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Teachers' Perceptions of Job Stress and Its Meaning on Intent to Remain at a Title I School

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Abstract

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MA, University of West Georgia, 2010

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

The shortage of teachers in Title I schools undermines educational equity and quality in underserved communities, necessitating concerted efforts from educators, policymakers, and local communities. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of Title I teachers regarding job stress and its meaning on their decisions to remain in the profession and within Title I environments. Grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's job demands-resources model, the study explored how perceived job stress shapes teachers' commitment to their roles. An interpretative phenomenological analysis was employed to analyze data from interviews with 10 Title I teachers. The thematic analysis identified 10 themes highlighting the importance of consistent feedback, recognition, and professional development as fundamental elements for fostering a positive and nurturing work environment. The findings indicated that focusing on teacher well-being, addressing systemic challenges, and fostering a supportive culture could enhance teacher retention and improve student outcomes in disadvantaged areas. The implications for positive social change include the potential for educational leaders to develop targeted strategies to support Title I teachers, aligning with broader educational equity and quality goals.

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Dedication

To my beloved children, Brooklyn and Travis Jr.; my supportive husband, Travis; my loving parents, Janet and Adamu; and my entire family, this dissertation is a testament to your unwavering love and support. You've been the bedrock of my journey, pillars of encouragement and belief. From standing by my side to nurturing my dreams, your presence has inspired me to break boundaries and strive for excellence. With deep gratitude and love, I dedicate this work to you for being my guiding light and enduring strength.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Daily exposure to stress from various sources, such as hefty assignments, meeting student needs, and state directives, has become embedded in the teaching profession's fabric. The prolonged and heightened job-related stress experience is linked to burnout, withdrawal from work and students, and personal accomplishment deficiency (Maslach et al., 1996; Schaufeli et al., 2009). As teacher shortages continue to be an ongoing issue within the public school system in the United States and internationally, stakeholders must develop policy interventions to tackle this widespread problem (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020; Sutcher et al, 2016). More specifically, the issue imperils lower socioeconomic and urban-based schools at a significantly higher rate (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a). Sutcher et al. (2016) reported 55% higher attrition of full-time teachers in Title I eligible schools than in Title I ineligible schools. In the current phenomenological study, I explored the lived experience of U.S.-based Title I teachers concerning their perceptions of job stress and its meaning on their intention to stay in the teaching profession and a Title I school.

Challenges with teacher retention have many implications. Research has shown that teacher longevity within the profession aids in being more effective regarding student and teacher achievement (R. A. Berry, 2010; Kini & Podolsky, 2016; Podolsky et al., 2019). During the first year of teaching, novice educators typically are less effective than in their subsequent teaching years (Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group, LLP, 2014; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019; Rice, 2003). Consequently, schools take on considerable economic risk when they devote financial resources to training teachers who leave before receiving any return on their

professional investment. Because classroom teachers play an integral role in students' educational outcomes, researchers have found significant effects of teacher quality on student achievement, further exacerbating this risk (Coleman et al., 1966; Hamushek, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). A sizeable decline in the individuals entering the teaching profession, as seen with a 15.4% dip in degrees awarded in education and a 27.4% drop in teacher preparation programs' completion rates from 2008 to 2016, highlights the urgency of the current state of teacher attrition and turnover (Garcia & Weiss, 2019b).

In this chapter, I discuss the study's background, including the current gap in the literature it addressed, the problem statement, and the purpose statement. I also present the study's research questions, theoretical framework, nature, definitions, assumptions, scope, and limitations. Chapter 1 concludes with the study's significance and an introduction to Chapter 2.

Background

After synthesizing data from the most recent nationally representative survey of U.S. teachers, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported a significant increase in U.S. teachers who have opted to abandon their profession over the past 20 years. Data from the Schools and Staffing Survey 2011-2012 and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey 2012-2013 revealed that in 1992, 5.1% of public schoolteachers left the workforce compared to 8.4% who left in 2005. The 3.3% increase represents approximately 90,000 additional open teaching positions each year. This finding contrasts with high-achieving school systems worldwide, such as Singapore and Finland, which

average around 3%–4%. Further analysis showed that turnover rates were 50% higher for teachers in Title I schools, which serve more low-income students than non-Title I schools (16% versus 11%). Specifically, mathematics and science teacher turnover rates were almost 70% higher in Title I schools than in non-Title I schools (17.8% versus 10.5%). The overall national teaching profession turnover rate for 2017 was approximately 16%. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond's findings support that over two thirds of teacher attrition resulted from reasons other than retirement. As described by teachers, the most salient motivations for leaving the profession were dissatisfaction with teaching linked to unhappiness with support from the administration, displeasure with teaching as a career, and test-based accountability.

Ryan et al. (2017) also found support for test-grounded responsibility being a prominent factor in teacher attrition and turnover rates while investigating the connection between test-based accountability policy and adverse occupational outcomes such as turnover intention, burnout, and stress. Ryan et al. research statistically supported the idea that test-based accountability predicted stress, attrition, and burnout. More notably, due to a strong relationship between increased teacher stress and burnout, Ryan et al. suggested that test-based accountability is linked strongly to stress and burnout syndrome even for teachers who remain in the profession. Furthermore, Ryan et al. proposed that restoring the disparity between teaching policy implementation and its effects on teachers requires policymakers to consider the essential detail that test-grounded responsibility plays a significant role in teachers' decisions to jump from school to school or leave the profession.

Maciejewska et al. (2019) reviewed the recent literature on teacher stress and burnout to develop the available literature on teachers' susceptibility to burnout. Maciejewska et al.'s review found that potential teacher stress sources included time constraints, modifying the teaching process to each student's needs, students' dysfunctional behaviors, conflicts within the workplace, and low social status within the profession. Additionally, Maciejewska et al.'s work supported the proposition that teachers are subject to physical and emotional stresses on their health. The significance of Maciejewska et al.'s findings within the current literature review lies in support of teacher burnout negatively influencing students and their motivation. Schools suffering from poor student performance were associated with teachers with high stress, burnout, and low coping levels. Students' poor behaviors strongly correlated to teacher burnout (Friedman, 1995; Maslach et al., 2001). The highest association was between poor student behavior and teachers' emotional exhaustion, where teacher stress physically affected students, reflecting in students' cortisol levels (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). The variability in cortisol levels was associated with higher levels of teacher burnout.

The significance of exposing teachers to unhealthy work environments was broadened by Herman et al.'s (2018) finding that 93% of the 121 general education teachers in their study fell into classes characterized by high-stress levels. There were four classes in total: stressed/low coping (3%), stressed/moderate coping (30%), stressed/high coping (60%), and well adjusted (7%). The increased stress levels reported by most of the study's teachers supported the notion that teaching is stressful. Garcia-Carmona et al. (2019) found high burnout levels in their meta-analysis regarding the

impact of stressful work environments on secondary teachers: 28.1% of the secondary teachers in the study suffered from severe emotional exhaustion, 37.9% had increased depersonalization levels, and 40.3% had low personal accomplishment. Garcia-Carmona et al. found great concern with the percentage of participants who expressed low personal accomplishment levels because it was much higher than in other professional groups. For example, Garcia-Carmona et al. highlighted that local police force members reported low personal accomplishment levels at 15%. The occurrence of stress and burnout among teachers was significant. As Lee (2017) found, teacher burnout was positively associated with turnover intention. Lee proposed that teachers who experience symptoms of burnout might leave the profession.

Problem Statement

National teacher shortages in the United States have sparked stakeholders' interest in understanding teacher attrition and turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). With 90% of annual teacher demand credited to the number of teachers leaving the profession, teacher turnover plays an active role in labor market imbalances (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Teacher-centered stress sources may justify some teachers' movements between schools and professions. Maciejewska et al. (2019) conducted a literature review that revealed potential job stress sources for teachers, including legal and social obligations involving students. Additionally, Shernoff et al. (2011) found three general themes in job stress sources for teachers from their research: (a) overwhelming feelings caused by an imbalance between demands and resources; (b) overcrowding, lack of resources, and

insufficient support for students with mental health needs in schools in lower socioeconomic climates; and (c) the dominant effect of work settings and job characteristics over individual attributes.

Researchers have linked the pronounced levels of perceived job stress for teaching professionals to unfavorable professional effects such as absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, burnout, turnover, and ineffectiveness (Skaalvik & Skaavlik, 2015; Yu et al., 2014). For example, Howard and Howard (2020) found that increased job stress levels were strongly associated with increased sick days for teachers. Furthermore, Parveen and Bano (2019) supported the idea that teacher stress and job satisfaction were negatively correlated. Additionally, a proposed extension of the job demands resources model highlighted a high risk of burnout and low motivation to an increased risk of experienced teachers leaving the profession contingent on resources and demands related to personal and job factors (Torenbeek & Peters, 2017).

Teachers at Title I schools serving many students from low-income households experience a 50% higher turnover rate than non-Title I schoolteachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This increased turnover rate makes these schools more prone to frequently utilizing available resources and time to recruit teachers (Barnes et al., 2007). Furthermore, transferring teachers out of schools and covering teaching expenses can exceed $20,000 to replace a teacher in an urban school district (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, 2019). As a result, teachers in high-poverty urban schools may experience ancillary job stressors that may not be as widespread at schools in rural and

suburban areas. These supplemental job stressors may result from limited supplies, limited funding, or other community-centered challenges.

The increased teacher turnover rates in Title I schools significantly affect student achievement and success by disrupting constancy, teacher–student relationships, and the accrual of content-specific information in the classroom (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). When Title I schools face shortages, they may assign inexperienced teachers with alternative certifications to fill vacancies. Shields et al. (2003) found a disproportionate number of underprepared and under certified teachers in their study's most vulnerable schools. Goldhaber et al. (2015) further supported this finding and concluded that disadvantaged students are more likely to be taught by underprepared teachers in all teacher quality measures (credentials, experience, etc.).

The current study may advance the current body of knowledge on Title I teacher attrition and retention rates by exploring how teachers' perceptions of stress inform the meaning of their intentions to remain in the profession and in a Title I school. This study addressed the gap in the recent literature by focusing on the lack of teacher-informed perspectives on their job stress to appraise the current turnover and attrition trends specific to Title I schools. In conjunction with the contemporary literature's broad emphasis on the origins and general effects of job stress on teachers, this study may enhance the existing knowledge by proposing viable solutions to reduce the disparity in teacher turnover and attrition rates in Title I schools.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study explored teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its meaning on their intentions to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. This research also addressed the literature gap due to a deficiency in teacher-advised perspectives on job stress regarding the current turnover and attrition trends specific to Title I schools. The identified themes may guide the development of interventions to address ongoing teacher turnover challenges and provide more practical guidance for policy implementation affecting teachers.

Research Questions

For this study, the research questions were the following:

RQ1: What are Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress?

RQ2: What meanings do Title I schoolteachers make of perceived job stress on their intention to remain in the profession and specifically at a Title I school?

Theoretical Framework

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) job demands-resource (JD-R) model served as the theoretical foundation for this study. When applying the transactional theory to a teacher's assessment of classroom demands surpassing the available classroom resources, McCarthy et al. (2022) found that teachers face a greater risk of experiencing stress. Educators can use this theory to deepen their understanding of how educational demands and resources interplay with stress perception. In contrast, the JD-R model assesses

teachers' intended attrition level and structure by exploring job demands and resources (Droogenbroeck & Spruyt, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping guided the current study's research decisions and themes of interest. Understanding how Title I teachers experience and deal with stress was critical to this study, and the transactional theory of stress and coping served as an approach to achieving this goal. Lazarus and Folkman contended that stress results from an individual concluding that their current environment's requirements exceed the available personal and social resources needed to address environmental demands efficiently.

A teacher's assessment of their work environment would play an essential role in their perception of stress. Environmental stressors on teachers' job satisfaction affect their everyday experiences and may determine their susceptibility to stress and burnout (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; Spilt et al., 2011). This notion aligns with Toropova et al.'s (2020) findings that teachers' working environment, specifically student discipline, teacher cooperation, and teacher workload, is significantly related to job satisfaction. Researchers can discover insights into teachers' perceptions of stress by investigating the coexistence of demands and resources within a school (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The negative emotions associated with the experience of stress by a teacher may lead to attrition and turnover (Betoret, 2006; Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Kyriacou, 2001).

By applying Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress, I hoped to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic process of teachers'

career decision making. However, this theory may be unsuccessful in explaining the phenomenon under investigation because it may not identify specific factors that may foretell an individual's intention to continue to work or not in a stressful environment. Instead, the theory depends on the individual's primary and secondary assessment of a stressful event to recognize an individual's ability to cope with the experience.

Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R Model

Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model provided the structure for assessing how teacher attrition may be affected by increased levels of stress and burnout. Recognizing the effects of the perceived intensity of stressful elements of the profession on teachers' decisions to remain at a Title I school was pivotal to achieving the goals of this study. The JD-R model helped me explain the lived experiences of Title I teachers that motivate their intentions to remain at a Title I school by underscoring the significance of stress causes, stress responses, teaching behaviors, and attrition (see Helms-Lorenz et al., 2017).

Researchers have acknowledged that teachers face high stress levels and are at an increased risk of experiencing burnout. Richards et al. (2018) sought to understand better, how teachers who perceived high and low levels of burnout experienced their work. The study's results indicated that teachers who experienced high burnout perceived their workplace environment as contentious and inhibiting. The teachers in this subgroup conveyed their roles as stressful. Furthermore, Bakker and de Vries (2021) found employees' tendency to use maladaptive self-regulation strategies, such as coping rigidity and self-undercutting, when faced with heightened job strain. Because Bakker and de

Vries also found that it was rare for employees experiencing increased job strain to use adaptive self-regulation approaches, it became evident that stable resources become critical in stressful situations.

The JD-R model provided the framework to understand how the environment in which teachers work and the school context variables were related to their motivation to leave the teaching profession. Schaufeli and Taris (2014) argued that although the model defines motivational processes and health impairment, such as burnout, as autonomous, researchers should study the two concepts together. Schaufeli and Taris claimed that one process has to be considered in relation to the other to grasp the concept entirely. The negative correlations between job demands and job resources, burnout and engagement, job resources, and burnout emphasize this notion. The JD-R model is naturally heuristic. Therefore, it does not restrict researchers' way of thinking (Mayerl et al., 2016; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Nature of the Study

I employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to provide an understanding of how Title I teachers experience job stress perceptions and how these perceptions provide context for Title I schools' attrition and turnover rates. This investigation required a phenomenological qualitative design to understand the comprehensive experiences of Title I teachers' perceptions of stress and their intent to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. In phenomenology, specific certainties, such as numbers and essences, are revealed through experiences (Giorgi et al., 2017). Phenomenology increases the accuracy of the experiential analysis.

Ryan et al. (2017) found little information in the recent literature about how the personal perceptions of Title I teachers' stress define whether they remain in the profession or a Title I school. Qualitative methodology complemented the current study's theoretical framework because the inductive nature of this methodology allowed for Title I teachers to inform the meaning of their experiences to answer the research questions (see Dukes, 1984). A phenomenological approach was selected for the current study given that the research questions addressed an interest in personal meaning (see L. Cohen et al., 2007; Dukes, 1984; Foehl, 2020). This method allowed me to objectively analyze lived experiences without methodological codification by combining philosophical inquiry and a thoughtful and descriptive research methodology (see Frey, 2018; Groenewald, 2004).

I interviewed teachers age 18 years or older currently teaching at a Title I school in the southern region of the United States for at least 1 year. I collected narrative-rich depictions of teachers' perceptions of job stress and its meaning in their intent to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. The participants' outlooks and perspectives provided data to help me understand the current trend of high attrition and turnover rates for teachers in Title I schools. My data analysis identified themes and constructs to explain the meaning of Title I teachers' lived experiences.

I used interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the meaning of teachers' lived experiences to better understand turnover and attrition rates for Title I schools (see Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Tomkins, 2017). IPA is a flexible set of guidelines that exceed rudimentary thematic analysis, highlighting the study's fluidity

and multidirectional nature (Noon, 2018). In addition, IPA supported my understanding of participants' meaning of their experience (see Smith et al., 2009).

Definition of Terms

I frequently referenced key terms such as *lived experience*, *attrition*, *turnover*, *stress*, and *burnout*. These key terms are defined to mitigate misunderstanding:

Attrition: An element of teacher turnover in which teachers leave the profession due to natural events such as retirements, deaths, or resignations, as opposed to planned cutbacks by management such as discharge, layoffs, or early retirements (Boe et al., 1997; Watlington et al., 2004)

Burnout: A state of psychological, emotional, and physical exhaustion experienced when an individual operates at a heightened level in their professional life until stress and tension take a toll (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Lived experience: The depiction and awareness of a research subject's human experiences, selections, and decisions and how those factors affects their perception of knowledge (Given, 2008).

Stress: Stress is a state in which an individual feels that an environment's pressures surpass the personal and social resources available (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Turnover: The rate at which teachers leave or separate from a school district or change from classroom teaching to another position from one school year to another (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.).

Assumptions

Phenomenological assumptions exist as conjectures concerning the underlying virtues of the phenomenon and how it connects to the environment in which it emerges (Bendersky & McGinn, 2010). I assumed that all study participants authentically represented their lived experiences as Title I teachers during their interviews. In conducting the research, I operated under the assumption that all participants agreed to participate with honest motives and genuine interest in contributing to the study. Participants were informed of their rights and the nature of the study, and I trust that their engagement was motivated by a sincere willingness to aid in the advancement of knowledge within the scope of our research objectives. Additionally, I assumed that the chosen methods, research design, and theoretical frameworks were appropriate and well-suited to address the research purpose. I carefully selected these elements to ensure they aligned with the study's objectives and would effectively guide my inquiry and analysis. By integrating these methodologies and theories, I aimed to provide a comprehensive and valid examination of the research questions, supporting the study's overall validity and reliability.

Scope and Delimitations

I recruited a representative sample of currently employed Title I schoolteachers in the southern region of the United States who had been teaching in a Title I school for at least 1 year. This study excluded non-Title I teachers and Title I teachers who had not completed their first year of teaching or who lived outside of the southern region of the United States. The purpose of this research was to understand the stress experienced by

Title I teachers. To achieve this, I engaged volunteer participants who provided invaluable insights based on their experiences. While the findings are specific to the participants of this study, I believe they are transferrable to similar populations, insofar as the data reflects teachers working in comparable contexts. This broader applicability can provide valuable implications for understanding and addressing the challenges faced by educators in Title I settings.

Limitations

I used interviews to collect data because phenomenology is grounded in lived experiences. Data analysis may have restricted the number of participants due to the required time. Additionally, due to the limited number of participants in the study, the study results may not represent every teacher's sentiments at every Title I school in the United States. Another notable limitation is the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic prohibited me from interviewing participants face-to-face. I offered participants the alternative of conducting interviews via videoconferencing. Finally, the time of the school year in which the study took place may have presented challenges to participation due to workload and the workplace's time constraints. Outlining the study's limitations aided in establishing the degree to which the study results were transferable. Phenomenology strives to uncover the transfer of meanings and distinctive differences, and findings are not generalizable (Holloway, 2005).

Significance

This research addressed a gap in the existing literature while also providing an understanding of a widespread phenomenon that needed consideration to combat the high

turnover and attrition rate for teachers in Title I schools. Researchers have established teaching as a stressful profession, indicating a positive correlation between teacher burnout, turnover intention, and significantly increased turnover rates, specifically in Title I teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Herman et al., 2018; Lee, 2017). New research on the distinctive experiences that involved the meaning of job stress perceptions on the intent to leave or remain in the profession and at a Title I school was needed to identify essential themes related to teacher turnover.

I sought to provide insight into these experiences by analyzing Title I teachers' responses to interview questions. Existing literature focused on the causes and effects of stress and its association with teachers' job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and burnout syndrome (Maciejewska et al., 2019; Smetackova et al., 2019). However, I employed a qualitative approach to provide information from Title I teachers' perspectives to develop solutions to decrease turnover and attrition rates in Title I schools.

