived their administrators as transformational leaders felt supported in incidents of student violence. Teachers further thought the variation in the administrators’ leadership styles lessened the possibility of their receiving the necessary support in student violence incidents. TG said, “The students mimic what they see from the administration. This sets a bad example for

the students because the administrator does not provide support to teachers when incidents occur.” This lack of rapport between teachers and administrators has caused teachers to leave the educational field (Moon et al., 2019) and a steady decrease in the teacher retention rate (Wronowski, 2018). Moon et al. (2020) identified the lack of administrative support and ineffective leadership as reasons why teachers leave the teaching profession.

Theme 4: The Type of Violence Determines the Level of Support Received

Administrators suffer the misconception that their leadership style guides the actions and the decisions they make in incidents of student violence. Although AC commented that they investigated each violent incident and, in some cases, have instructed teachers to file criminal charges, AC further admitted they mainly used their leadership skills and knowledge to resolve violent student incidents against teachers. All the administrators reported that despite the level of violence, each teacher received support in student violence incidents. This theme aligns with Ghazzawi et al.’s (2017) research on contingency theory, in which they proposed that leaders decide how to handle situations based on their leadership styles after examining the conditions and circumstances. Depending on their situation, educational leaders choose one or more leadership styles to address the situation (Ghazzawi et al., 2017).

When tasked with responding to the same question, teachers disagreed and argued that the amount of support they received had less to do with the leadership style of their administrator and largely depended on the level of violence the teacher encountered. Teachers who identified their administrators as transactional or laissez-faire leaders

identified a lack of administrative support after a student violence incident. TF, commenting about experiencing consistent verbal violence from a student, stated, “So basically, what’s more important to the teacher’s mind is the emotional impact and toll these incidents take on you.” It should be noted that those teachers who identified their administrators as transformational leaders stated their administrators expressed more concern for their needs after a student violence incident. While some events can be systematically brushed off with minimal intervention, others have a lasting impact and much more severe repercussions that require a further administrative response.

Limitations of the Study

In this study, I examined the perceptions of eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and eight administrators in two separate K–12, urban, southern Louisiana public school districts who either witnessed or responded to student violence incidents against teachers. One limitation of this study was the number of participants chosen for the analysis. Because the K-12 urban southern Louisiana public school districts are comprised of significantly more than the number of schools represented in this study, the interviews of eight elementary, middle, and high school teachers and eight administrators may not have accurately represented the entire teacher and administrator populations’ relative perceptions.

Another limitation was my inability to conduct in-person interviews. Because the interview process began while COVID-19 restrictions were in place, I was restricted to conducting my interviews through Zoom. Not being able to conduct in-person interviews reduced my ability to observe the participants’ nonverbal communications and gestures.

Scheduling the interviews through Zoom meant I had to meet with teachers and administrators after school, on weekends, and during holidays to accommodate their time using an online platform.

The final limitation involves seeking participants for the study. Because of the nature of the study and the questions involved, many teachers and administrators were reluctant to participate despite being assured that their responses would remain confidential for 5 years, as described in Walden University's consent form. Some teachers and administrators initially consented to participate via email and were sent the study consent form and questions but did not respond to my reminder emails. This limitation prolonged the time necessary to recruit participants and collect the necessary data.

Recommendations

My recommendations for further research regarding administrative support in student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools are needed based on the limitations identified in the current study. I recommend that this study be replicated in other school districts to understand the teachers' perceptions of administrative support in student violence directed toward teachers. Additionally, further studies on how administrators could develop school-based support programs that provide ongoing counseling services to teachers involved in violent student incidents could appease teachers who are otherwise discontent and dissatisfied with the previously held ideals of working in a safe institution and help them feel supported by their administrator.

Another recommendation is for K–12, urban, southern Louisiana school districts to work with teachers and administrators to create policies that protect teachers who have experienced student violence. Creating these policies is needed so administrators will have guidance on supporting teachers involved in student violence incidents. Based on the results of this study, the creation of these policies can be the support teachers need to increase teacher retention and decrease teacher attrition. The creation of these policies can be used as a tool for building collaborative relationships and establishing an avenue for open communication between administrators, teachers, and the school district.

I also recommend that steps be taken to increase the knowledge of school districts and administrators regarding the effects of student violence directed toward teachers. The study results revealed that teachers felt they received support based on the level of student violence. I recommend that future research studies examine the long- and short-term effects of student violence on teachers. If administrators and school districts have a better understanding of the effects of student violence on teachers, they will further understand the teachers' need for additional support regardless of the type of violence experienced.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers and administrators on student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. The findings included the various perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the administrators' roles and leadership styles in supporting teachers concerning incidents of student violence. The results of this study indicated that

teachers and administrators agree the administrator's role is to support teachers, but the teachers and administrators differ when identifying the type of support received after a violent incident. This study contributed to the literature by identifying the gap between the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding administrator support for teachers involved in incidents of student violence. Because teachers and administrators have differing views on how teachers are supported, administrators must have a clearer understanding of what support is and how providing support is the foundational element to decreasing teachers' claims of nonsupport and reducing the rate of teacher attrition and turnover.

In identifying this gap, I hope that this study will support positive social change by being used by K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools at the district and state levels to begin discussions with teachers to identify the type of support they expect after a student violence incident. It is further hoped that the discussions will help build a collaborative relationship between teachers and administrators, with administrators being made aware of the teachers' needs after being involved in a violent student incident. Assuring that teachers receive satisfactory support from their administrator can ensure the teacher's longevity at the school, contribute to the feeling of safety while at work, and promote positive social change at the local level through an affirmative school culture. The development of an administrative support system in incidents of student violence directed against teachers can also positively impact the student's academic development because teachers who feel safe in their environment and have the support of their

administrators can focus more on curriculum implementation and building positive school culture.