The current study addressed a gap in the literature regarding the population of interest and provided an impetus for positive social change. The meanings behind the perceptions of job stress on the intent to remain a Title I teacher and in the teaching profession may help to guide policymakers and other advocates of education by deterring the sources and adverse effects of the high turnover and attrition rates of Title I teachers, such as decreased student motivation (see Maciejewska et al., 2019). Moreover, this study's findings may positively affect the intervention efforts by revealing the meaning of lived experiences of teacher stress as a guide to developing programs that increase

psychological well-being and decrease stress to motivate retention within the profession and Title I schools (see Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I identified a gap concerning the lack of using Title I teacher-informed job stress perspectives to evaluate the current turnover and attrition trends specific to their schools. The background provided essential information associated with the components that addressed the job stress perspectives of Title I teachers and their meaning on job retention intent. Furthermore, I identified the theoretical foundation of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model. The significance of the study was also discussed. This study aimed to reveal Title I teachers' experiences of job stress and its value on their plans to remain at Title I schools. The results may affect future policy implementation involving the teaching profession and intervention strategies. Chapter 2 includes the literature search strategy, a literature review on the perceptions of job stress of Title I teachers, and its meaning to staying in the profession. Chapter 2 also includes a detailed discussion of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I explored the job stress perceptions of Title I teachers based in the southern region of the United States and the meaning of their intent to remain at a Title I school. Additionally, I addressed the scarcity of teacher-informed perspectives on job stress that may reveal turnover and attrition tendencies in Title I schools. Title I schools have a higher percentage of low-income students and have a historically higher teacher turnover rate than non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Because of this statistical significance, I aimed to identify emergent themes that could guide the development of intervention strategies to prevent setbacks to Title I schools caused by teacher turnover and attrition rates. Greenberg et al. (2016) demonstrated that organizational and individual-level interventions reduced teacher stress by changing the culture and teaching approach. Holme et al. (2018) also addressed the need for research that identifies the different types of instability within Title I teacher retention and appropriate interventions for each situation.

Because stress represents an influential element in teachers' decision to leave teaching and its existence is amplified among teachers in environments where job demands are high and resources are low, Title I teacher retention is of significant importance (Herman et al., 2018; Lindqvist et al., 2014; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). With approximately 40%–50% of teachers leaving the profession within their first 5 years, the current study explored Title I teachers' lived experience of stress and how it informs their decisions to remain in the profession as a valuable tool to support teachers better (see Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ryan et al., 2017). I used a phenomenological approach to

identify themes in Title I teachers' experiences, which may inform the meaning of current turnover intention trends and guide the creation of public school policies. Chapter 2 focuses on literature about Title I teachers' experiences of stress and literature supporting the theoretical framework of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model. The chapter also discusses the literature search strategies, key terms I searched, and the databases I used to conduct the searches.

Literature Search Strategy

The databases I searched for articles included the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, SAGE Journal, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and Taylor and Francis Online. The literature review encompasses research about teachers' perceptions of stress and their meaning on their intent to remain at a Title I school. The literature review also includes an analysis of existing and preceding studies addressing theories of stress and coping, job demands, lived experience, behavior, and individual actions.

I performed a filtered search for literature published after 2017, except for inquiries on the chosen theories regarding Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model. The following keywords were used: *perceptions, stress, + burnout + meaning, lived experience + Title I+ teachers + turnover, attrition + Lazarus, Folkman, stress and coping theory + Bakker, Demerouti,* and *job demands resource model.*

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study included Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model. Teachers' perception of stress concerning the day-to-day demands of their occupation was critical to this study. The transactional model of stress provided a foundation for improved awareness of how teachers' stress may result from their assessment of environmental demands as overpowering the individual and collective resources they have to address these demands effectively (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The JD-R model allowed me to explore burnout and intent to leave the teaching profession (see Rajendran et al., 2020).

Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping

The stress sources experienced by an individual teacher are unique and contingent on the specific, multifaceted partnership between the teacher's personality, values, skills, and circumstances (Kyriacou, 2001). Teacher stress can result from poor working conditions, poor relationships at work, role conflict, lack of autonomy, teacher perceptions, and state mandates (Hanif, 2004; Haydon et al., 2018). Individuals give meaning to their subjective responses to perceived stressors through primary and secondary cognitive appraisals (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When individuals engage in primary cognitive appraisals, they assess a potentially stressful situation regarding their well-being. They can categorize this assessment into three groups: irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. If the assessment yields no significance for well-being, it is deemed irrelevant. If the situation does not exceed the individual's resources or is perceived to

result in beneficial consequences, it is considered benign-positive. Finally, individuals deem situations as stressful if the situation overwhelms the individual's resources. When individuals partake in secondary cognitive appraisals, they assess coping reserves and opportunities to address their ability to handle the situation. This type of appraisal becomes essential when coding the primary appraisal as stressful.

Furthermore, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) stated that when individuals utilize cognitive and behavioral efforts to deal with stressful situations, they participate in coping. Lazarus (2006) categorized coping strategies as either emotion focused or problem focused. Emotion-focused coping occurs when individuals attempt to control emotions designed to avoid or escape a stressful situation, such as through meditation. In contrast, problem-focused coping refers to individuals trying to resolve or modify a stressful situation or themselves when they have determined they have the resources available (Folkman, 1997, 2010). These two coping strategies do not act independently of each other and complement each other in the most stressful situations.

In a recent study, Sharifabad et al. (2020) investigated the effects of a transactional model stress appraisal based training on hemodialysis patients. The results indicated that training based on Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model can help individuals appropriately assess stressful situations. Patients in the study expressed that stress was exceedingly hazardous to their health. Furthermore, Sanaeinasab et al. (2017) tested an educational program using a transactional model to help women with multiple sclerosis cope with the stress caused by its unpredictability and lack of definitive treatment. The study found support for reducing stress levels and increasing coping styles

in the patients. The perceived stress decreased, and healthy coping behaviors increased significantly between the intervention group and the patients in the control group.

Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R Model

The intricacies of jobs such as teaching create the need to understand the demands and resources of the job that can harm the health or weaken the motivation of an individual, which affects their decision to continue to work within the profession (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Organizations can utilize the JD-R model to predict employee burnout and commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R model's exploratory design allows researchers to apply to any occupational setting. The JD-R model's foundation rests on the concept that every occupation is subject to its factors of employee well-being. These factors are categorized as either job demands (negative job characteristics) or job resources (positive job characteristics).

The psychological and physiological costs associated with the prolonged physical and cognitive forces required for a job are referred to as job demands. Job demands can take the form of amplified work burdens in hostile environments. Job demands can stress an individual when they compel them to exert increased amounts of energy they are not equipped to sustain and provide. Job resources signify the aspects of a job that decrease stressors, support the achievement of work goals, or encourage development, knowledge, and enhancement. These resources are essential in managing job demands and are significant in their own right.

According to the JD-R model, burnout results from increased job demand and insufficient job resources. Teaching is a psychologically challenging and demanding

occupation with stress sources resulting from increased job demands (Kyriacou, 2001). Studies have shown that these elevated job demands forecast adverse outcomes, such as attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Copious job resources take an active part in the extrinsic motivational role due to its instigation of the inclination to wield compensatory effort, weakening job demands and nurturing goal attainment (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

High attrition rates continue to plague the teaching profession globally (Craig, 2017). In the United States, teacher attrition accounts for 90% of the annual need for educators and transcends Canada's, Finland's, and Singapore's attrition rates twofold (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019). Teacher shortages triggered by these increased rates provide an opportunity to exacerbate the stress and burnout of teachers still employed within the profession, which is disadvantageous to all educational stakeholders (Goddard & Goodard, 2006; Ingersoll, 2012; Rajendran et al., 2020). Furthermore, a deficient supply of quality teachers in urban, high-poverty schools results from teachers seeking opportunities in schools with a higher percentage of students with more academically and behaviorally positive outcomes (Andrews & Donaldson, 2009; Berry, 2008; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Hiring unqualified teachers for open teaching positions exacerbates challenges, particularly affecting disadvantaged students because schools with limited resources struggle to access qualified teachers (Carothers et al., 2019). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) can be used to explore this phenomenon and provide a

meaningful understanding of teachers' experiences to foster improvements in theory and intervention development (Sandelowski, 2008; Sohn et al., 2017). The interpretive nature of IPA empowered me to obtain insights from respondents by engaging their inquisitiveness, neutrality, responsiveness, and flexibility in the narration of their experiences in a natural setting that provided social, cultural, economic, and historical frameworks (see Finlay, 2011; Tuffour, 2017).

Teacher Shortages and High-Poverty Schools

Teacher shortages occur when the demand for teachers surpasses the certified individuals' allocation within current wage trends (Sutcher et al., 2016). The catalyst for teacher staffing challenges ranges from the inadequate production of new teachers for many fields to altering educational programs (Sutcher et al., 2019). More than 40 states cite teacher shortages in various subject areas, such as mathematics and science (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2017). When coupled with more than 30 states reporting teaching deficiencies in areas such as career technical education and languages, there is evidence that teacher shortages are a widespread issue across the United States. The teacher shortage issue has significant consequences, including the danger of student learning being negatively affected by a lack of qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Garcia & Weiss, 2019b; Ladd & Sorensen, 2014). Moreover, excessive turnover depletes financial resources that could otherwise be allocated to improve the advancement of the educational system (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The method used to calculate the existing national teacher shortage likely misrepresents the scale of the shortage by including newly qualified teachers needed to meet new demands (Garcia & Weiss, 2019b). This computational approach does not consider that not all teachers currently working in the field meet the requirements of being classified as highly qualified. The U.S. Department of Education (2006, 2019) defined a highly qualified teacher as possessing four fundamental benchmarks: a bachelor's degree or higher in the subject taught, state teacher certification, knowledge of the subject taught, and 5 years of experience. According to the data collected from the U.S. Department of Education's National Teacher and Principal Survey from 2015 to 2016, not all teachers meet the U.S. Department of Education's definition of a highly qualified teacher. For instance, 8.8% of teachers in public noncharter schools are not fully certified, 22.4% have 5 or fewer years of experience, and 17.1% pursued an alternative track to teaching.

Furthermore, the unequal distribution of underqualified teachers among schools worsens teacher shortages. Although current research has not supplied an approximation of the disparity between the need for highly qualified teachers and the availability of positions within high-poverty schools, there is enough support for the role school poverty plays in turnover and attrition (Garcia & Weiss, 2019b; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016). School districts that serve a more significant proportion of racial minority and lower income students have twice as many inexperienced and uncredentialed teachers as those serving student populations of lower proportions (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Baker, 2018). The credentials of teachers who remain in public noncharter schools

are improved compared to those who leave the teaching field entirely (Garcia & Weiss, 2019b). However, the differences are tighter by 1.8% for high-poverty schoolteachers who did not major in the subject that they are assigned to teach, as shown by information gathered from the Schools and Staffing Survey 2011-2012 and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey 2012-2013.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

As amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act supplies financial support to educational community organizations and schools containing many students from low-income families. The act aims to ensure that all students meet the demanding academic benchmarks. States and public school systems must observe and enhance student achievement results as a stipulation for receiving Title I federal funding (Skinner, 2020). The accountability structure of the states and public schools involves setting long-term and provisional performance objectives for specific measures, assigning weights to these measures, and identifying schools that require additional support to improve student achievement through an annual differentiation process (Skinner, 2020).

The Educator Equity portion of the ESSA's Section 5.2 mandates that states provide documentation of disparities in percentages of low-income and racial minority students enrolled in Title I Part A funded schools. Underqualified, alternatively certified, and inexperienced teachers typically instruct these schools compared to those of non-low-income and nonminority students (Sunderman & Kim, 2005). Furthermore, in analyzing this information, states are expected to pinpoint potential sources of the disparities and

develop strategies to tackle the breaches in access to qualified educators. With the "comparability" and "supplement, not supplant" provisions of Title I, eligible schools are afforded more funding. The increased funding is given with the expectation that more financial capital will lead to smaller class sizes, more qualified teachers, increased instructional times, or additional measures to eliminate achievement disparities (Rivera Rodas, 2019).

However, as supported by research within New York City schools, equal funding to Title I students before distributing Title I funds does not occur (Rivera Rodas, 2019; Roza & Lake, 2015; Roza et al., 2005). This discrepancy may occur because some districts use average salaries rather than actual labor costs to determine the provisions for allocating Title I funds (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The comparability provision of Title I can exclude variations in teacher salaries from calculations. Therefore, schools within the same district with comparable teachers can report relatively similar amounts of money spent on teachers' salaries, even if there are variations in teacher experience or educational levels (Luebchow, 2009; Rivera Rodas, 2019). Essentially, the Title I provision contains an ambiguity that allows districts to present data misleadingly, showing teachers as receiving the same pay even when differences are based on education and experience levels.

Teacher Recruitment in High-Poverty Schools

Schools often seek out highly qualified teachers and offer them numerous opportunities to teach in different schools due to the high demand for their skills. Consequently, school districts with higher incomes can provide more enhanced

opportunities to meet support needs, working conditions, and subject and grade level choices than lower income school districts which, in turn, attracts more qualified teachers (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Baker, 2018). According to current research, underachieving and low-income schools frequently depend on lateral entry and provisional teachers to bridge teaching gaps resulting from high teacher turnover (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). The 2013-2014 statistics highlighted that the rate of uncertified teachers quadrupled in high minority schools compared to low minority schools (Carothers et al., 2019).

The unequal distribution of unqualified teachers to high poverty and high minority schools is significant because previous research showed that students taught by unqualified teachers tend to be less successful and have stunted academic growth than qualified teachers (Clotfelter et al., 2010; Ingersoll, 2019). Teachers with training and certification deficiencies in subjects they teach often lack basic pedagogical content knowledge and, as a result, deliver lesser quality instruction (Baumert et al., 2010; van Overschelde & Piatt, 2020). Unqualified teachers may rely more heavily on textbook and workbook combinations. In contrast, qualified teachers can create materials that supplement textbooks that engage students and their curiosity about the subject of interest.

Additionally, unqualified teachers are more susceptible to frustrations caused by inadequate subject matter knowledge. These nuisances lead unqualified teachers to experience higher attrition rates, lower quality of work life, increased feelings of isolation at work, subordinate professional positions, and limited opportunities to apply their

professional development education (Donaldson & Johnson, 2010; Glazer, 2020). Research suggests that a teacher preparation program's ability to yield educators dedicated to remaining employed at urban schools is contingent on their ability to draw candidates with previous experiences in urban settings (Frankenberg et al., 2010; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). More specifically, educators who attended urban, high poverty schools as students or had previously worked in schools within these demographics were more prone to choose or continue teaching.

High-Poverty Schools and Teacher Stress

Inadequate funding and resources, increased workload, negative student behavior, large class sizes, role ambiguity, and low salary wages are widespread stressors for teachers who work in predominately high poverty schools (Ryan et al., 2017; Thompson, 2017; Tokar & Feitler, 1986). In particular, the constant challenge of regularly managing disorderly student behavior and time demands are significant sources of stress for teachers in urban schools (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Prilleltensky et al., 2016). An added amount of pressure to aid marginalized students in meeting the weight of federal, state, and district expectations while maneuvering limited financial and emotional support creates enough stress for urban teachers to leave the profession (Eslinger, 2014; Schmidt & Jones-Fosu, 2019). This persistent exposure to stress sources can eventually lead to professional burnout, explaining why turnover is more prevalent for teachers who work in underachieving urban schools (Ingersoll, 2002; Thompson, 2017). Many explicit and implicit inflictions may result from this occurrence.

A significant and overt implication of urban teachers leaving the profession is the financial burden created when teachers leave the profession within five years of entry. With public school systems spending upwards of $7.3 billion per year on turnover costs, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future assesses that the cost per teacher in urban districts exceeds $17,000 (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016). However, the implicit consequences could potentially lead to more detrimental and long-lasting outcomes in high-poverty areas, hindering their ability to establish solid and healthy relationships with all community stakeholders in the end. For example, alterations to the composition and quality of the teaching staff caused by increased teacher departures can result in an influx of novice and inexperienced teachers and subsequently increased turnover rates in the future (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020).

The entry of new and inexperienced teachers can potentially interrupt the ongoing progression of a cohesive educational setting within the school. While one could argue that turnover naturally causes such disruption, which is to some extent unavoidable, Sorensen & Ladd (2020) assert that this event is intensified when novice teachers replace veteran and more experienced teachers. Moreover, the tendency for novice and alternatively certified teachers to leave the profession at a higher rate than experienced teachers will, in turn, trigger high turnover rates to continue to intensify. Teachers with less experience tend to leave the profession because, on average, they are less successful at advancing student outcomes than experienced teachers (Kane et al., 2008; Ladd & Sorensen, 2017; Papay & Kraft, 2015; Wiswall, 2013). Overall, turnover can have

significant adverse penalties that affect the value of instructional staff and student achievement (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020).

General Teacher Stress

The teaching profession is challenging due to the breadth of obligations, such as resource and classroom management, lesson planning, and continuous student evaluation. Teachers are the focal point of interactions with all stakeholders and, therefore, can benefit from identifying stress sources and effective coping strategies that promote healthier work environments. Previous research studies showed that special education teachers exhibit higher stress levels than general education teachers due to the additional resources, attention, and time students with special needs require compared to other students (Hester et al., 2020; Lazarus, 2006). However, research results from Beirut, Lebanon, revealed no statistically significant differences between special education and general education classroom teachers connected to sources and effects of stress (Kebbi, 2018). While Kebbi (2018) identified the study's limitations, such as a small sample size of special education teachers and having only a few participant teachers respond to the open-ended qualitative questions, it provided an alternative perspective to teachers' stress risks.

Stress has been identified as a deterrent to individual well-being, and without proper coping strategies, it can lead teachers to develop counterproductive relationships with students that adversely affect academic and behavioral results for the students whom they serve (Folkman et al., 1986; Herman et al., 2018; Wentzel, 2010). Researchers acknowledge stress as a detrimental element within a dual-factor mental health model

that defines teacher well-being (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2001; Mankin et al., 2018; Renshaw et al., 2015). Considering this fact, Von der Embse and Mankin (2020) addressed a gap in the current research literature by identifying the importance of studying the fluidity of well-being and stress variability during the school year. Their study showed that teachers' stress increased by approximately 17% from October to June and peaked close to state standardized test administration in the fall and winter seasons.

As student performance on standardized tests becomes the cornerstone of assessing educator and school success, more governmental initiatives and policies require student performance on high-stakes assessments as part of teacher evaluations (Saeki et al., 2015). Current literature supports that this practice has unintended adverse effects on teacher well-being, such as increased teacher burnout and turnover (Ryan et al., 2017). Saeki et al. (2018) further highlighted this occurrence by investigating the potential influence of these policies on early elementary schoolteachers whose students do not take high-stakes state-mandated tests. Their research found elevated stress levels and perceptions of test stress were high even in this subgroup. While using test-based accountability policies to measure school and educator achievement is likely to continue, current literature suggests that investing in ways to better support and facilitate a healthier work environment for teachers during testing is critical.

Job Demands

The combination of technological advances, globalization, and multifaceted transformations in the present day has compelled educators to embrace the notion that complicated work demands require equally complex responses (Nicolaides & Scully-

Russ, 2018). Demands employed on teachers and the resources available to tackle them represent the scope in which they flourish in their profession (Hakanen et al., 2006); therefore, they have been used to explore teacher well-being (Dicke et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Recent research found that schools in Australia and England with supportive profiles experienced higher job satisfaction and commitment (Collie et al., 2020). These results reflect previous research findings that support teachers with more resources, such as self-efficacy and positive colleague relationships, and experience decreased stress and burnout (Bottiani et al., 2019). The contributions of these studies draw attention to the significance of teachers' perception of workplace demands and the resources available to them.

A component shown to raise the incidence of teachers' turnover intention is quantitative and emotional job demands, which can ultimately lead to actual turnover and attrition (Charzyńska et al., 2021; Clandinin et al., 2015; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Quantitative job demands refer to the effort to be done within a specified time (Altaf & Awan, 2011). Teachers' quantitative job demands include preparing lessons, professional development courses, and scoring (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). In contrast, emotional demands for teachers consist of hours of face-to-face interactions with students, parent-teacher conferences, and consistent communication with other teachers and administrators (Jensen, 2021). Research has shown support for a direct relationship between turnover and both quantitative and emotional job demands, such that when job demand is high, there is increased turnover intention (Charzyńska et al., 2021; Räsänen et al., 2020).

Burnout

Teachers' responsibility to facilitate the stability and enhancement of society through influencing the youth entails a good use of professional credentials and the satisfaction of an emotional perspective of their vocation. Therefore, teachers' emotional state regarding their profession can have a positive or negative effect on their ability to teach and enable students to learn effectively, which, in turn, serves as markers for the health of the nation's educational system (García-Arroyo et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Tunc, 2019). For example, the enthusiasm of teachers, as defined by their ability to nonverbally transfer high energy and excitement for a topic to a student, is a characteristic of an effective teacher (Baloch & Akram, 2018; Kunter et al., 2008). Moreover, past research supports a relationship between teacher enthusiasm and professional burnout, such that teachers who experience a high level of burnout report a decreased level of teaching enthusiasm (Kasalak & Dağyar, 2022; Kunter et al., 2011). Teachers experiencing high levels of burnout described feeling ineffective, fatigued, and distressed.

Research has shown that preventing teacher burnout can enhance overall teacher well-being, leading to increased job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Abós et al., 2019; Christensen et al., 2020; Fathi & Saeedian, 2020; Hampton et al., 2020). The onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic has classified teacher burnout as a worldwide epidemic that requires the attention of all educational stakeholders (Pressley, 2021). Răducua and Stănculescu (2022) found that teachers most protected from burnout symptoms were those coded as individuals who perceive and express emotions and possess self-control.

Teachers in this group could leverage their positive emotions and experiences to master stressors. Teachers who could not adequately perceive and express emotions and had insufficient self-control were more prone to burnout symptom experiences.

Research results regarding differences in burnout experiences amongst teachers at differing school levels have been a mixed bag. Some studies have supported primary schoolteachers experiencing more burnout than their secondary school counterparts do, while others showed the opposite trend (Fiorilli et al., 2015; Rey et al., 2012; Zivcicova & Gullerova, 2018). However, a recent study found no differences in burnout levels between teachers' school levels (Cacciamani et al., 2022). Contemporary interventions aiming to tackle teacher burnout through social and emotional learning (SEL) have increased due to the association of a substantial amount of teaching-specific stressors with socio-emotional aptitudes (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Oliveira et al. (2021) found support for a significant medium positive effect on personal accomplishment and a significant medium negative effect on emotional exhaustion. From these findings, researchers can conclude that SEL intervention can encourage teachers' personal accomplishment, which represents an area of burnout associated with assessing personal resources and an individual's capacity to react to job demands (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Interventions for Teacher Stress

Various contextual elements within schools' educational climate and culture affect teacher welfare, job satisfaction, and work associated stress (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; von der Embse et al., 2016). Therefore, teachers can significantly decrease adverse outcomes linked to high stress by actively engaging in daily environmental interactions.

Implementing a standardized common core curriculum in many states and evaluating teacher performance linked to standardized student test scores by federal and state authorities have increased teacher stress levels (von der Embse et al., 2017). Research supports this notion by showing that approximately 30% of teachers describe themselves as having clinically impaired stress levels (von der Embse et al., 2015). Teacher stress substantially affects student success, such as classroom climate changes, attrition, absenteeism, and mental health decision making (Collie et al., 2012; von der Embse et al., 2016). Therefore, knowledge of the best interventions for teacher stress is crucial.

A recent systematic review of teacher interventions revealed four principal treatment domains: cognitive-behavioral (CBI), behavioral (BI), mindfulness, and psychoeducational or knowledge-based methods (KBI) (von der Embse et al., 2019). CBIs unify cognitive guidance and strategic behavioral exercises to provide teachers with knowledge and skills to handle work related stress. Traditional execution of this type of intervention focuses on manual-rooted treatment conventions (Vujanovic et al., 2017). BIs, on the other hand, feature a distinct skill or strategy to minimize teacher stress, which may include practices such as meditation and relaxation techniques (Kaspereen, 2012). Additionally, mindfulness interventions incorporate cognitive and behavioral tactics to focus on developing feelings and thinking instead of on thought matter (Riley et al., 2022). Lastly, KBIs use informational or psychosocial training to combat teacher stress and do not typically include a wellness element. Although this strategy may be an easy and practical resource, it may cause frustration among teachers if it is not generalizable and supported by peers or the administration (Dede et al., 2009)

Using the between-group effect size standard developed by Cohen (1988), researchers found that regardless of the intervention method, there were reports of effect sizes in small ($d < 0.20$) to medium ranges ($d = 0.5$). However, the length of the intervention affected the degree of the treatment gains despite the form of the treatment. Researchers have shown a current interest in mindfulness-based interventions used with the awareness of physiological and cognitive responses to stressful environments or experiences (Jennings et al., 2013; Klingbeil et al., 2017). However, a review of the existing literature found no support for the notion that mindfulness-based treatments are more effective than other treatment types in reducing teacher stress (von der Embse et al., 2019).

Intent to Stay

From its negative effect on student achievement to the futile financial investment in training, employing, and inducting teachers, teacher attrition burdens all educational stakeholders (Milanowski & Odden, 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Current research supports the importance of work conditions in predicting attrition and intent to leave (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). More specifically, research shows that teachers were increasingly predisposed to remain at their schools when they were more experienced, had improved access to instructional tools, and had substantial collegial and administrative sponsorship (Bettini et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers with a weaker intent to stay were characterized as less experienced, suffering more difficulties with students, teaching in high-poverty areas, and working long hours.

Research findings suggest that reasons concerning whether a teacher wants to stay or leave the profession can sometimes be unclear and complicated (Kwon et al., 2020). Many teachers are uncertain about their future professional plans for various reasons and complex circumstances. As educators constantly assess their situations and work environments, they participate in cost-benefit analysis of their decisions to stay or leave. For example, workplace stressors, such as tensions with administrators, amplified some teachers' intention to leave, outweighing their love for teaching. Other teachers reported that their passion for teaching compensated for personal and professional stressors, leading to their decision to stay.

Conclusion

The ongoing presence and significant impact of teacher shortages in Title I schools necessitate further qualitative investigation into their causes in order to devise effective solutions. Research has shown that schools with elevated concentrations of teachers more susceptible to stress were likelier to have increased levels of average workplace fatigue and decreased commitment to the profession (Fitchett et al., 2019). Therefore, further consideration should be given to the rising wave of teacher stress to minimize its effects on teachers, students, and the community (Schmidt & Jones-Fosu, 2019). Research on the lived experiences of Title I teachers' stress perceptions can better inform the understanding of current trends in teacher attrition and turnover rates.

Summary

Primary research has laid the foundation to explore further the significance of teacher appraisal of their work environment in foreshadowing their commitment to

remaining in the profession (Fitchett et al., 2019). The goal of improving Title I teacher attrition and overall quality of education may be to identify trends in teacher stress perceptions. Current research shows that the susceptibility of teachers to stress increases with the number of high-poverty and minority students they service (Boyd et al., 2005; Fitchett et al., 2019; Ouellette et al., 2018). While these factors are out of the control of teachers, they may highlight a systemic issue that intensifies issues with current trends, such as inequalities in funding and support. Thus, Title I teachers' lived experiences within the classroom are needed to inform the basis of current trends and the development of practical solutions.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of the lived experiences of Title I teachers in the United States. I conducted an extensive and detailed review of the current literature and research on the topic of interest, exploring it in conjunction with the transactional theory of stress and coping and the job demands-resource model to establish the study's theoretical underpinning. Furthermore, this chapter presents the literature search strategy.

Chapter 3 includes the research design and establishes the chosen research design's rationale. This chapter also provides an explanation for eliminating other designs and reviews the qualitative research questions. Finally, this chapter addresses the researcher's role, provides a detailed description of the methodology, and discusses trustworthiness issues.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This phenomenological study was an exploration of the lived experiences of Title I teachers' stress perceptions. Before the coronavirus global pandemic of 2020, national surveys established that teacher stress was increasing yearly (Farley & Chamberlain, 2021; Markow et al., 2013). This statistic is significant because research has established that job strain, such as work overload and complex job responsibilities, affects teachers' turnover intentions (Husain et al., 2016; Yiu-Chung et al., 2007). The current study aimed to explore how Title I teacher-informed experiences of stress inform teacher attrition by capturing the significance of personal insights, expectations, views, and adaptations to their Title I teacher-specific working conditions.

This chapter provides the research design and rationale, the phenomenon, the role of the researcher, power differentials and incentives, and management of researcher biases. The methodology section includes the following subsections: participant selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment of participants, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter also addresses credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Finally, the chapter concludes with a description of ethical procedures and a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

Research presented in the literature review of Chapter 2 established significant evidence of high teacher attrition and turnover rates in Title I schools. Additionally, the literature review revealed a gap in teachers' perspectives of job stress and their intent to

remain at a Title I school. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological was to explore teachers' lived experiences of job stress and its meaning on the intention to remain at a Title I school. Through insight gained from the meanings and interpretations that Title I teachers give to job stress and attrition intent, future educational policy creators may curtail high incidence of Title I teacher attrition and turnover. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress?

RQ2: What meanings do Title I schoolteachers make of perceived job stress on their intention to remain in the profession and specifically at a Title I school?

This qualitative study was a phenomenological inquiry to answer these questions. A phenomenological design was merited due to the identified literature gap in Chapter 2, demonstrating the absence of informative data on teacher-perceived job stress and its consideration of current Title I teacher turnover and attrition trends. Analysis of participants' responses provided insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding their intentions to stay (see Neubauer et al., 2019). Furthermore, this approach aided in recognizing the meanings the participants attributed to their experiences. I treated each participant's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings as unique to inform the meanings of the phenomenon (see Neubauer et al., 2019). Through open-ended questions in one-on-one interviews, participants articulated their views and experiences of being a teacher in a Title I school. The two research questions helped me capture the significance of participants' personal insights, expectations, beliefs, and adaptations to their specific working conditions.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, particularly a phenomenological study, the role of the researcher extends beyond data collection to encompass a deep engagement with participants' lived experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). The researcher is not an impartial observer but an integral part of the research process, where subjectivity and reflexivity play crucial roles (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). As described by Moustakas (1994), phenomenology focuses on exploring and understanding the essence of experiences from the perspectives of those who lived them. The researcher's role involves interpreting and making meaning from these experiences while maintaining an awareness of potential biases and preconceptions. A qualitative researcher's responsibilities include subjectivity and reflexivity, objectivity and subjectivity balance, and adherence to a guiding research philosophy. Subjectivity and reflexivity require the researcher to engage with participants' narratives while reflecting on personal biases and preconceptions to ensure an authentic representation of participants' experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Achieving a balance between objectivity and subjectivity is crucial in the interpretation of data because the phenomenological approach acknowledges the inherent subjectivity of the researcher. This duality necessitates an intentional balance to ensure that personal perspectives do not overshadow the participants' voices (Moustakas, 1994). The research philosophy guiding the researcher emphasizes understanding the essence of lived experiences, necessitating an empathetic and open-minded approach to uncover the meanings attributed to experiences by the participants (van Manen, 1997).

In the current qualitative phenomenological study, I aimed to explore the lived experiences of Title I teachers concerning their stress perceptions and intentions to remain in the profession and at their current schools. I conducted semistructured interviews to capture the depth and richness of participants' experiences. Although the interview questions were scripted to address specific research questions, additional unscripted follow-up questions were used to understand participants' responses fully, reflecting the adaptive nature of qualitative research (see Moustakas, 1994). Active participation in data collection required me to remain vigilant in recognizing and mitigating potential biases. This was achieved through ongoing reflexivity and bracketing, allowing me to set aside preconceived notions from previous experiences as a Title I high school teacher. As Neubauer et al. (2019) suggested, self-reflection facilitates a meaningful appreciation of the phenomenon under study. Given my background and current role, remaining aware of the potential for unconscious biases was critical. My firsthand observations of teacher attrition and turnover shaped initial beliefs and feelings about the phenomenon. I employed reflexivity and bracketing throughout the study to ensure these preconceptions did not influence the research.

To facilitate genuine sharing of experiences, I recorded each interview, transcribed the conversations, and provided participants with transcripts to verify the accuracy of their accounts. Each participant signed a written informed consent form granting permission to use the information obtained during the study. By adhering to these principles and practices, I aimed to achieve a balanced and insightful exploration of Title I teachers' stress perceptions and their intent to remain in the profession. This

approach, grounded in phenomenological methodology and supported by scholarly sources, aimed to uncover the nuanced meanings behind the participants' lived experiences.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

My goal in completing this qualitative phenomenological study was to capture the essence of Title I teachers' experiences and reveal how they make meaning of job stress and their intent to remain at Title I schools. I used a purposeful sampling strategy to select participants for the study. Participants who met the requirements outlined in the study and on study interest flyers and who had the willingness to engage in a semistructured interview were selected. To ensure saturation and account for attrition, I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 current Title I high school teachers from a pool of 20 potential participants who had been in that role for at least one academic year within the southern region of the United States (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criteria were mentioned in written and verbal form with each participant before the semistructured interview. Participants who provided consent to eligibility screening questions were selected. The survey's screening questions consisted of the following: (a) Are you currently employed as a teacher at a Title I school? (b) If yes, have you been so for at least 1 year within the southern region of the United States? (c) Would you be willing to be a research participant and share your experiences as a teacher at a Title I school?

I selected participants from a purposive sample to ensure that participants could provide data to answer the research questions with an elevated depth of understanding

(see Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling helped me collect appropriate and valuable data (see Kelly, 2010; Palinkas et al., 2015). Finding an appropriate group of individuals working in a Title I school was essential to meeting the four aspects of sampling (people, process, events, and actions) to understand the participants' lived experiences (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). A researcher can reduce a phenomenological study's sample size compared to other qualitative research designs because more significant numbers tend not to produce more knowledge and insight into the study's phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I excluded individuals who currently taught at non-Title I schools, had not completed at least 1 year of teaching at a Title I school, or taught outside of the southern region of the United States. Potential participants were sourced from professional organizations for primary and secondary educators by obtaining participant recruitment permission from their social media account managers and using snowball sampling. The participant recruitment platforms (Prolific and Respondent) were intended to be used if the primary method failed to generate enough participants. However, I achieved data saturation by using the primary option. Participants who met the study qualifications and who agreed to participate received letters of consent and a demographic questionnaire via email from me. Once I received a participant's consent email and a completed demographic questionnaire form, participants were instructed to schedule their interviews for a specific date and time. Interviews with recruited individuals were conducted virtually through the Zoom video conferencing software. Participants answered open-ended questions that generated data related to their lived experiences of their job stress

perceptions and the meaning of their intent to remain at a Title I school. After I collected the interview data, I transcribed and analyzed them to determine themes. I ended the interviewing process once data saturation was met and no new themes were revealed (see Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Instrumentation

This study's qualitative instrumentation included researcher-generated open-ended interview questions and consent forms. My proficiency was crucial to the success of the interview. According to McGrath et al. (2018), an effective interviewer possesses intelligence, empathy, receptivity, structure, compassion, etiquette, retention ability, and the ability to analyze data. The instruments used to collect data for this study included researcher-conducted in-depth semistructured interviews featuring open-ended questions (see Appendix D) and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). I conducted semistructured interviews to ask participants about their experiences, opinions, and beliefs related to their job stress perceptions and the meaning of their intent to remain at a Title I school. The semistructured interview format allowed me to use subquestions, as needed, to gain additional insight into the participants' lived experiences and perceived experiences of stress (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To answer the research questions regarding Title I teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and the meaning of their intention to continue teaching at a Title I school, I used these instruments to collect relevant and meaningful data from the study participants. The open-ended interview questions elicited responses that provided insight regarding the participants' lived experiences. The semistructured interviews allowed me

to acquire data from the participants' perspectives. The open-ended questions used in the interviews encouraged in-depth discussion of the social and cultural influences that informed participants' lived experiences. Furthermore, the interview questions aimed to elicit insights into the meaning the participants attached to their experiences (see Brown & Danaher, 2017). I inquired about the emotions, beliefs, and implications of stress perceptions on participants' interest in continuing teaching at a Title I school. Each question posed to participants was chosen based on its alignment with the research questions. The study's theoretical framework also informed the interview questions, and using qualitative methods was intentional.

Information gathered from the literature review in Chapter 2 allowed for the development of research questions that addressed the gap in the literature regarding Title I teacher-informed perspectives of job stress related to the current turnover and attrition trends specific to Title I schools. The demographic questionnaire addressed the participant's educational and professional background, and the interview protocol contained open-ended questions that aligned with the study's research questions. The demographic and professional information participants provided was their age, gender, number of years teaching at a Title I school, overall number of years teaching, and highest degree earned. Participants also shared their views on job demands, job resources, and their intent to stay in the profession and at a Title I school in the upcoming school year. When applicable, I asked participants follow-up questions to understand their lived experiences better (see Burkholder et al., 2016). The interview protocol (see Appendix D) helped me guide the semistructured interviews, and interview questions allowed me to

collect data specific to the participants' lived experiences that informed their intentions to stay in the teaching profession or at a Title I school. Furthermore, the researcher-developed approach included trustworthiness factors such as credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability to establish the content validity of the findings (see Creswell, 2013).

Data Collection

I conducted the interviewing process after screening information from participants was collected to determine their eligibility. I gathered participants' demographic information (see Appendix C) and informed consent to obtain participant consent to participate in the study. Next, I conducted a one-on-one semistructured interview with each participant to collect data. I conducted interviews with the research questions in mind and the flexibility to ask additional questions as the need arose. I made a determined effort to perceive things through the participant's assessments whenever further questions arose. Each interview commenced with an open-ended question to capture each participant's lived experience in a phenomenological manner (see Neubauer, 2019). I initiated casual conversations before the formal interview to ensure the participant felt comfortable.

I then outlined the research procedure by providing a general overview of the study, accompanied by questions that led participants toward the primary research questions. I requested that the participants provide insights into their experiences as Title I teachers, including their thoughts on their job demands, resources, and intentions to remain a Title I schoolteacher. Doing so prompted the participants toward self-reflection

and recollecting their experiences. The following sample questions were used in the interviews: (a) Can you describe your experience working at a Title I school? (b) Could you describe a time when you felt particularly overwhelmed by the demands of your job as a Title I teacher? (c) Can you discuss a time when a lack of job-related resources hindered your ability to perform in your role as a Title I teacher? (d) How well do you think your current workload as a Title I teacher aligns with the necessary resources to help you manage that workload? (e) Have you ever considered leaving your role as a Title I teacher? If yes, why, and if no, why not? I asked additional questions as the interview continued.

I conducted the interview virtually through Zoom video conferencing software. Zoom prioritizes the confidentiality and privacy of research participants with features such as end-to-end encryption, secure login, waiting rooms, recording controls, and accredited certifications, collectively ensuring that participant data is safe and only accessed by authorized parties during virtual interview sessions. The interviews lasted approximately an hour. I recorded each interview via Zoom video conferencing to ensure participant responses were not misinterpreted or lost. The audio recordings are part of the collected data and capture valuable in-depth information during transcription and analysis. I will preserve the recordings for five years and discard them per university requirements. After completing the interviews, I transcribed the data using the program Notta within an hour of finishing the sessions. I sent participants a subsequent follow-up email, providing them with a transcript of their interview and asking them to review it for accuracy. This follow-up email was immensely crucial in addressing any potential

misinterpretation that may have arisen. After each interview session and email message, I appreciated and thanked each participant for contributing to the study.