At the policy level, to increase the type of support teachers receive in student violence incidents, administrators must have the support and guidance of the school district. With the support and funding of the school district, policies and programs can be developed to provide the emotional and physical support teachers need following a violent event. These policies can also provide extended or ongoing support for teachers as they continue in the teaching profession.

At the organizational level, to increase the understanding of the need for support for teachers involved in student violence incidents, the administrators and the school district must understand that regardless of the type of violent incident (i.e., physical or verbal), teachers require support. The development of professional learning communities at the school and district levels will provide ongoing conversations on the effects of student violence directed at teachers. This collaborative effort between administrators, teachers, and school districts could raise awareness of supporting teachers in student violence incidents in the community at large as well.

Conclusion

This study focused on administrative support in incidents of student violence directed toward teachers in K–12, urban, southern Louisiana schools. Although administrators articulated that they provided support, many teachers have departed the profession within 5 years, citing a lack of administrative support as one of their main reasons for leaving. In this study, I gathered the perceptions of the teachers and

administrators about the administrator's role and leadership style when addressing student violence directed toward teachers. By interviewing both teachers and administrators, it was obvious that administrators do not understand the teachers' ideas of support in incidents of student violence. Teachers need to know that they should be able to rely on their administrator for support and not have to seek other counseling services when incidents like these happen. With the COVID-19 pandemic, social justice issues, and the need for trauma restorative practices, it is essential for administrators to become aware of the impact these events have had on the mental state of teachers and students, how that can escalate to violent outbursts in the classroom, and how to respond accordingly.

To support teachers, administrators need the support of the school district. The study findings indicated that the school district placed limitations on the school administrators in supporting teachers in student violence incidents. Creating policies to protect teachers in student violence incidents, developing programs to support teachers on the school and district level, and providing administrators with financial support for teachers will have to come from the school district. As such, I recommend that the results of this study serve as a guide to begin the discussion on student violence directed toward teachers. The findings of this study showed teachers' need for administrative support in student violence incidents. The knowledge gained from this study can lead to positive social change at the local level by improving the educational institutions' working environment and providing concepts that will help implement strategies to enhance the protection of teachers in the classroom to maintain a positive school culture and increase

teacher retention and attrition, which will ensure the students will be adequately prepared for the future.

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Appendix: Correlation Between the Quotes and Codes

Quote(s)	Code
“School administrator should be the buffer between the students and teacher.”	Supporting teachers, counseling support services, school-based support, limited, non-existent
“The administrator should be a mediator as well as an administrator in the areas of school violence.”	
“As far as providing support, I think that they should provide support to both the teacher and the student without negating either person.”	
“Teacher was offered the opportunity to speak to the counselor, but my school does not have a counselor, so this support was provided on the district level.”	
“I have not seen any support because we do have students who have shown violence toward teachers (kicking, spitting, hitting) and I have not seen anyone from the district other than the school counselor trying to assist the teacher with students who are being violent.”	
“I would listen to their concerns, and also offer support for them to talk to someone outside of the school.”	
“This administrator did not provide support to the teachers.”	
“When we talk about these district guidelines, it is more in support of the child, than it is of the teacher.”	School district regulations gaps, school administration, school district, hindrance
“District regulations guide decisions which sometimes is a hindrance to making sure that the teachers feel as supported as they need to.”	

“The district has started to operate too much on the side of the student, who has committed violence against teachers.”

“I don't think the teachers feel supported by the district in these incidences.”

“I don't believe the district does enough to support teachers, they (the district) are more concerned about lawsuits and legalities.”

“In the district guidelines, it tells you if a student does this do that and if a student does this, do that. So, there are no district guidelines for teachers.”

“Everything has to be done through the district and it's like the principal has no say, no opinion, and has to do exactly what the district tells them.”

“I feel that his school leadership style wants to be transformative, because of some of the outside agitators and that he has to contend with it makes it look as if his style is laissez-faire in particular instances.”

Leadership style, transformational leadership, laid-back leadership style, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership

“I would say my current administrator's style was laissez-faire, however, I think what he aspires to be is a transformative leader. He is struggling to balance out the two in terms of he wants to provide the support and due diligence to make sure that we need.”

“Yes, because she was a transactional leader, she was more engaged in doing things her way. She wouldn't allow those people to flourish in the areas where they were incompetent.”

“I think that in any given situation I show transactional or transformational leadership and I rarely show laissez-faire leadership.”

“I feel that I am more of a transformational leader. I believe I display attributes that stimulate my followers to exceed their standard capabilities and strive for an excellent performance.”

“As far as the transactional, I know some dictator administrators and I know I am far from that. I would say that I am a mixture of all, the laissez-faire and transformational, but not transactional because I want people to do what they are responsible to do.”

“I would be geared toward a transformational leader. Being willing to serve or being able to give service to that teacher in any shape or form to help in the situation.”

“If a student was verbally abusive to a teacher, typically I would remove the student, contact parents, give the teacher a break to make sure they are all right, follow up with the parent and take disciplinary action depending on whether it is habitual or not.”

Level of violence, student behavior, school-based violence, student violence incidents, special education teacher, regular education teacher

“I like to base my decisions based on the situation that's going on. It depends on the type of violence the teacher has experienced.”

“If it is a case where it is verbal interaction between teacher and student depending on how that verbal transaction occurs and if it escalates, then that's something that they immediately come in and take care of.”

“It is hard to separate leadership style and personality when it comes to situations like this because student violence that’s one of the highest forms of violating someone, so I take that very seriously.”

“When I’m making decisions, it’s normally based on the habitual actions of the student and the teacher’s feeling of coming to school every day and not deserving that.”