Validity is the extent to which I considered the data collected through the interview meaningful and valuable. Therefore, the accuracy and validity of the study's data were achieved through several strategies, such as bracketing, interpreting, and participant review, as recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018). Furthermore, I achieved qualitative validity by ensuring that the research findings truly and accurately represented the intended phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). If the recruitment procedure failed to yield the intended number to reach saturation, I would have asked participants to refer other Title I teachers who may have been interested in participating in the study and met participation requirements.

Data Analysis Plan

I conducted data analysis through direct communication with the participants from the first interview to the end of the process. During the one-on-one interviews, the goal was to comprehensively understand the research participants' daily experiences through phenomenological approaches. Rather than simply fixing possible meanings, the focus was on understanding how these meanings were constructed and altered. Considering this, I used a thematic approach to isolate, evaluate, and present patterns within the presented information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analyzing the themes surrounding individuals' decisions regarding their intentions to remain at a Title I school as a teacher was crucial to this research study, so I chose a thematic analysis as the ideal interpretive phenomenological approach. I utilized philosophical guidance to determine

how phenomena affecting participants' lives influence their decision-making process. The insights gleaned from the study potentially aid educational policymakers in evaluating whether applying Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) job demands-resource model can help mitigate high attrition and turnover rates among Title I schoolteachers and enhance overall student achievement in the sector.

The chief procedures in phenomenological research identified by Moustakas (1994) include epoché, phenomenology reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. In analyzing the phenomenological data, I took multiple steps, beginning with epoché, which required me to practice ongoing self-reflection to create a clear mindset and remain open, aware, and present concerning the participants. This process required me to listen intently and without bias, fostering renewed perspectives of the phenomenon and promoting openness to its entirety (Moustakas, 1994). Subsequently, phenomenological reduction aimed to shed interpretations of meanings beyond the phenomenon to provide a pure description of the phenomenon's essence. This involved engaging in tasks such as systematically bracketing out biases, actively listening to, and transcribing participant narratives, and continuously reflecting to ensure an unbiased representation of the lived experiences. At the same time, imaginative variation allowed me to look at different scenarios and identify aspects of the phenomenon that may have been left out in previous analyses. This required me to perform tasks like creatively reflecting on all possible meanings, conducting thought experiments, and exploring alternative perspectives to uncover hidden dimensions of the experience. Finally, synthesis combined all

information from phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation to form a single interpretive framework. This involved meticulously compiling and reconciling data, integrating diverse insights, and constructing a cohesive and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. These processes ultimately ensured that the study's findings were valid, rigorous, and insightful by maintaining methodological integrity and depth of analysis.

Moreover, bracketing was an essential component of phenomenological research that allowed me to set aside any presuppositions and acknowledge their understanding of the phenomenon of study. According to Tufford and Newman (2010), bracketing is a process of questioning one's preconceptions that may skew the interpretations of data. I sensitively and attentively immersed myself in the data through bracketing to understand the participant's experiences fully. By setting aside preconceived beliefs, biases, and cultural assumptions, I interpreted the interview data, which allowed themes to emerge from the participant's experiences. Through an optimal application of bracketing, I ensured the credibility and validity of data, safeguarded genuine insights, and formed a trustworthy analysis of the investigated phenomenon.

I utilized horizontalization to analyze the data obtained from the participants by identifying notable statements, grouping them into themes, and perceiving participants' lived experiences from their vantage points. All data collected through one-on-one recorded interviews and note taking was transcribed and categorized into emerging themes and patterns. The analysis explored connections between the data to answer research questions and how people make choices related to the study's phenomenon. I

used thematic analysis to code the data by transcribing and indexing the collected information using NVivo software. Ultimately, I compared themes and patterns until the saturation point was met (see Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies describes the reliability of the data gathered, the interpretation of data, and the assurance of the quality of study methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Impaired trustworthiness can significantly affect the research findings' usefulness and integrity. I guaranteed trustworthiness by adhering to the principles of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (see Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The study's credibility focused on my assertion of the study's truth and its outcomes. The participants' views were at the core of the research study. I was mindful of the potential threats to credibility. Thus, I adhered to consistent semistructured interview protocols across the research study, with colloquial speech applied only based on the participant's understanding and ability to communicate what they experienced. To minimize threats to trustworthiness, I was fully aware of the factors influencing selection, such as instrumentation, history, and maturation. I reinforced the study's credibility through reflective processes, including engaging with the participants in self-analysis about their views. This study's dependability concerns its findings' stability over time through controllable conditions (Nowell et al., 2017). Thus, the research participant's assessments of the results and the interpretation ensured that their views were accurately represented (Korstjens & Moser, 2017).

Transferability means the consistency and redundancy of the data, their descriptive details, and participant details to speak truthfully about the participants' experiences (Nowell et al., 2017). I ensured dependability and confirmability by strictly adhering to Moustakas' (1994) meticulous phenomenological process. This involved creating word-for-word transcripts of interview audios and applying the data collection and analysis, which participants then reviewed to ensure truth and accuracy. The qualitative study's trustworthiness ensured that the research questions were answered following the principles of validity, reliability, and credibility. I demonstrated trustworthiness by maintaining validity, transparency measures, replicability, methodological clarity, ethics, and sound analysis. The data collection, analysis, and review by participants incorporated reflective practices by the participants and me, which provided insights into the experiences of Title I teachers and their meaning on their intent to remain Title I teachers.

Ethical Procedures

I addressed ethical concerns regarding participant recruitment before the data collection procedures by obtaining necessary approvals from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. I received IRB approval (no. 09-27-23-0746340) on September 27, 2023, and began recruiting participants soon afterward. I considered all participants' ethical concerns and conducted the study per Walden University's established guidelines, allowing for confidentiality and secure data storage. Participation in the study was voluntary, and I placed participation notices in IRB-approved areas. The flyers outlined the study's purpose, participant criteria, and confidentiality. Interested

participants contacted me through private messaging on Facebook Messenger and a secure Walden email address. I ensured confidentiality by informing participants verbally and in written form about the confidentiality process involved in collecting data. I notified participants of their right to withdraw consent without penalty.

I reviewed confidentiality and the terms of the data collection process with participants, and they were provided with a written informed consent form to complete before the research interview began. To maintain anonymity, I assigned pseudonyms to all participants, which were used in all aspects of the data reporting process. I securely stored interview transcripts, consent forms, digital recordings, and data analysis items in a password-protected computer accessible only to me. Accessibility will be for five years following the study, after which all the data will be disposed of in compliance with Walden University's protocol—the outlined procedures aid in securing the participants' confidentiality while protecting the data's integrity.

Summary

The study aimed to explore teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its meaning on their intentions to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. This chapter provides information regarding the research study's design, methodology, and ethical considerations. Additionally, this chapter reviews the study's participant criteria, selection process, and sampling strategy. Within the chapter, I also discuss explanations of the study's trustworthiness, dependability, and confirmability. Finally, the presentation includes ethical considerations regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and information storage. Chapter 4 provides information on the research study's findings,

data collection procedures, data analysis, theme identification and sub-themes, and data support from participant interviews.

Chapter 4: Results

This phenomenological study sought to understand teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its role in shaping their intentions to remain in the profession, specifically within Title I schools in the southern United States. Using semistructured interviews, I conducted an in-depth exploration of each participant's experience of job-related stress, addressing the scarcity of perspectives informed by Title I teachers regarding current turnover and attrition trends in these schools. This chapter establishes the framework for addressing the research questions through the lived experiences of 10 Title I teachers, detailing how these experiences shaped their decisions to continue in the profession and at a Title I school. This chapter includes the demographic information of the participants and an overview of the data collection and analysis procedures. I then describe the data analysis and present the study's findings including participant excerpts, emergent codes, categories, and thematic patterns identified during the data collection process. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the research findings.

Research Context

Targeting a specific population of teachers in the southern United States, I conducted this phenomenological study during the 2023-2024 school year. Data collection occurred from late fall to early spring, including some interviews during the winter break. This timing was crucial because it included various phases of the academic year to provide a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' experiences. Each period of the school year presents unique challenges and stressors. For instance, late fall includes the pressure of preparing for mid-year assessments and parent–teacher

conferences, while the winter break offers a brief respite that often leads to reflection on the first half of the school year and planning for the second half. Conducting interviews over the winter break allowed teachers to share how breaks and holidays impact their stress levels and job satisfaction. This period served as a pivotal moment for teachers to assess their stress and coping mechanisms with some distance from their daily responsibilities. Early spring involves intensive preparation for standardized tests and end-of-year evaluations, providing a well-rounded view of the fluctuations in job stress and workload experienced by Title I teachers.

Additionally, the 2023-2024 school year was marked by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as addressing student achievement deficits from periods of extended remote learning, increased behavioral issues, and the social-emotional needs of students returning to in-person learning environments. These additional challenges compounded the regular responsibilities of teachers, making their experiences particularly relevant for understanding job stress and retention factors. Ongoing COVID-19-related safety concerns also necessitated virtual interviewing. Title I schools, which serve high populations of low-income students, faced unique challenges during this period. The pandemic exacerbated existing issues such as limited resources, larger class sizes, and the need to meet diverse student needs, thereby increasing job-related stress (García & Weiss, 2020; Kraft et al., 2016).

All participant interviews were conducted via separate password-protected Zoom links to maintain confidentiality and privacy. Each participant received detailed instructions via email on accessing the Zoom interviews, ensuring a seamless process.

This method safeguarded sensitive information while providing flexibility and convenience in scheduling interviews, allowing teachers to share their experiences in a secure and comfortable environment.

Demographics

In this phenomenological study, I recruited a sample aimed at representing the diverse experiences of Title I teachers in the southern region of the United States, adhering to methodological principles that advocate for a manageable yet sufficiently detailed exploration of participants' lived experiences (see Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2018). Emphasizing depth over breadth, I sought to recruit between 10 and 15 participants to capture a spectrum of perspectives on job-related stress and retention intentions among these educators, consistent with sample size recommendations for phenomenological research (see Moustakas, 1994; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The criteria for participant selection required individuals to be at least 18 years of age, have a minimum of 1 year of experience teaching in a Title I school, and be currently employed as a teacher in a Title I school located in the southern United States.

The recruitment strategy aimed to target a participant pool of at least 20 eligible individuals, ensuring a broad and diverse selection from which the final 10 participants could be chosen, aligning with the methodological emphasis on purposeful sampling to achieve rich, meaningful data (see Polkinghorne, 1989). Outreach efforts included using professional social media network groups geared toward educators for broad reach. Despite scheduling challenges and the virtual nature of the study, I met the initial recruitment objective. These challenges were mitigated by offering a variety of time slots,

including evenings and weekends, to accommodate participants' schedules, demonstrating persistent effort, and adaptability. This flexibility underscores the principle of maintaining participant accessibility and engagement crucial in qualitative research (van Manen, 1997). Additionally, I employed interpersonal skills within the virtual format to build rapport and create a conducive environment for sharing in-depth experiences. Participants were encouraged to select distraction-free environments, and interview protocols were adjusted to accommodate potential interruptions, in line with best practices for ensuring data quality in phenomenological studies (see Moustakas, 1994).

Upon achieving the recruitment goal, I proceeded with 10 participants who met the inclusion criteria, reflecting the methodological principle of ensuring participant relevance to the research questions (see Polkinghorne, 1989). Demographic data were collected and presented in graphic and narrative formats. The demographic details for each participant are listed in Table 1, aligning with the practice of providing comprehensive participant profiles to contextualize the findings within phenomenological research (see van Manen, 1997).

Table 1

Demographic Data

Participant	Gender	Age	Overall teaching experience (years)	Title I teaching experience (years)
Participant 1	Female	35–44	11–15	10+
Participant 2	Female	25–34	6–10	7–10
Participant 3	Male	35–44	11–15	10+
Participant 4	Female	25–34	1–5	4–6
Participant 5	Male	25–34	1–5	1–3
Participant 6	Male	55+	11–15	10+
Participant 7	Female	35–44	1–5	1–3
Participant 8	Female	35–44	6–10	4–6
Participant 9	Female	25–34	11–15	10+
Participant 10	Female	35–44	16–20	10+

Note. Participants were assigned a number for confidentiality purposes, which did not correspond to the order in which they completed the interview.

The ages of the 10 participants ranged from 25 to 55+. Of these 10 participants, seven were female, and three were male. Eight participants identified as Black/African American, while the remaining two identified as White. In terms of marital status, five participants were married, four had never been married, and one was divorced, separated, or widowed. All participants held at least a bachelor's degree, with eight having advanced degrees.

Moreover, eight participants possessed state teacher certifications from Florida, Georgia, or Louisiana; one had pursued an alternative route to licensure, and one held the I-Teach LA Practitioners License. Teaching experience ranged from 1 to 20 years, with Title I teaching experience varying from 1 to over 10 years. Four participants taught at the elementary level, three at the middle school level, and three at the high school level. Disciplinary specializations included three in mathematics, three in English/language arts, one in physical education, one in social studies/history, one in both mathematics and

science, and one in mathematics, science, English/language arts, and social studies/history.

The ranges of years of teaching experience and years of teaching in a Title I school offered several methodological and analytical benefits. Primarily, employing ranges acknowledged the natural variability in career lengths and experiences among teachers, providing a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the studied population (see Patton, 2015). Second, this approach mitigated the risk of inaccuracies in self-reported data, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings (see Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Finally, ranges facilitated the identification of potential patterns and trends across different levels of teaching experience, enabling a richer data analysis and allowing for a more meaningful interpretation of how teaching experience influences educational outcomes in Title I schools (see Mertens, 2019).

Data Collection

This phenomenological inquiry explored the lived experiences of Title I teachers in the southern region of the United States, concentrating on their perceptions of job stress and its implications for their professional retention within Title I schools. Following the approval from Walden University's IRB, purposive sampling was implemented to select participants who met the criteria outlined in the recruitment materials. With permission from social media group administrators, I disseminated recruitment flyers (see Appendix A) in targeted Facebook groups aimed at engaging potential participants. These groups included ones focused on kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers, academic resource groups for grade school educators, and communities

for Title I educators. Although follow-up messages were not sent to unresponsive administrators, I expressed gratitude to those who responded. Interested participants were invited to express their interest by contacting me via my Walden email or Facebook Messenger. After receiving a participant's expression of interest, I initiated subsequent communication via email, except for the interviews.

I identified and selected 10 participants for the study. Semistructured interviews were conducted with each participant to gather comprehensive and in-depth data. This sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation, in which no new themes or insights emerge from additional data collection, thereby confirming the sample size's adequacy (Guest et al., 2006). Data saturation ensures the findings' credibility and reliability (Mason, 2010). The current study was geographically and institutionally focused on Title I schools in the southern region of the United States to generate targeted insights into how teachers' lived experiences contribute to turnover and attrition rates within these settings. This intentional focus ensured the relevance and applicability of the findings to educational research, particularly regarding economically disadvantaged schools (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Some potential participants were excluded during recruitment due to teaching outside the prescribed demographic region. Including such participants would have diluted the data's specificity, applicability, thereby weakening the study's capacity to generate focused, and pertinent insights (see Patton, 2015). Adhering to the selection criteria contributed to methodological rigor and bolstered the study's validity. The criteria were chosen to align with the study's objectives, emphasizing Title I schools' unique challenges and dynamics. Achieving data saturation

with a smaller, highly relevant participant pool is a recognized practice in qualitative research that balances depth with practical constraints (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criteria were chosen to align with the current study's objectives, focusing on Title I schools to explore these educational environments' distinctive challenges and dynamics. Achieving data saturation with a small, relevant participant pool is a recognized practice in qualitative research that balances depth with practical constraints (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data collection included individual semistructured interviews to explore participants' personal experiences and reflections on job stress and its impact on their career decisions. These interviews were designed to elicit detailed accounts of the challenges, emotions, and factors informing participants' decisions to continue teaching in Title I schools. By capturing the intricate narratives and lived experiences of Title I teachers in the southern region of the United States, I aimed to uncover the complex interplay between job stress, professional commitment, and the educational context (see Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2016).

Informed consent and demographic data were obtained from each participant before the interviews, with assurances of confidentiality provided to foster a safe environment for open and honest discourse. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, offering a convenient platform given geographical constraints. Preinterview instructions were provided to participants on Zoom use, including technical tips for a stable connection and optimal settings. Each interview began with an icebreaker to build rapport and reiterate confidentiality assurances. The interview protocol included 13 open-ended

questions (see Appendix D) and additional prompts tailored to the research objectives, encouraging participants to share their perspectives on job stress and its significance in shaping their career intentions. This approach facilitated thorough and nuanced data collection, indispensable for understanding participants' experiences.

After the interview, participants were sent their transcripts for review to ensure accuracy. No participant had any follow-up questions or concerns. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within participants' narratives (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). This qualitative analysis revealed how job stress experiences shaped the career decisions of Title I teachers in the southern region of the United States. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the data collection process, adhering to Walden University's IRB guidelines to safeguard participants' rights and well-being (see Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The insights obtained from the data deepened the understanding of the lived experiences of Title I teacher participants, highlighting the complex dynamics of job stress and career intentions within Title I schools in the southern region of the United States. By exploring personal narratives and reflections, this study contributed to the discourse on the challenges and motivations guiding educators' decisions to remain in their professions within these specific educational contexts.

Data Analysis

I employed IPA to explore the personal meanings that Title I teachers ascribe to their lived experiences, examining how these experiences shape their intentions to remain in the profession and in Title I schools. IPA, a qualitative methodology, emphasizes

understanding participants' subjective experiences within their specific contexts, thereby allowing for a thorough exploration of individual perspectives (Smith et al., 2009). Using this analytical approach, I aimed to reveal the intricate interplay of personal, professional, and contextual factors that inform teachers' decisions to stay in or leave their roles in Title I schools. The process began with a systematic movement from coding individual data units to forming larger representations such as categories and themes. Initially, I conducted a detailed examination of interview transcripts to detect recurring themes and patterns within the teachers' narratives. Each segment of data was carefully coded, with specific codes emerging organically from the participants' stories. NVivo software was used to organize, manage, and analyze the qualitative data, providing a nuanced and grounded interpretation.

As the analysis advanced, related codes were grouped into broader categories reflecting common aspects of the participants' experiences. For instance, the codes "stressful work environment," "physical manifestations of stress," and "work-home boundary management" led to the formation of the category "intersecting dimensions of job stress." Participant 2 illustrated this by saying, "I hold a lot of stress. I get more migraines now. I mean, it's definitely the stress manifesting into physical symptoms, 100 percent." Similarly, Participant 10 emphasized the struggle of balancing work and home life: "It can be stressful, but you have to learn how to separate work from home and leave work at work sometimes." This category, "intersecting dimensions of job stress," then informed the broader theme of "impact of job stress on daily life and work experiences." Through continuous comparison and refinement, I identified relationships among these

categories, evolving them into overarching themes. Engaging in a double hermeneutic interpretation process, I aimed to grasp how participants interpreted their experiences while also situating these interpretations within the wider context of turnover and attrition in Title I schools (Smith et al., 2009). This reflexive approach enabled a profound exploration of the participants' subjective meanings and lived realities.

Once initial categories were identified, I organized these into higher-order themes that encapsulated the essence of the teachers' experiences in Title I schools. For instance, the code "student-centered motivation" was developed into the category "motivations and flexibility in the education environment," which then contributed to the broader theme "motivation to continue teaching despite challenges." Participant 1 articulated this well: "I see my impact in the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college." Additionally, Participant 7 shared: "It's my dream job. I love my babies, even though they get on my nerves sometimes, but I love my babies." Through iterative analysis and constant comparison, connections between themes were interpreted, and overarching patterns emerged that highlighted the core motivations and challenges affecting teacher retention (Smith et al., 2009). This analytical approach facilitated a holistic comprehension of the multifaceted nature of teachers' experiences of perceived job stress and how these experiences shape their intentions to stay in the teaching profession and at a Title I school. As the analysis deepened, I engaged in interpretive synthesis, delving into individual stories and experiences shared by the teachers to uncover underlying meanings and themes transcending individual accounts. By situating these findings within the broader literature on teacher turnover and attrition,

the study aimed to offer a more comprehensive understanding of trends in Title I schools. Through this interpretive lens, I provided enhanced insights into teachers' lived experiences and the implications for improving retention strategies in high-needs educational environments. This inductive approach ensured that the resulting categories and themes were deeply embedded in the actual data, reflecting the study's participants' authentic perspectives. Ultimately, the study's methodological rigor and reflexive engagement yielded a rich, grounded understanding of the complex factors shaping the career decisions of Title I teachers in the southern United States.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Establishing the trustworthiness of this qualitative phenomenological study's findings was paramount to ensuring their validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). This section provides a comprehensive overview of the strategies employed to enhance the research outcomes' credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. By implementing rigorous methodological approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and maintaining transparency throughout the research process, the study aimed to present an in-depth, trustworthy account of teachers' experiences with job stress and their decision-making regarding career retention in challenging educational settings. To achieve this, the study utilized strategies such as member checking, where participants reviewed and verified the accuracy of transcriptions and interpretations (Birt et al., 2016), and prolonged engagement to build rapport and gain deeper insights (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Triangulation was also employed, using multiple data sources to cross-verify information (Fusch et al., 2018).

Through these measures, the study aimed to ensure that the findings were robust, reflective of participants' authentic experiences, and applicable to similar contexts.

Credibility

I established credibility through the implementation of member checking, reflexivity, and thick description. Member checking was conducted to ensure the accuracy and validity of the data collected, allowing participants to review and confirm the findings based on their own experiences (Birt et al., 2016; Thomas, 2017). Each participant received a copy of his or her interview transcript via email shortly after the interview was conducted. They were instructed to review the document carefully, correct any misinterpretations, add further details, or clarify any points that might have been misrepresented. Participants were reminded of the importance of their feedback for the study's validity and were encouraged to take their time in reviewing the transcripts. A follow-up email was sent to ensure all participants received the request and to thank them for their participation. Although no participants responded with questions or concerns, the absence of feedback was interpreted as an indication that the transcripts accurately represented their interviews. I remained open to receiving feedback throughout the analytical process, ensuring that the opportunity for participant input was always available. This meticulous process bolstered the study's methodological rigor, even without direct participant feedback.

Reflexivity was another critical element in enhancing the study's credibility. I engaged in a series of detailed steps to continuously reflect on their biases, assumptions, and preconceptions throughout the research process (Berger, 2013; Darawsheh, 2014).

This included maintaining a reflexive journal and engaging in regular self-assessment. The reflexive journal documented personal reflections following each interview and during the data analysis phase, capturing thoughts on potential biases, emotional responses, and initial interpretations. By consistently writing in this journal, I could identify and critically examine their assumptions, ensuring they did not unduly influence the findings (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). Regular self-assessment ensured the analysis remained aligned with the study's initial objectives. This involved methodically reviewing data collection and analysis steps, considering how my background, experiences, and perspectives could shape the interpretation of the data (see Haynes, 2012). Periodic self-assessment helped maintain awareness of my positionality and its potential impact on the research process. Additionally, I applied bracketing techniques to set aside personal biases consciously and preconceived notions while engaging with the data (Tufford & Newman, 2010; Sorsa et al., 2015). Before conducting interviews and during data analysis, I made a conscious effort to acknowledge and mitigate existing assumptions, explicitly noting these biases in the reflexive journal.

By implementing these comprehensive reflexive practices, I ensured a thorough and deliberate examination of their role and influence within the research process. This meticulous approach to reflexivity not only enhanced the study's credibility but also facilitated a nuanced and authentic understanding of the research findings. Integrating these strategies ensured that the findings were robust, reliable, and reflective of the participants' lived experiences.

Transferability

Transferability was established through several key strategies designed to situate the study within the broader research context and ensure the findings resonated with existing literature on teacher stress, retention, and school context. By comparing the study's outcomes with established research, I identified common themes and unique insights that delineate the specific challenges faced by Title I teachers (Naeem et al., 2023; Strati et al., 2017). Initially, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, examining key studies and theoretical frameworks related to the educational challenges in Title I schools. This review entailed a thorough analysis of existing research on teacher retention, instructional strategies, and student outcomes within low-income settings. Synthesizing these findings established a clear context for the current study and highlighted gaps within the existing literature. Subsequently, emerging themes from the data were cross-referenced with those highlighted in prior research. Recurrent issues such as high demands and lack of resources were consistent with findings from Nicolaides and Scully-Russ (2018), and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018). By drawing direct comparisons, I gained a deeper understanding of the prevalence and nuances of these issues, identifying where the study's findings either aligned with or diverged from established patterns.

Moreover, I underscored unique insights by highlighting specific challenges underrepresented or not previously documented in the literature. For instance, this study revealed innovative coping strategies and community support systems not extensively covered in previous works, such as the need for mental health professional development days mentioned by Participant 2 and Participant 7. These findings contributed new

knowledge to the field. I included a discussion section to critically engage with the broader academic landscape and further contextualize the research. This part explained how the study's results supported, disagreed with, or added to previous theories and empirical studies. It did this by citing Naeem et al. (2023), Strati et al. (2017), and other relevant sources to back up its claims. By situating the study within this extended framework, I illuminated common themes, emphasized unique contributions, and provided a comprehensive understanding of the particular challenges faced by Title I teachers, thus enriching the existing body of knowledge (Nguyen & Springer, 2021).

The discussion also addressed the study's limitations, such as potential biases in data collection and the specific characteristics of the participant sample, which provided a transparent assessment of the study's scope and potential transferability. By acknowledging these limitations, I demonstrated a critical awareness of the study's boundaries and outlined factors guiding the transferability of the findings. Furthermore, the inclusion of participant quotes and examples throughout the research findings report provided rich and authentic narratives that captured the lived experiences and perspectives of Title I teachers regarding job stress and retention issues. These firsthand accounts added depth and nuance to the study and offered concrete examples for the audience to consider in similar educational settings. Through these comprehensive strategies, I ensured that the findings were insightful, relevant, and transferable to other Title I schools and educational contexts, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of teacher well-being and retention in high-needs schools.

Dependability

Sharing the methodological process with a research mentor for feedback significantly contributed to achieving dependability in the study. Several measures were undertaken to ensure the research remained consistent and stable over time, thus enhancing its credibility and dependability. Initially, I detailed each methodological step to the study's research chair, thoroughly explaining participant recruitment, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures. The mentor's critical feedback and constructive criticism were instrumental in refining the research design and identifying potential biases or methodological issues early on. To further ensure dependability, I meticulously maintained an audit trail, documenting all research decisions and processes comprehensively. This included memos on methodological choices, rationales for participant selection, detailed descriptions of data collection procedures, and records of data analysis steps (Tracy, 2010; Nowell et al., 2017). This extensive audit trail served as a transparent record that peers and reviewers could scrutinize, ensuring that the study could be replicated or evaluated for consistency.

Reflexive journaling was equally critical in maintaining transparency and dependability. After each interview and during data analysis, I made detailed journal entries to capture reflections, emotional responses, and evolving interpretations. For example, I documented reasons for specific methodological choices, how personal biases were recognized and managed, and changes in perspective throughout the research process. This practice enabled critical evaluation and adjustment of the research approach over time, enhancing the study's reliability (Finlay, 2002; Berger, 2013). Code-recoding

strategies were employed to ensure consistency in data analysis. I initially developed a coding schema based on preliminary themes identified in the data. After some time, the data were independently revisited and recoded. This iterative process confirmed the reliability of the initial codes and refined the coding schema, ensuring consistent and accurate data analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The study's rich, thick descriptions further reinforced its dependability. These detailed narratives included extensive contextual information about the socioeconomic background of the region, the specific environment of the Title I schools, and the demographics of participating teachers. Additionally, verbatim interview quotes were incorporated to illustrate participants' experiences and perspectives vividly. These comprehensive descriptions provided readers with an in-depth understanding of the research setting and participants, supporting the transferability of the findings (Morse, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I ensured the study's consistency and stability over time by implementing these rigorous practices, maintaining a detailed audit trail, engaging in reflexive journaling, employing code-recoding strategies, and providing thick descriptions. These steps enhanced the dependability of the research outcomes, fostering a culture of rigor, openness, and accountability within the scholarly community.

Confirmability

To establish the confirmability of the findings, I maintained an objective stance throughout the data analysis process, striving to authentically present the participants' voices and experiences without imposing personal interpretations or biases. For instance, Participant 5 directly remarked, "But I have my own stuff going on, you know, after

work, too. And that's when they get a little stressful. You know, you get home. I want to sit on the couch, unwind, and not think about what happened." Similarly, Participant 6 shared, "I did at one point in time have a temper when I was in Title I schools because of such the discipline problems, the distractions of headphones and phones and those things, which can really make you start stressing about things that you can't control." Participant 10 added, "It can be stressful, but you have to learn how to separate work from home and leave work at work sometimes."

Reflexive journaling was implemented to document my reflections, emotional responses, and reactions to the data, ensuring transparency in the decision-making process. This reflective practice allowed me to critically examine my own contributions to the research and maintain an unbiased approach (Berger, 2013; Ortlipp, 2008). By adhering to this rigorous and systematic approach to data analysis, the study aimed to enhance the confirmability of the research findings and conclusions. Through the implementation of strategies to enhance credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, this phenomenological study aimed to establish trustworthiness in the research findings on teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its implications on their intentions to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. By conducting a systematic and transparent research process, the study sought to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted experiences of job stress, teacher retention, and school context, thereby offering a deeper understanding of the obstacles and potential advantages encountered in high-needs school settings (Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004).

Results

The research questions guiding this inquiry were twofold: “What are Title I schoolteachers’ lived experiences of perceived job stress?” and “What meanings do Title I schoolteachers ascribe to perceived job stress in relation to their intentions to remain in the profession and specifically at a Title I school?” Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, this study explored the complex perspectives, challenges, coping strategies, and motivations of educators working in Title I schools. The following section presents the key themes organized in relation to these research questions, providing a deeper understanding of the multifaceted relational dynamics of job stress, teacher retention, and the distinctive context of Title I schools.

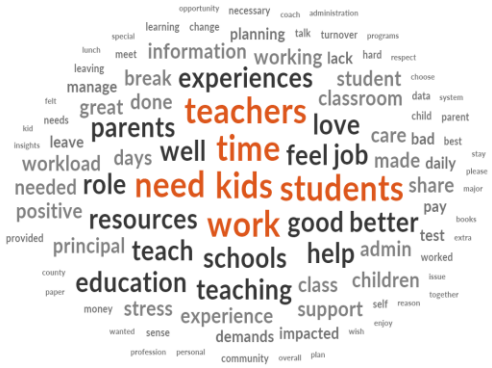
Analyzing the phenomenological data collected from interviews with Title I schoolteachers revealed several key themes, categories, and patterns that illuminate the lived experiences of educators regarding job stress and its implications for their professional commitments. The initial analysis involved coding the interview data to identify significant phrases and concepts. These codes were then grouped into categories representing broader aspects of teachers’ experiences. Overarching themes emerged from these categories, which encapsulated the core elements of the educators’ narratives.

The following codes, categories, and themes were instrumental in capturing the complexities of teachers’ experiences in high-needs educational settings. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of keywords utilizing NVivo Word Cloud Analysis, facilitating the identification of relevant codes. These codes were systematically employed to categorize and analyze the data, uncovering the underlying themes and

patterns in teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and their intentions to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. Additionally, Appendix D offers a sample overview of the corresponding codes, categories, themes, and excerpts of quotations that encapsulate the essence of teachers' narratives in navigating job stress within Title I schools.

Figure 1

Visual Representation of Key Words Using NVivo Word Cloud Analysis



Research Question 1: What Are Title I Schoolteachers' Lived Experiences of Perceived Job Stress?

The study aimed to explore the educators' lived experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the essence and significance of perceived job stress in Title I schools. Five themes emerged in relation to the first research question, which focused on Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress. By identifying and examining these themes, the study sought to illuminate the unique stressors and challenges faced by Title I schoolteachers, providing valuable insights that could inform the future development of strategies to support their well-being and professional longevity.

Theme: Impact of Job Stress on Daily Life and Work Experiences

The categories of intersecting dimensions of job stress and experiences of overwhelm provide significant insight into how job stress affects the daily lives and work experiences of Title I schoolteachers. Participants shared a range of perspectives that illustrate the profound effects of job-related stress. Participant 2 articulated the physical manifestations of stress: “I hold a lot of stress. I get more migraines now. I mean, it’s definitely the stress definitely manifesting into physical symptoms, 100 percent.” Such experiences highlight how the burdens of teaching can lead to serious health concerns, which add a layer of complexity to their jobs. The quote continues, “It’s either, you know, you deal with it. You bring work home like they always tell you not to, or you stress even worse because you know you’re not doing it at home,” indicating the perpetual cycle of stress. The struggle between managing school responsibilities and maintaining a personal life underscores the emotional toll on teachers.

Participant 5 expressed frustration about balancing work and personal life: “But I have my own stuff going on, you know, after work, too. And that’s when they get a little stressful.” The desire to unwind after a demanding workday is hindered by the stress carried home, complicating their ability to relax and recharge. Furthermore, Participant 6 shared their experience with behavioral challenges that contributed to job stress: “I did at one point in time have a temper […] in Title I schools because of such the discipline problems.” The presence of constant distractions, such as students using headphones and phones, creates an environment where stressors can feel unmanageable. Lack of control over these factors intensifies feelings of overwhelm. The necessity of maintaining a

boundary between work and home life was highlighted by Participant 10: “It can be stressful, but you have to learn how to separate work from home and leave work at work sometimes.” Maintaining this separation can be particularly challenging for teachers who feel an emotional investment in their students’ success. Participant 1 described the feeling of being stretched thin: “Being able to juggle is almost like having to be an octopus. You have to have several hands everywhere to make everything function.” The metaphor illustrates the exhaustion that comes from attempting to manage multiple responsibilities, frequently leading teachers to experience significant burnout.

Overwhelm was also a concern mentioned by Participant 2, who recognized the difficulty in meeting the diverse needs of students: “Working in special ed too, you know, that’s just important to me, but I can see how easy those accommodations will slip because teachers are so overwhelmed with so much going on.” The pressure to provide tailored support to students can lead to feelings of inadequacy when teachers are unable to meet expectations. Participant 5 echoed this sentiment regarding overwhelming demands: “But this year, it did get a lot of overwhelming because they wanted us to implement this.” The rapid pace of new initiatives without adequate time to see their effectiveness contributes to stress levels. For many teachers, organizational skills become crucial. Participant 6 noted, “It’s overwhelming to those that don’t have good organizational skills. It’s very hard to do.” Underlying stress can escalate when tasks accumulate or when poor organizational strategies lead to forgotten responsibilities. Participant 7 reflected the need for assistance: “I’ve told them numerous times, hey, I’m overwhelmed. I need help.” The admission of struggle signifies that many teachers feel

the burden of their workloads but may lack the support necessary to manage it effectively. Finally, Participant 9 expressed the challenges heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic: “I’ll say probably during COVID, that was the most overwhelming time, simply because, you know, the kids, even though the school provided them with devices, some of them didn’t have Wi-Fi.” The additional hurdles of ensuring students had access to online learning resources compounded existing stressors, further complicating the teaching landscape.

In summary, participants’ experiences illustrate the pervasive impact of job stress on their daily lives and work experiences. Severe physical health concerns, an inability to unwind after work, overwhelming demands, and a lack of effective support systems create a challenging environment for Title I schoolteachers. Addressing these issues may be crucial to developing strategies that support teachers in overcoming the overwhelming nature of their roles.

Theme: Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands

The categories of resource availability and adequacy and the role and impact of administrative support on professional experience illustrate the critical importance of resources in managing job demands among Title I schoolteachers. Participants provided various insights into how resource availability and administrative backing play vital roles in their experiences of job stress. Participant 1 emphasized the need for sufficient resources: “Also, being resourceful because there are some resources that we receive, and there are several resources that we still need.” The distinction made here underscores the gap between existing resources and those required to effectively meet the demands of

teaching. Participant 2 spoke positively about improvements in resources: “So now I do have that adequate resource that has been helping me, and they’ve enforced that they’ve added some more things that we need to start doing that I think are helping, you know, big time.” The acknowledgment of adequate resources serving as a meaningful support suggests that when schools prioritize resource distribution, it significantly benefits teachers’ ability to manage their workloads.

In contrast, Participant 5 expressed a strong need for additional resources: “I feel like, as a Title I teacher, we need a lot more resources.” The plea for more resources hints at the challenges teachers face when they are expected to perform with limited tools and support, which can heighten feelings of stress. Participant 6 pointed out a common issue teachers encounter: “I think sometimes we are not given enough information. We don’t get some of the resources that we need.” Insufficient information exacerbates stress when teachers lack clarity on how to access or utilize available resources, further complicating their workload. The impact of inadequate resources on student outcomes was highlighted by Participant 7: “I feel like my kids suffered because I didn’t have the resources that I need.” This connection illustrates how the stress experienced by teachers can directly affect student learning, emphasizing the ripple effect of resource deficiencies. Participant 8 described the overwhelming expectations faced by teachers: “I feel the sense of being like, you know, overworked a lot and having a lot of expectations with very limited resources or lack of resources at all.” The mismatch between expectations and available resources creates an environment where stress can thrive, leading to burnout and job dissatisfaction.

Participant 9 reiterated concerns about resource adequacy: “If we talk about this resource provided by the school, then no. Okay. No, it’s not enough. I keep an Amazon order.” Reliance on personal funding for necessary resources creates an additional burden on teachers, who may already face financial constraints, further intensifying stress. Understanding the critical role of administrative support, Participant 2 shared, “Having someone to be supportive and give you advice, like, my principals have really been that way.” The positive impact of supportive administration highlights how essential it is for teachers to feel backed by their leaders in order to navigate daily challenges effectively. Conversely, Participant 4 noted a lack of support as a significant source of stress: “Because like that was the big thing that drove me to want to quit was that I felt like I had nobody there to support me.” The absence of support can lead to feelings of isolation and overwhelm, prompting teachers to consider leaving their positions.

Participant 5 reflected on the importance of supportive administration: “Our administration is lovely, like our school counselor. In my personal opinion, I think when she’s not there, then the school is just going to go downhill.” Strong administrative support serves as a stabilizing force that can improve teachers’ job satisfaction and resilience against stress. Participant 8 further emphasized the necessity of effective administrative backing: “The most important resource to handle the job demands most effectively is just administrative support, making sure that there’s an appropriate schedule to meet the needs of the different students.” Attention to scheduling and logistics helps teachers manage their responsibilities more effectively and reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed. Participant 10 encapsulated the significance of administrative support,

stating, “Like I said in the beginning, admin, admin, admin support because they can make it hell.” This sentiment reflects the anxiety teachers feel when administrative support is lacking, reinforcing how strong leadership can positively or negatively influence their experiences.

Overall, the insights shared by participants illustrate how resource availability, both material and administrative, may directly impact Title I teachers’ experiences of job stress. By recognizing the critical importance of adequate resources and supportive administration, schools can take meaningful steps to enhance the professional experiences of their educators.

Theme: Role of Self-Care in Maintaining Well-Being

The categories of self-care practices and challenges and work-life balance and well-being highlight the vital role self-care plays in the lives of Title I schoolteachers, particularly in managing job stress. Participants shared various experiences and strategies that illustrate how self-care affects their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. Participant 2 candidly reflected on the difficulty of prioritizing self-care: “Well, I want to say I try. But honestly, I can’t think of the last time I’ve done anything for myself.” The admission that a recent hospital stay provided the most sleep underscores the challenges teachers face in carving out time for personal well-being amidst their demanding roles. In contrast, Participant 5 found solace in music as a coping mechanism: “Music, music is my escape. I listen to music at work. I listen to it in the car. I get to sing it in the shower.” Music serves as a consistent source of relief, demonstrating how personal interests can support mental health and provide a necessary escape from the stressors of teaching.

Participant 6 emphasized their proactive approach to self-care: “Self-care for me, I’m pretty good at making sure my health is right. I don’t get stressed out a lot.” This perspective highlights the importance of maintaining healthy habits as a buffer against job-related stress. Boundaries around work are crucial, as expressed by Participant 1: “When I leave work, I leave work. When I walk out that door, I don’t work on it at home.” The establishment of boundaries became particularly significant after experiencing Bell’s Palsy, teaching them the importance of separating work from personal life to protect their health. Participant 3 also emphasized the necessity of strict boundaries: “Man, having strict boundaries, you know, I’m saying, leaving, you know, I leave my computer at work, every day.” The approach of not bringing work home creates a structure that allows teachers to recharge, reinforcing the idea that preserving personal time is essential for combating stress.

Creating opportunities to maintain boundaries was noted by Participant 4: “I know whatever three days I need this week, I’m going to leave it at home.” Planning ahead enables better management of work commitments while prioritizing personal time, showcasing a strategic approach to self-care. Participant 7 highlighted the importance of mental health breaks: “My thing is I keep my iPad on me, and I read.” Taking time to indulge in reading during breaks reflects the need for relaxation and personal fulfillment alongside professional responsibilities. The commitment to avoiding work-related tasks after hours was echoed by Participant 8: “So when I leave school, I’m not doing anything work-related. I’m not responding to emails.” Setting these firm boundaries helps maintain focus on personal well-being, allowing for renewed energy during the workweek.

Participant 9 expressed the necessity of prioritizing self and family: “So I have to make time to focus on just me and my needs and my family.” This statement emphasizes the importance of balancing work obligations with personal responsibilities and self-care, acknowledging that some tasks may remain unfinished.

Overall, the insights shared by participants illustrate the significant impact that self-care practices can have on the well-being of Title I schoolteachers. By establishing boundaries, identifying personal coping strategies, and recognizing the importance of mental health, teachers may be able to better navigate the challenges of their profession, highlighting the essential role of self-care in mitigating job stress.

Theme: Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support

The categories identified reveal significant insights into the lived experiences of Title I schoolteachers regarding job stress and highlight their perspectives on how educational support can alleviate such pressures. Numerous direct quotations illustrate the experiences and suggestions of participants. For instance, Participant 1 stated, “I think we could improve our counseling services, emphasized enhancements in counseling services. Since we deal with a lot of students with different backgrounds, they have different types of traumas that teachers aren’t, we’re not prepared for dealing with.” Inadequate support for addressing diverse student traumas contributes significantly to teacher stress. Participants indicate that better mental health resources could lessen the emotional burden on teachers and mitigate job stress.

Participant 4 expressed the importance of partnerships: “I think partnerships are really like a good thing.” Collaborative relationships can provide additional resources and

decrease the strain on teachers, addressing the unique demands of teaching in Title I schools that heighten job stress. Calls for an appropriate curriculum and resources were highlighted by Participant 5: “I would really love for them to change the curriculum…get the actual books, libraries need to come back.” A preference for more traditional and effective instructional methods suggests that current resources may add to instructional stress. Advocating for curricular reform underscores the connection between educational tools and job-related stress. The need for stability was articulated by Participant 6, “Yes, there could be more, I would say, more stability. I think in some of these Title I schools, there’s such high turnover rates.” High turnover disrupts the learning environment and creates additional pressure on remaining staff, indicating a need for more support and retention strategies.

Inclusivity in special education training was emphasized by Participant 7, who noted, “Changes would be having all teachers take a special education class,” suggesting that comprehensive training could empower teachers to manage diverse learning challenges better, potentially reducing stress linked to inadequate preparation. Consistency in funding and accountability were captured in Participant 9’s statement: “Making it more consistent like for the child, you know how they say they want kids to have common standards.” Stable funding and accountability measures can foster a predictable teaching environment, alleviating stressors related to resource variability. Improved teacher compensation was discussed by Participant 2, who remarked, “I think that paying teachers what they’re worth,” along with Participant 3’s sentiment, “Oh, more money always for the teachers.” Fair compensation serves as a crucial aspect of

addressing financial stress, a significant contributor to overall job stress among teachers. The necessity for mental health breaks was echoed by Participant 1's suggestion for "more mental breaks where they can either take…just being able to have someone step in." Structured breaks could provide essential relief in a demanding job landscape. Advocacy for paid mental health days, expressed by Participants 2 and 7, emphasizes the importance of allowing teachers time to recuperate: "I believe mental days are needed."

These insights illustrate a collective call for systemic improvements in educational support to address the multifaceted challenges faced by Title I schoolteachers. The intersection of enhanced counseling services, stable partnerships, appropriate curriculum adjustments, consistent funding, improved teacher compensation, and dedicated mental health resources forms a comprehensive roadmap toward mitigating job stress. Addressing these key areas can create a more supportive teaching environment that recognizes the challenges faced by Title I educators and actively works toward alleviating them.

Theme: Alignment of Workload With Available Resources

The categories of working and role changes in teaching and resources and support in teaching illuminate how the alignment of workload with available resources significantly influences the experiences of Title I schoolteachers. Participants highlighted their personal experiences regarding the demands of their roles and the resources available to them. Participant 2 shared their experience transitioning from a paraprofessional to a teacher: "Well, so I didn't see as much stress when I was a paraprofessional. I didn't have as much of a workload." The contrast in workload

illustrates how the responsibilities associated with being a certified teacher can lead to heightened stress, particularly when inadequate resources accompany greater demands.

Participant 5 emphasized challenges associated with increased workload: “So with this big old workload I have, it’s up to basically, it’s literally up to the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers.” The reliance on teachers to manage substantial workloads without adequate support reflects systemic issues that can exacerbate stress. Participant 2 also recounted a challenging start to their teaching career: “I was supposed to have a mentor teacher. I was supposed to have these resources, but our budget was cut, and that made it to where our mentor teachers were... laid off.” Budget cuts directly limited the support structures that could help new teachers navigate the complexities of the profession, adding to the challenges of adjusting to their role.

In contrast, Participant 3 mentioned having necessary resources: “I teach health and physical education... everything my classroom requires.” Having access to adequate resources allowed them to feel prepared, underscoring the importance of alignment between the demands of the role and the resources available. Participant 4 discussed personal strategies for managing workload: “I have a to-do list and a set of friends.” Maintaining organizational tools and supportive peer relationships can mitigate stress and help manage the demands of teaching. Participant 6 expressed a positive view on resource adequacy: “The resources that we have are adequate and that we as teachers are able to use those to give to the classes that we have.” Adequate resources contribute to a supportive teaching environment, which can enhance teachers’ ability to meet their students’ needs effectively.

Conversely, as previously mentioned Participant 9 voiced frustration regarding resource availability: “If we talk about this resource provided by the school, then no. Okay. No, it’s not enough. I keep an Amazon order.” The need to supplement school resources with personal purchases indicates a misalignment between workload demands and resource availability, which can lead to feelings of stress and frustration. Participant 10 also highlighted a cycle of insufficient resources: “Like I can’t, I don’t have what I need to do my job, but it’s not because... my admin won’t buy it. It’s just, it’s been like a cycle.” The ongoing cycle of inadequate resources inhibits teachers from performing effectively and contributes to the pervasive stress felt within the teaching profession.

Overall, the experiences shared by participants illustrate the critical importance of aligning workload with resources in the context of Title I teaching. By addressing the gaps between responsibilities and available support, schools can help alleviate some of the job-related stress that educators face, leading to improved well-being and effectiveness in their roles.

Research Question 2: What Meanings Do Title I Schoolteachers Make of Perceived Job Stress on their Intentions to Remain in the Profession and Specifically at a Title I School?

Another objective of this study was to examine how teachers’ lived experiences of perceived job stress shape their intentions to remain in the profession, particularly within Title I schools. By examining the fundamental nature of job stress and its impact on professional commitments, this research aimed to reveal the meanings teachers attribute to their experiences of stress. Such insights may illuminate the complex factors that affect

their decisions to persist in Title I educational settings, ultimately providing important perspectives for designing support strategies that enhance teacher retention and well-being. The themes that emerged from this inquiry are as follows:

Theme: Motivation to Continue Teaching Despite Challenges

The categories of motivations and flexibility in the educational environment, educator motivations and ethos, and resilience and sense of purpose in education highlight the intrinsic factors that drive Title I schoolteachers to persevere despite the challenges they face. Participants articulated their motivations for teaching, revealing a deep-seated commitment to their students and a sense of responsibility toward their communities. Participant 7 articulated a profound connection to their students: “The kids, it’s literally my why.” This statement underscores how the students themselves serve as a primary source of motivation, emphasizing the personal stakes teachers feel in their roles. The flexibility inherent in the teaching environment at Title I and charter schools was noted by Participant 8: “I would say being at Title I schools, and especially charter schools, you have a lot more freedom as an educator.” The freedom to innovate and engage students in diverse learning experiences contributes to teachers’ motivation, allowing them to create meaningful educational opportunities.

Participant 1 expressed a long-term view of impact: “I see my impact in the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college.” The ability to witness the fruits of their labor and the enduring influence they have on students fosters a sense of purpose and fulfillment, motivating teachers to continue their work. Participant 2 reinforced the emotional connection to teaching: “Well,

I mean just the love of children that need me." Love for the students serves as a powerful motivator, driving educators to rise to the challenges presented by their roles. Similarly, Participant 3 emphasized the centrality of students in their motivation: "Well, it's always the kids, the kids are the motivators." The affirmation that student needs propel teachers forward highlights the strong commitment educators feel toward supporting their student populations. Participant 4 articulated a sense of connection to the community: "I think there's something special about, like, teaching kids that are from where you're from." This personal stake in the success of local students further motivates teachers to overcome challenges.

Describing a sense of obligation, Participant 5 stated, "Bad, but I do need my bills paid, but that's not even, that's not the worst case. In my opinion, if not me, then who?" This perspective illustrates a strong sense of duty to their students and community, reinforcing their decision to remain in the teaching profession despite challenges. Participant 6 viewed their role as a challenge to embrace: "Well, for me, I would say I'm a soldier. I've always liked a challenge." This warrior mentality reflects resilience and a commitment to navigating the complexities of teaching in a Title I setting. Participant 7 reiterated their passion for teaching: "It's my dream job. I love my babies, even though they get on my nerves sometimes, but I love my babies." The emotional investment in their students elevates their teaching experience and motivates continued dedication. The desire to serve as a role model was highlighted by Participant 9: "Being able to be that example of a true, like role model for these kids." Aspirations to positively influence students affirm educators' motivations and their commitment to standing as examples for

their students. Participant 10 echoed a sense of responsibility: “Who else will do it? Who else will do it?” This rhetorical question underlines the commitment shared among educators to remain steadfast in their roles, ensuring that their students have the support they need.

Overall, the testimonies of participants illustrate a multifaceted array of motivations that fortify Title I schoolteachers’ resolve to continue in their profession. By fostering a strong sense of purpose, connection to students, and community responsibility, educators can navigate the complexities of their roles with resilience, ultimately enriching the educational experiences of their students.

Theme: Considerations of Leaving the Profession

The category reasons for considering departure from educational roles highlights the thoughts and reflections of Title I schoolteachers as they navigate the complex landscape of job stress. Participants articulated various factors contributing to their contemplation of leaving the profession, revealing insights into the meanings ascribed to their experiences of perceived stress.

Participant 1 mentioned aspirations beyond their current role: “Yes, to move up to a higher position. That can be more effective.” The desire for career advancement indicates a search for greater impact and fulfillment, suggesting that current pressures may detract from their educational effectiveness. In exploring curiosity about alternatives, Participant 3 stated, “I consider leaving because I just want to see what it’s like on the other side.” This reflects a longing for exploration and a sense of unfulfillment in their current situation, highlighting the need for personal and professional growth.

Participant 4 discussed challenges in their working relationship, noting, “My principal and I necessarily didn’t get along. I felt just like bogged down.” Tensions with administration can lead to feelings of stagnation, especially in high-pressure environments, which complicates the motivation to continue teaching amidst difficult circumstances. The assertion that external factors can obscure positivity reinforces the connection between job stress and intentions to leave. Participant 6 elaborated on their experiences with turnover in leadership: “Yes, I have before thought about leaving my role as a Title I teacher... the constant changing, the constant personalities of some of the administrators.” Frequent shifts in administration can create instability, diminishing teachers’ sense of security and belonging within their schools. Participant 8 reflected on a past experience that led to consideration of departure: “Um, I did after my, when I took a break from the first school because it was so strict.” The rigidity of school policies and environments can contribute to teacher burnout, prompting educators to seek more supportive settings.

The diminished joy in teaching was poignantly expressed by Participant 9: “Why? Because teaching is not fun anymore. Not just in a Title I school, just teaching overall, the demands of teaching, you know, you don’t really get to teach anymore.” This sentiment emphasizes how overwhelming demands can strip the profession of its intrinsic rewards, prompting considerations of leaving. Finally, Participant 10 shared a sense of fatigue after years in the profession: “I’m tired. And then I’ve been doing this 20 years.” Longevity in a challenging environment can lead to burnout, heightening the contemplation of departure as a means of reclaiming personal well-being.

Through the perspectives shared by participants, it becomes evident that a range of stressors, from administrative conflicts and structural challenges to a loss of passion, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' thoughts about leaving the profession. These reflections underscore the complexities surrounding job stress and its influence on Title I teachers' intentions to persist in their roles, revealing the urgent need for targeted support and reform to enhance teacher retention.

Theme: Perceived Importance of the Role in Students' Lives

The categories of educator roles and impact on students and recognition of impact and fulfillment in education reveal how Title I schoolteachers perceive the significance of their roles in students' lives and the subsequent impact on their decisions to remain in the profession. Participants expressed their understanding of the vital contributions they make, shaping both the academic and personal development of their students. Participant 1 emphasized the guidance they provide to students from diverse backgrounds: "I'm able to give them the next steps in life on how to prepare because since I'm dealing with so many nationalities and a lot of refugees, they don't know what's needed to go further." The recognition of their role in aiding students' transitions underscores the profound responsibility teachers feel in supporting their students' futures. Participant 2 articulated the emotional support they strive to offer: "I just want them to know I'm here for them and I care for them and that I'm a safe person to come to things." The commitment to being a compassionate and understanding presence speaks to the essential relational aspect of teaching, reinforcing the significance of teachers as trusted figures in their students' lives.

As Participant 3 reflected, “I perceive my role to be important…I like to think of myself as more than just a teacher.” This acknowledgment of a multifaceted identity as an educator highlights the sense of purpose that drives teachers beyond mere instructional duties. Participant 4 shared a personal connection to their role: “I know how important my own teachers were when I was in middle school. Like middle school was my least favorite time; that’s why I teach it.” Understanding the influence of their own teachers instills a sense of urgency and intimacy in their work, motivating educators to provide the support they once sought. Participant 5 conveyed the significance of representation, noting, “Oh, man. I think for me, I always tell them, y’all are so lucky. Because the majority of the children I teach are black or Hispanic.” By sharing their own experiences and the importance of diverse role models, teachers inspire students to envision themselves succeeding in their educational journeys.

Recognizing the individual needs of students, Participant 6 stated, “I think that I play an important part; each, you know, each student is different.” This acknowledgment of the unique impact on every student reinforces teachers’ commitment to adapt their approaches to better serve their classrooms. Participant 7 portrayed their role as multifaceted: “I see myself, like I said, as a mom, big sister, counselor, whatever role I need to take on because a lot of them don’t have parental figures at home.” The willingness to embrace various roles demonstrates how deeply invested educators are in nurturing their students’ overall well-being. Participant 8 extended this notion of impact by stating, “I would say pretty important. I have not a great deal, but, you know, get a handful of I still communicate with, and they’ll send me photos and pictures of them in

karate or when in the spelling bee." Positive feedback from former students serves as an affirmation of the teacher's influence, reinforcing a sense of connection and responsibility.

Participant 9 emphasized the necessity of visibility, stating, "It's necessary because the kids need to see somebody that looks like them doing good things." This acknowledgment of representation further highlights the importance of educators serving as role models, fostering both aspiration and resilience among students. Participant 1 noted the cyclical nature of impact: "I see my impact on the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college. So I'm able to see, not necessarily what I'm doing right now, but I'm able to see what I input into them come back out full circle." The long-term recognition of influence emphasizes how teachers derive meaning from their contributions and the ongoing relationships formed with students. Finally, Participant 8 expressed joy in their work, stating, "I do enjoy education, and it's mainly because of those moments when I see that I've made an impact." Such reflections convey the fulfillment educators find in witnessing their influence on students' lives, reinforcing their commitment to the profession despite the associated stress.

Through these insights, it is evident that Title I schoolteachers deeply understand and value their roles in shaping students' lives. The perceived importance of their contributions serves as a powerful motivator to remain in the profession, even amidst significant challenges. This commitment not only enriches their teaching experience but also reinforces the critical relationships that foster student growth and achievement.

Theme: Personal Growth and Enrichment From Working in Title I Schools

The categories of personal growth and outlook shaped by teaching and valuable experiences and insights from teaching illustrate how educators find significant personal enrichment and development through their work in Title I schools. Participants emphasized how their experiences in challenging environments have facilitated transformative growth, shaping their perspectives both professionally and personally. Participant 1 noted, “It’s taught me to give more, be more giving, be more receiving of others in what they believe in, and be patient.” This reflection highlights the profound influence of teaching on developing empathy and patience, essential qualities for navigating the complexities of a Title I teaching environment. In a similar vein, Participant 3 expressed the importance of understanding, stating, “Giving people grace, giving myself grace. So yeah, understanding, trying to be more understanding of people’s situations and things like that.” The growth in understanding not only benefits the educator but also fosters a more supportive classroom atmosphere, reinforcing the values of compassion and patience.

Participant 4 described the emotional depth gained through teaching: “I feel like that really made me a more present person and a more caring and empathetic person because I never knew how much I could care about another person until I became a teacher.” This newfound awareness of the capacity for empathy underscores the transformative effect teaching has on personal identity and emotional intelligence. Participant 5 echoed similar sentiments: “It has made me more compassionate.” The acknowledgment of increased compassion reflects a deepening of the emotional

connection educators develop with their students, which can be particularly impactful in a Title I context where students may face significant challenges. Participant 6 shared their adaptive approach to challenges, stating, “I just started telling myself that, you know, you can’t be mad at something that you can’t control...you either have to deal with it, find a way to deal with it, or then you have to get out of it.” This pragmatic shift in mindset illustrates the resilience fostered through experience, enabling educators to cope with stressors productively.

Participant 7 noted, “It has taught me patience. It has pushed me to my limits and out of my comfort zone.” Such reflections on personal limits indicate that the challenges faced in Title I schools encourage growth in resilience and adaptability, which ultimately strengthens educators’ resolve to remain in their roles. Participant 8 articulated a sense of gratitude for their experiences: “I think overall, it also has made me just more, I would say thankful...I can only imagine back in the 90s...how much of a struggle it could have been for teachers to...make learning fun.” This historical perspective enhances educators’ appreciation for their current resources and the challenges their predecessors faced, fostering a deeper commitment to their roles. For Participant 9, the ability to connect with students was paramount: “Just being able to look back and see, you know, I made a difference in the lives of kids that look like me.” The validation of impact lends meaning to their work and reinforces the necessity of representation in teaching.

Participant 2 cited personal growth through diverse experiences: “I got so much special education experience with students that were so different, so funny.” The joy found in these unique interactions added depth to their professional journey and

contributed to a fulfilling teaching experience. Further emphasizing lifelong learning, Participant 8 stated, “It’s allowed me to...be, I think I look like a forever learner in a sense, and it’s created a certain drive in me to just make an impact in education.” This continuous pursuit of growth and impact illustrates how teaching in Title I environments fosters a commitment to lifelong learning. Finally, Participant 10 noted, “It shows me that our kids, man, they have so much potential.” Recognizing the potential in students not only reinforces educators’ passion for their work but also inspires them to remain steadfast in their commitments, even amidst stresses.

These insights reveal that personal growth and enrichment emerge distinctly from the experiences of Title I schoolteachers. The transformative nature of their roles shapes not only their professional identities but also how they perceive challenges, fostering resilience and a deeper commitment to their students. This intrinsic motivation and sense of purpose ultimately play a vital role in their ongoing dedication to teaching in Title I settings.

Theme: Positive and Negative Experiences in Title I Schools

The categories of positive and fulfilling experiences in teaching and challenges in teaching environments illustrate the complex interplay of both positive and negative experiences that Title I schoolteachers encounter. Participants reflected deeply on how these experiences shape their perspectives and influence their intentions to continue working in the profession. Participant 1 shared, “The interaction with the different cultures. To me, that’s the experience in itself. Just seeing their appreciation for the education that we take for granted sometimes.” This recognition of cultural diversity

enriches the teaching experience, fostering a sense of fulfillment that can counterbalance the stresses associated with teaching in Title I schools. The emotional rewards of teaching were highlighted by Participant 3: “Just the love you get from the kids who have never received some of that stuff before, you know, that’s the always a positive experience.” This love and appreciation from students serve as vital motivators, reinforcing teachers’ dedication in the face of challenges. Participant 4 emphasized the importance of student development: “And so like to see that like cultivated as young as like 12 is really awesome to see too.” Witnessing personal growth in students resonates deeply with educators, affirming their purpose and commitment to their roles.

Success stories highlighted by Participant 5 were particularly inspiring: “I don’t care what nobody says, to hear a child who wants to read... from August they were struggling... and now they’re raising their hand.” Such moments of progress are powerful affirmations of teachers’ efforts and dedication, further motivating them to remain in their roles despite challenges. Participant 6 acknowledged the rewarding nature of working with diverse student needs: “It was a very enjoyable challenge to try and see these students grow and just learn something to take with them when they left school.” The enjoyment derived from overcoming challenges reinforces a sense of purpose and commitment to teaching, even in difficult circumstances. However, challenges were also prevalent in participants’ reflections. Participant 2 noted, “There’s a lot of neglect... food insecurity. You know, we would have to go buy clothes for our students.” Such hardships present significant emotional and logistical challenges, often weighing heavily on teachers and influencing their job stress and overall job satisfaction.

Classroom management issues were underscored by Participant 6: “The most difficult part about Title I schooling is probably discipline and classroom management.” These challenges can create stressful teaching environments, leading educators to consider their intentions to stay in the profession. Participant 8 added, “However, there is a lot of lack of resources compared to the private and non-Title I school that I had been at previously.” The scarcity of resources presents continual barriers for educators, creating added stress that can affect their morale and job satisfaction. Participant 10 emphasized behavioral challenges: “Behavior is an issue. Lack of accountability for the parents is an issue.” These external factors can exacerbate job stress, leading educators to reevaluate their commitment to challenging environments.

In total, the insights shared by participants reveal the dual nature of teaching in Title I schools, marked by profound personal fulfillment alongside significant challenges. Positive interactions with students and the rewarding experiences of growth and development bring joy and purpose to educators, but they are equally met with issues of neglect, resources, and behavioral management that can cause stress and strain. This complex tapestry of experiences plays a crucial role in shaping Title I teachers’ intentions to remain in the profession, as they navigate the balance between meaningful impact and challenging circumstances.

Key Themes and Emerging Insights

In the comprehensive analysis of participants’ narratives, two prominent themes emerged: “Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands” and “Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support.” These themes were prioritized over “Alignment

of Workload with Available Resources," which, although significant, was considered less critical. The emphasis on the "Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands" arose from the frequent references made by teachers to existing resource deficits that significantly hindered their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities. For example, the inadequacy of support within special education settings was particularly noted, suggesting that essential areas requiring immediate attention were insufficiently resourced. Additionally, pervasive food insecurity adversely affected students' learning capacities, thereby imposing further demands on teachers to address both educational and basic needs. The relative lack of resources in Title I schools compared to non-Title I institutions made these problems even worse. Teachers kept saying that having enough resources was essential for meeting the high demands of their jobs.

The theme of "Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support" was also deemed a high priority, given its potential to mitigate some stressors identified within the context of resource constraints. Teachers widely proposed enhanced parental involvement and strengthened institutional support systems as effective solutions to alleviate burdens. This focus on collaborative strategies underscored their belief that fostering a supportive environment could significantly enhance the educational experiences of both educators and students. Conversely, the theme "Alignment of Workload with Available Resources" was regarded as a lower priority. While participants acknowledged its significance, they stressed the urgency of addressing immediate resource allocation and structural support enhancements before tackling issues related to workload misalignment. Teachers felt that aligning their workload effectively with available resources and support systems would

prove challenging without ensuring that adequate resources and support systems were established.

An unexpected finding from the analysis was the deep sense of fulfillment many educators derived from working with culturally diverse student populations. Despite the considerable challenges encountered, teachers expressed profound satisfaction and joy in engaging with diverse cultures, adding richness to their professional experiences and highlighting the unique benefits of teaching in Title I schools. Additionally, while not sufficiently prominent to generate a distinct theme, discussions on the necessity for innovative teaching strategies and professional development opportunities were noteworthy. Educators indicated that ongoing training and access to effective pedagogical methodologies could further empower them and enhance their professional performance, suggesting a valuable area for future exploration to support educators.

In summary, the prominent focus on the need for resources and educational support emphasizes the immediate concerns confronting teachers in Title I schools. While aligning workload with available resources is an important consideration, the foundational necessity for adequate resources and robust support systems takes precedence. The unexpected positive experiences related to cultural diversity, alongside the emerging demand for professional development, enrich the understanding of the multifaceted realities faced by these educators.

Summary

This chapter presents a thorough exploration of educators' narratives, shedding light on how they navigate job stress in Title I schools. A detailed analysis revealed that

teachers employ various strategies, including self-care practices, the establishment of personal boundaries, the identification of joyful moments in their work, and the pursuit of emotional support to mitigate the pressures inherent in their roles. Participants consistently emphasized the urgent need for enhanced resources, professional development opportunities, systemic reforms, and competitive salaries, all of which they identified as essential to addressing the underlying causes of job stress and challenges related to teacher retention.

These findings affirm and illuminate the core themes associated with the research questions, elucidating the impact of job stress on educators' daily experiences, the critical role of self-care in promoting well-being, and the necessity for adequate resources. Additionally, the data captured participants' motivations for continuing their teaching careers despite significant challenges, considerations regarding potential departures from the profession, and the perceived importance of their roles in shaping students' lives. The study also highlighted the personal growth and enrichment that educators derive from their experiences in Title I schools and emphasized the vital alignment of workload with available resources.

In Chapter 5, the focus shifts to interpreting the research findings by contextualizing participants' insights within the existing body of literature on job stress among educators. This comparative analysis aims to identify consistencies and discrepancies; ultimately fostering a comprehensive understanding of Title I teachers' lived experiences. The chapter articulates actionable strategies designed to support these educators, particularly within the southern region of the United States. It examines the

challenges faced by teachers, the meanings they ascribe to these stressors, and the contextual factors that influence their decisions to remain in Title I educational environments. Moreover, the chapter offers practical recommendations aimed at fostering positive and sustainable teaching environments in Title I schools. It addresses the implications of the study for theoretical frameworks concerning job stress, teacher retention, and self-care, thereby contributing to a deeper comprehension of these interconnected concepts. Practical recommendations focus on strategies for increasing resource availability, enhancing professional development, implementing systemic reforms, and advocating for improved compensation.

Finally, the chapter highlights the critical need for further qualitative research to deepen the understanding of factors influencing job satisfaction, retention rates, and overall well-being among educators in Title I contexts. By identifying these areas for exploration, future studies could provide valuable insights that inform policy and practice, ultimately supporting the educational community in these challenging environments.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this chapter, I provide a summary of teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and the meanings they associate with this stress in relation to their willingness to persist in the teaching profession within the context of Title I schools. The inquiry was guided by two research questions: What are Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress? What meanings do Title I schoolteachers derive from their perceived job stress concerning their intention to remain in the profession, specifically within a Title I school? Through comprehensive discussions and semistructured interviews, I sought to identify the experiences that shape educators' perceptions, decisions, and aspirations while navigating their demanding work environments. By exploring the multifaceted dimensions of job stress and its impact on professional commitment, I aimed to illuminate the underlying experiences that drive teachers' retention and engagement efforts in Title I schools.

The narratives revealed the intricacies of teachers' experiences, offering insights into the triumphs, challenges, and aspirations that form the foundation of their career paths. Through an empathetic and reflective approach, I synthesized the narratives to draw meaningful conclusions and provide valuable insights into the trials and opportunities confronting educators in Title I settings. After integrating the findings and reflections presented in this chapter, I articulate the participants' stories and perspectives shared during the interviews. This study aimed to cultivate a deeper understanding of the viewpoints expressed by participants. By establishing strong connections between theory and practice, I intended to use the insights of these educators to inform future studies that

explore the lived experiences of Title I teachers and their intentions regarding continued engagement in the profession.

Interpretation of Findings with Empirical and Theoretical Research

Through a robust thematic analysis of transcripts from semistructured interviews conducted with 10 Title I teachers, I identified 10 recurring themes that provided deep insights into participants' lived experiences. A recurring theme was defined in the study as a concept, experience, or sentiment that was consistently reported by at least 50% of participants, with each reference comprising a substantial narrative of at least 50 words. This quantitative threshold ensured that the themes were not only prevalent but also articulated in a meaningful manner. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined *thematic analysis* as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting observable patterns, or themes, within qualitative data. The thematic analysis process involves becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, defining categories, searching for themes, reviewing these themes, and producing the final report. By implementing a word count criterion, I ensured that each identified theme represented a comprehensive and well-articulated experience, offering rich insights into participants' perspectives. For instance, if at least half of the teachers discussed a particular source of job stress such as excessive workload or insufficient administrative support in detail, these discussions qualified as recurring themes. The requirement for a minimum word count guaranteed that these themes were thoroughly described and contextualized, thereby enhancing the depth of understanding of their significance. The dual application of participant percentage and word count

criteria bolstered the robustness and credibility of the study's findings (see Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The first theme reflected the profound impact of job stress on daily life and work experiences, illustrating the high-pressure environment prevalent in Title I schools. This theme highlighted the pervasive nature of stress experienced by teachers. The second theme emphasized the critical importance of resources for managing job demands, demonstrating how effective resource allocation and utilization are essential for navigating the complexities of everyday teaching tasks. The third theme underscored the significance of self-care in maintaining well-being, highlighting self-care's essential role in a demanding profession. Despite the challenges outlined, the fourth theme revealed the enduring motivation to continue teaching, underscoring the resilience and dedication of educators within this context. In contrast, the fifth theme conveyed the contemplations surrounding leaving the profession, reflecting the intense pressures that can lead to such considerations. Both themes elucidated the dual narratives teachers construct regarding their stress, balancing their commitments against the contemplation of departure due to overwhelming pressures.

The sixth theme captured teachers' perceptions of their vital roles in students' lives, which serve as a fundamental motivating factor in their dedication to their work. This theme highlighted the significance educators place on their professional responsibilities despite the stressors they encounter. The seventh theme presented suggestions for improvements in educational support, indicating areas in which additional resources could alleviate job stress. The eighth theme addressed the personal growth and

enrichment derived from teaching in Title I schools, emphasizing the rewarding aspects of their work despite inherent difficulties. This theme illustrated the positive meanings teachers extracted from their experiences in these challenging environments. The ninth theme pertained to the alignment of workload with available resources, drawing attention to systemic issues that affect teacher stress and effectiveness. The final theme encompassed the complex interplay of positive and negative experiences in Title I schools, providing a nuanced understanding of the educators' professional landscapes.

These themes, derived from teachers' narratives, offered substantial depth to the exploration of perceived job stress and the meanings educators assign to their experiences. Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussions of these findings through the lens of IPA, addressing the lived experiences related to job stress and the meanings participants derived from these experiences. This chapter also addressed how these insights relate to the theoretical frameworks, answer to the research questions, and align with findings from previous studies. Furthermore, Chapter 5 addresses how educators' interpretations of their stress influence their intentions to remain in the teaching profession, particularly within Title I educational settings.

Theme: Impact of Job Stress on Daily Life and Work Experiences

The theme elucidating the impact of job stress on daily life and work experiences was pivotal in answering the research question concerning Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress. This theme provided profound personal insights into the daily realities faced by these educators, including physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms. This theme illustrated the extent and nature of job stress that permeated

participants' work and personal contexts, thereby enriching the understanding of their lived experiences. Through this lens, the theme offered a nuanced exploration of how job stress manifests in various contexts, revealing the multifaceted challenges these teachers encounter. For example, Participant 2 articulated the interplay between personality and past experiences in shaping their response to stress, stating "you know, I think just all of those things together... my personality and then me experiencing what those kids went through ... it's all just made it to where even though the stress is so demanding and so hard, I still know it's where I need to be." This statement revealed how a positive outlook and sense of purpose can mitigate perceived stress, highlighting the role of internal cognitive processes in managing adversity.

In contrast, Participant 6 reflected on their composed disposition as a strategy for navigating stress: "I don't get angry a lot. I'm kind of an even keel guy. So I don't let everything bother me." This calm approach demonstrated how individual temperament influences stress management and resilience. Conversely, Participant 10 emphasized how perceptions of support and fairness can significantly alter stress levels: "If you don't support me, I'm not going to support you. So guess what I'm going to do? Call out every Friday." This highlighted how perceived inadequacies in support or perceived injustice can exacerbate stress, emphasizing the critical role of contextual factors in shaping educators' experiences. These excerpts from participant narratives illustrated that individual perceptions, as articulated by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, are fundamental in shaping the experience and management

of stress. Teachers' internal cognitive processes and coping mechanisms emerged as significant determinants of their daily experiences under stress.

Furthermore, the JD-R model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) offered a framework for understanding the depletion of teachers' energy resources amid high job demands. In Title I schools, this dynamic is often exacerbated, where high demands coupled with limited resources lead to heightened stress. This theme substantiated the premise that an imbalance between excessive job demands and insufficient resources can intensify the stress experienced by teachers. Similar findings by Herman et al. (2018), Lindqvist et al. (2014), and Newberry and Allsop (2017) reinforce the notion that elevated job demands and low resources contribute significantly to stress, thereby influencing teachers' experiences. These studies corroborate the theme from the current study, indicating that increased stress levels can provide a precursor to attrition, further demonstrating the relevance of the JD-R model in understanding teacher retention. The convergence of the theme, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings underscores that job stress, exacerbated by high demands and limited resources, profoundly affects teachers' professional well-being and lived experiences. This insight highlights the critical need for organizational and individual-level interventions aimed at fostering supportive environments and improving resource availability, as suggested by Greenberg et al. (2016) and von der Embse et al. (2019).

Theme: Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands

The theme regarding the importance of resources in managing job demands was essential to understanding Title I teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and

their capacity to navigate the high expectations of their profession. Resource availability significantly shapes teachers' daily experiences, influencing their motivation, performance, and susceptibility to burnout. For instance, Participant 5 articulated the challenges of balancing personal and professional responsibilities:

> I have my own stuff going on, you know, after work too. And that's when they get a little stressful. You know, you get home. I want to sit on the couch and unwind and just not think about what happened. You got the instructional coach messaging us saying, well, we need this data for tomorrow.

This highlights how insufficient time management and relentless demands can exacerbate feelings of burnout and impede performance. Conversely, Participant 7 illustrated how a structured approach can become overwhelming in the face of unexpected challenges: "I'm very structured and I don't like surprises... I cried a lot to my principal." This reflects how a lack of preparedness for unforeseen circumstances, coupled with inadequate emotional support, can catalyze burnout. On a more positive note, Participant 8 emphasized the transformative power of mindset in managing stress: "After my third year of teaching, it was a sense of where I had to just tell myself that the things I do day to day are preparing my students to be successful." This sentiment illustrated how adopting a broader perspective on success can alleviate daily pressures and reduce burnout. These narratives collectively demonstrated that the readiness to manage challenging situations is fundamental to teachers' effectiveness, motivation, and resilience.

In addressing the question concerning the lived experiences of Title I schoolteachers relating to perceived job stress, the centrality of adequate resources emerged. Insufficient resources, such as time, materials, and administrative support, can intensify job demands, potentially raising doubts about teachers' commitment to their profession. This finding aligns with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, which posits that individuals assess situational demands concerning their coping resources. When teachers view their resources as critical tools for managing professional demands, it reaffirms this theoretical framework. Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) JD-R model contextualizes this perspective, emphasizing the importance of resource availability in coping with job demands and alleviating feelings of being overwhelmed. In Title I schools, where the gap between high demands and limited resources is often exacerbated, this importance becomes even more pronounced.

This finding resonates with findings by Greenberg et al. (2016), which emphasized the necessity of supporting teachers at both organizational and individual levels to foster resilience and job satisfaction. Collie et al. (2020) further underscored the relevance of environmental and personal resources in promoting well-being among educators. Patterns identified by Hanif (2004) and Haydon et al. (2018) revealed that poor working conditions and role conflict are prevalent sources of job stress. Equipping teachers with appropriate resources could be instrumental in mitigating these stressors, positively affecting their professional experiences, and enhancing their coping abilities in the face of inherent job challenges.

Theme: Role of Self-Care in Maintaining Well-Being

The theme concerning the role of self-care in maintaining well-being provided valuable insights into Title I teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress, highlighting how these experiences transcend the classroom and necessitate personal attention through diverse self-care practices. This phenomenon illustrates that teachers employ various self-care strategies, including emotional, physical, and social, to cope with the stressors they encounter in their professional roles. For instance, emotional self-care may encompass practices such as meditation, physical self-care might involve engaging in exercise, and social self-care may include spending quality time with loved ones. Participant 5 expressed this coping mechanism: "Music, music is my escape. I listen to music at work. I listen to it in the car. I get to sing it in the shower. It doesn't matter to me; it's just music. That's how I cope."

Understanding self-care as integral to teachers' experiences revealed its significance in their efforts to manage stress, thereby influencing their emotional well-being. Participant 6 emphasized this connection, stating "self-care for me, I'm pretty good at making sure my health is right. I don't get stressed out a lot." This highlighted the role adequate self-care plays in fostering resilience against stressors. In contrast, Participant 2 presented a stark reality for some teachers:

> Well, I want to say I try. But honestly, I can't think of the last time I've done anything for myself. I'm just going to say, the few days in the hospital is probably the most sleep I've gotten in a long time.

Such reflections underscore the potential consequences of neglecting self-care in a demanding profession.

Grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, this theme underscores self-care as a proactive approach to managing demands perceived as overwhelming. Teachers' engagement with self-care illuminateed their attempts to counterbalance the taxing nature of their work by leveraging available personal resources. The efficacy of these strategies plays a crucial role in shaping emotional responses and interpretations of stressors in their professional lives. Participant 1 illustrates this by stating

> when I leave work, I leave work. When I walk out that door, I don't work on it at home. I learned that about my second or third year because I actually caught Bell's Palsy or had Bell's Palsy my first year.

This commitment to self-care establishes necessary boundaries, which can mitigate stress. Additionally, the connection between self-care and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources model is evident in that self-care functions as a personal resource to buffer the effects of job demands. According to this model, environments characterized by high demands and limited resources can precipitate burnout, whereas adequate resources, such as self-care practices, can mitigate the impact of stressors. As such, nurturing self-care routines can facilitate a vital equilibrium, reducing stress levels and enhancing overall well-being. Participant 4 notes, "So I guess creating more opportunities, like in the sense of like okay, I know whatever three days I need this week, I'm going to leave it at home, you know, or at work and then go from there." This

proactive planning exemplifies how self-care strategies can help balance the pressures teachers face and maintain their commitment to their profession.

A review of existing literature illustrated a nuanced interaction between the educational climate and teacher welfare, emphasizing the importance of self-care in promoting job satisfaction amidst high stress. Prior research has documented the intricate relationships between these elements (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; von der Embse et al., 2016), suggesting that self-care plays a critical role in enabling teachers to engage positively with their environments, thereby minimizing adverse outcomes associated with elevated stress levels. For example, Participant 3 states, “Man, having strict boundaries, you know, I’m saying, leaving, you know, I leave my computer at work, every day… If it didn’t get done, you know, as I get it done tomorrow.” This commitment to boundary-setting represents a key self-care strategy that educators utilize to protect their personal time.

While contemporary pressures such as standardized curricula and evaluations introduce significant stressors (von der Embse et al., 2017), self-care practices, particularly mindfulness-based interventions, have been recognized for their potential benefits in stress reduction (Jennings et al., 2013; Klingbeil et al., 2017). However, as pointed out by von der Embse et al. (2019), there remains an absence of substantial evidence establishing mindfulness interventions as singularly superior to other treatments for alleviating teacher stress. This observation suggests the necessity for a holistic approach to self-care that integrates various stress management strategies. Participant 8 reinforces this idea, stating, “So when I leave school, I’m not doing anything work-

related. I'm not responding to emails. No work." This assertion does not diminish the importance of self-care but advocates for a comprehensive perspective that combines self-care with other strategies for stress management. Ultimately, the theme of self-care is crucial in preserving overall well-being and alleviating the detrimental effects of job stress within the teaching profession. Participant 9 poignantly concludes, "So I have to make time to focus on just me and my needs and my family, and, you know, I can't let work consume me." Their collective voices reflect a deep understanding of self-care's pivotal role in navigating the challenges of their profession.

Theme: Motivation to Continue Teaching Despite Challenges

The exploration of the theme regarding the motivation to continue teaching despite challenges reveals the intricate lived experiences of Title I schoolteachers in relation to perceived job stress and their intentions to persist in their profession. Teaching in Title I schools entails numerous obstacles, such as high poverty rates, limited resources, and diverse student needs, which often culminate in increased levels of stress. Nevertheless, a substantial number of educators maintain a strong commitment to their roles. This determination is frequently driven by personal motivations, including a deep sense of responsibility towards their students, a passion for teaching, and a belief in the profound impact their work can have. Participant 7 encapsulates this sentiment, stating, "The kids, it's literally my why," which illustrates the intrinsic motivation propelling many teachers to persevere despite adversities. Teachers employ a range of coping mechanisms that reflect their resilience and unwavering dedication to their profession. For example, Participant 8 remarks, "Being at Title I schools, and especially charter

schools, you have a lot more freedom as an educator to decide how you use the resources they provide for you." This perspective reveals how autonomy can enhance teachers' motivation and sense of agency as they navigate the challenges they face.

Interpreting these experiences through Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping suggests that motivation functions not only as a personal asset but also as an adaptive strategy in response to stressors. Teachers' capacity to assess their stressors alongside positive influences, such as their dedication to students and their belief in the importance of their roles, fosters an equilibrium that helps mitigate the demanding aspects of their positions. Participant 1 reflects this sentiment when stating, "I see my impact in the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college." This sense of fulfillment strengthens their commitment and underscores the significance they derive from their work.

Moreover, the motivation to continue teaching amid these stressors aligns with Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources model. In this framework, motivation is viewed as a personal resource that educators can cultivate to buffer against the negative effects of job demands. As articulated by Participant 6, "For me, I would say I'm a soldier. I've always liked a challenge. So even though there's a lot of things that go on with the Title I school, I think that's where I belong." This reflection highlights the role of intrinsic motivation as a protective factor against job-related stress. The relationship between motivation and teachers' intentions to remain in the profession is further illuminated through various participant narratives. Participant 3 states, "Well, it's always the kids, the kids are the motivators…," while Participant 4 adds, "I think there's

something special about, like, teaching kids that are from where you're from." These voices emphasize the connection between personal experiences and the decision to persist in teaching roles despite challenges.

Existing literature supports these findings; for instance, Bettini et al. (2020) argued that factors such as professional experience, access to instructional tools, and strong collegial and administrative support significantly enhance teachers' motivation to remain in the field. Conversely, findings from Kwon et al. (2020) indicated that less experienced teachers working in high-demand environments exhibit diminished intentions to stay, underscoring the essential need for increased resources and support systems for this demographic. Participant 9 reflects this commitment, sharing, "Being able to be that example of a true role model for these kids," reinforcing the notion that role modeling is a crucial component of teacher motivation.

In conclusion, motivation serves as a significant factor in how Title I schoolteachers perceive and manage job stress. Acknowledging the multifaceted dimensions of their experiences reveals that motivation operates as a critical coping resource, facilitating perseverance amidst the inherent challenges of teaching in Title I schools. While the complexities surrounding teachers' decisions to remain or leave are manifold, the consistent presence of motivation, as articulated in the heartfelt statement by Participant 10, "Who else will do it?," underscores the pivotal role that intrinsic motivation plays in sustaining educators' commitment to their profession and their students.

Theme: Considerations of Leaving the Profession

The theme concerning the considerations for leaving the profession exposes the emotional toll and practical implications stemming from the challenges faced by Title I schoolteachers. This theme provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of educators, revealing the intensity and pervasiveness of stress that compels some to contemplate departure from a profession to which they may feel affection or loyalty. Daily stressors, ranging from inadequate resources and high student-teacher ratios to administrative pressure and personal psychological burdens, can overwhelm teachers, leading them to question their ongoing commitment to the profession. In exploring the meanings that Title I teachers attach to their job-related stress, it becomes evident that, for some, the stressors may outweigh perceived benefits, thereby diminishing their intention to persist in their roles or remain at a specific Title I school. This perspective frames job stress as a formidable obstacle, one that prompts deep reconsideration of their career trajectories.

In connecting this theme with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, it appears that some educators may view their coping resources as insufficient to manage the stress encountered, ultimately affecting their decisions about staying in the profession. For instance, Participant 3 expressed this sentiment: "I consider leaving because I just want to see what it's like on the other side, you know, see what it's like." From Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources model, the consideration of leaving the profession is likely to arise when job demands outpace the available resources. For Title I teachers, perceptions that the challenges of their roles

exceed both personal and organizational support can catalyze thoughts of leaving, viewed as a strategy to restore equilibrium. Participant 6 articulated this struggle:

> Yes, I have before thought about leaving my role as a Title I teacher, and that just basically because of where I've been, I've had a lot of turnover in administration, the constant changing, the constant personalities of some of the administrators.

Furthermore, research findings reinforce the theme's relevance, highlighting how teacher shortages can exacerbate existing stress and burnout. Goddard and Godard (2006) and Rajendran et al. (2020) emphasize that such shortages place additional pressure on remaining educators, prompting thoughts of departure. Teachers serving in high-poverty areas often encounter elevated job demands with diminished resources, leading some to seek opportunities in more supportive environments. This idea is echoed by Participant 4, who noted,

> My principal and I necessarily didn't get along. I felt just like bogged down, too. Like in a tested subject, it's hard to, you know, stay positive sometimes when like so many other things impact this score that they're going to determine you on.

The implications of an imbalance within the Job Demands-Resources framework are clear. Participant 10 powerfully captured the sentiment prevalent among many educators: "I'm tired. And then I've been doing this 20 years." Participant 9 also alluded to the pervasive dissatisfaction when stating, "Why? Because teaching is not fun anymore. Not just in a Title I school, just teaching overall, the demands of teaching, you know, you don't really get to teach anymore."

This theme underscores the critical need for adequate resources and support to effectively manage job-related stress, thereby mitigating considerations of leaving the profession. It highlights the complexities of educators' decision-making processes regarding their continued presence in or departure from the teaching profession. As demonstrated, these processes are intricately tied to their lived experiences, perceptions of stress, and coping strategies, thereby illuminating the need for systemic changes to support Title I teachers in balancing challenges with available resources.

Theme: Perceived Importance of the Role in Students' Lives

The theme of the perceived importance of the role in students' lives is intricately connected to the research question concerning the meanings Title I schoolteachers attach to perceived job stress and how this affects their intentions to remain in the profession, particularly within Title I schools. This theme illuminates the ways in which teachers navigate the demanding realities of their roles while finding profound significance in their contributions to their students' lives. Despite facing considerable challenges and elevated levels of job-related stress, educators frequently derive motivation from their perceived impact on student growth and well-being, viewing their positions as foundational to their students' futures. Teachers articulate this significance through their understanding of the responsibilities inherent in their roles. For instance, Participant 1 states, "I'm able to give them the next steps in life on how to prepare because since I'm dealing with so many nationalities and a lot of refugees, they don't know what's needed to go further." This perspective underscores the educators' commitment to providing guidance and support, which serves as a source of motivation even amidst stress. From a

phenomenological lens, the stress experienced is often interpreted as a challenge to be surmounted for the benefit of their students. Teachers like Participant 2 express this sentiment: “I just want them to know I’m here for them and I care for them and that I’m a safe person to come to.” Such affirmations indicate that the perceived importance of their role bolsters their resilience and dedication, framing stressors within the larger context of their mission to support and uplift students.

Utilizing Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, the significance educators attribute to their roles can be viewed as an effective strategy for managing stress. By recognizing the positive outcomes of their contributions, teachers can buffer the negative emotional impacts of stressors. The positive emotions derived from this sense of purpose may counterbalance adverse effects, allowing educators to sustain their engagement in challenging environments. This is echoed by Participant 3, who notes, “I perceive my role to be important…I like to think of myself as more than just a teacher.” Using Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) job demand-resources model to look at this theme, perceived importance is a key job resource that keeps teachers engaged, even when they have a lot to do. The rewarding experiences of positively influencing students’ lives serve not only as a source of motivation but also as a mechanism for resilience against job stress. Participant 4 captures this sentiment by referencing her own experience: “I know how important my own teachers were when I was in middle school. That’s why I teach it.” This acknowledgment of the transformative role educators play in their students’ lives reinforces their commitment to remain in the profession despite challenges.

Research supports these findings, emphasizing the pivotal role that qualified teachers play in students' academic success. As noted by Carothers et al. (2019) and Clotfelter et al. (2010), qualified teachers are essential in fostering student growth, which in turn affects their own perceptions of the importance of their roles and their decisions to continue in education. Furthermore, educators in underserved communities often feel an acute sense of responsibility; Participant 5 explains, "I always tell them, y'all are so lucky. Because the majority of the children I teach are black or Hispanic. I tell especially my male students, I didn't have my first black male teacher until 10th grade." This highlights teachers' awareness of representation and the vital role they play in shaping positive identities for their students.

Ultimately, understanding how Title I teachers perceive their roles in their students' lives sheds light on how they navigate the inherent stress of teaching. Their interpretations significantly shape their intentions to remain in the profession, reinforcing the importance of continued support for educators. As Participant 9 articulates, "It's necessary because the kids need to see somebody that looks like them doing good things." This underscores the critical nature of both teacher resilience and the systemic support required to enable educators to thrive in their vital roles.

Theme: Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support

The theme concerning suggestions for improvements in educational support serves as a pivotal connection to the lived experiences of job-related stress among Title I schoolteachers. This theme not only elucidates the specific stressors educators encounter but also showcases their proactive approaches to mitigating these challenges. By

articulating potential improvements, teachers demonstrate a capacity for critical analysis and problem-solving that extends beyond their direct teaching responsibilities. Teachers' suggestions reveal a deep understanding of their working conditions and a commitment to enhancing the educational environment for themselves and their students. For example, Participant 1 commented, "I think we could improve our counseling services. Since we deal with a lot of students with different backgrounds, they have different types of traumas that teachers aren't prepared for dealing with." This reflection highlights the recognition of specific needs within the student population that, if addressed, could alleviate some of the stress experienced by educators. The theme emphasizes a belief among teachers that perceived job stress could be reframed as an opportunity for systemic improvement. Many educators view their stressors as challenges that can be managed effectively, thereby reinforcing their commitment to the profession. Participant 6 noted, "Yes, there could be more, I would say, more stability. I think in some of these Title I schools, there's such high turnover rates that the stability is not there." This insight indicates that teachers see the potential for change and improvement in their work environments, underscoring their resilience and dedication.

Theoretical frameworks, such as Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, suggest that proactive coping strategies, such as proposing improvements, can facilitate effective management of stress. This approach aligns with the teachers' efforts to find solutions, reflecting problem-focused coping aimed at reducing the sources of stress. Additionally, Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources model underlines that when the demands of the job exceed available

resources, stress arises. Therefore, the proposals for improvement can be interpreted as attempts to enhance resources, thereby potentially decreasing job-related strain. For instance, Participant 5 articulated a desire for changes in instructional materials, stating,

> I would really love for them to change the curriculum. In my opinion, if they don't want textbooks, good for you. But I feel like at Title I schools, especially, take the Chromebooks away, get the actual books, libraries need to come back.

Research supports these findings, emphasizing the effectiveness of social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions in mitigating teacher burnout, as highlighted by Schonert-Reichl (2017) and Oliveira et al. (2021). The positive impact of SEL on teachers' emotional well-being and its relationship to job-specific stressors illustrate the importance of targeted support systems in alleviating stress. This theme encapsulates the imperative for educational support that addresses the distinct challenges faced by Title I teachers, as illustrated by Participant 7's suggestion: "Changes would be having all teachers take a special education class to know how to help their students, not just the special education teachers, because not all kids are just in all special education classes." Moreover, the importance of adequate compensation is a recurrent theme among participants, with many expressing the need for better teacher pay, as noted in the sentiments of Participants 2 and 3: "I think that paying teachers what they're worth" and "Oh, more money always for the teachers." This recognition underscores a broader understanding that appropriate remuneration is critical for teacher retention and morale, which in turn affects their ability to cope with stress.

In conclusion, this theme highlights how Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress inform their proactive suggestions for improvements in educational support. By analyzing their conditions and proposing tangible solutions, educators not only affirm their commitment to the profession but also contribute to potential strategies for enhancing their working environments. Their voices encapsulate a deep-seated resilience and a desire for meaningful change, ultimately underscoring the urgent need for systemic interventions that can alleviate the stressors prevalent in Title I schools and promote teacher retention.

Theme: Personal Growth and Enrichment From Working in Title I Schools

The theme regarding personal growth and enrichment from working in Title I schools reveals the complex interplay between perceived job stress and the meanings Title I schoolteachers derive from their experiences. This theme highlights that, despite the inherent challenges associated with teaching in these environments, many educators encounter personal growth and enrichment, revealing a nuanced understanding of stress that transcends mere burden. Indeed, this perspective illustrates that positive experiences can emerge even in difficult circumstances, contributing to teachers' resilience and commitment to the profession. Teachers within Title I schools often interpret job stress as a catalyst for personal development, suggesting that their struggles strengthen their resolve to remain in the profession. For instance, Participant 1 articulates, "It's taught me to give more, be more giving, be more receiving of others in what they believe in, and be patient." This sentiment reflects an acknowledgment that the demands of their roles foster qualities such as patience and empathy, enhancing their professional and personal lives.

Similarly, Participant 4 expresses, “I feel like that really made me a more present person and a more caring and empathetic person because I never knew how much I could care about another person until I became a teacher.”

When considering Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, the personal growth experienced by teachers can be conceptualized as an emotion-focused coping strategy. By identifying and embracing the positive aspects of their stressful work environment, educators can mitigate the adverse emotional impacts of their experiences, thereby reducing overall job-related stress. Participant 6 illustrates this adaptive approach: “As the years went by, I just started telling myself that you can’t be mad at something that you can’t control... you either have to deal with it, find a way to deal with it, or then you have to get out of it.” Such reflections highlight a strategy of acceptance and proactive management that contributes to their emotional well-being. Bakker and Demerouti’s (2007) Job Demands-Resources model further supports the notion that personal growth can serve as a resource amid occupational demands. The ability to carve out meaning from their experiences not only enhances job satisfaction but also bolsters commitment and engagement. Participant 8, who notes, “I think overall, it also has made me just more, I would say thankful,” emphasizes the transformative impact of their roles in shaping a deep sense of appreciation for their profession, reinforcing their decision to remain in the educational field.

Research findings corroborate this theme, illustrating that regular communication, acknowledgment of efforts, and opportunities for professional development significantly enhance teachers’ sense of value and belonging in their roles (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

By cultivating rewarding experiences, educational institutions can foster an environment where educators feel fulfilled and motivated despite the pressures they face. Participant 7 encapsulates this sentiment by affirming, “It has taught me patience. It has pushed me to my limits and out of my comfort zone,” illustrating how personal challenges translate into resilience and dedication. Ultimately, this theme reinforces the idea that Title I schoolteachers can derive considerable personal growth and enrichment from their experiences, even amid high-stress environments. The interplay of stress and personal development shapes their intentions to remain within the profession, highlighting a profound resilience characterized by hope and commitment. Positive reflections on their impact, as articulated by Participant 9, “Just being able to look back and see, you know, I made a difference in the lives of kids that look like me”, underscore a continual affirmation of their purpose and dedication, ultimately influencing their decisions to persist in the challenging yet rewarding landscape of Title I education.

Theme: Alignment of Workload With Available Resources

The theme alignment of workload with available resources critically relates to Title I schoolteachers’ lived experiences of perceived job stress. This theme underscores the significant stress arising from the disjunction between teachers’ workloads and the resources at their disposal. When the demands of their roles exceed available supports, be it time, materials, or administrative assistance, stress levels are heightened. Educators recognize that systemic issues contribute to their job stress, positing that their intentions to remain at their Title I schools are closely tied to the education system’s capacity to provide adequate resources to align with their demands.

From the perspective of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, the disparity between workload and resources can be viewed as a specific source of problem-focused stress that requires intervention. Educators may seek to address this imbalance through various strategies, such as advocating for additional support, redistributing workloads, or pushing for systemic reforms. For instance, Participant 2 articulates frustration over resource shortages exacerbated by budget cuts, stating, "I was supposed to have a mentor teacher... but our budget was cut, and that made it to where our mentor teachers were... laid off." This highlights how a lack of resources can undermine teachers' support systems and professional development.

Employing Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources model further elucidates this theme. In this framework, the teaching workload represents job demands, while resources pertain to the supports available. An imbalance, where job demands significantly outpace job resources, can adversely affect teachers' well-being and performance, potentially leading to burnout and decreased intentions to remain in their roles. As noted by Participant 9, "If we talk about this resource provided by the school, then no. Okay. No, it's not enough. I keep an Amazon order," reflecting the reality that educators often have to supplement their resources independently due to systemic inadequacies.

Research findings align with this theme, emphasizing the correlation between job demands and teachers' overall professional satisfaction. For instance, studies by Nicolaides and Scully-Russ (2018) illustrate that complex work demands require diverse responses. Similarly, Collie et al. (2020) found that schools characterized by supportive

environments, where resources align with demands, report higher job satisfaction, and commitment. The assertion by Participant 7 that resource availability is crucial for her transition into special education underscores the importance of adequate support: "...but it helped. I have with my district. I have so many resources. I told them at the district, I've never felt more prepared in my life." Conversely, inadequate resources can amplify turnover intentions among educators. Acknowledging this, Participant 10 remarks, "...I don't have what I need to do my job, but it's not because I'm asking for stuff and my admin won't buy it." This statement captures the cyclical nature of resource constraints that may lead to feelings of frustration and disillusionment among teachers.

In summary, the theme regarding the alignment of workload with available resources encapsulates a critical dimension of Title I teachers' lived experiences regarding perceived job stress. The disparity between the demands of their roles and the resources available profoundly affects their experiences and intentions to remain in the profession. To foster teacher retention and enhance job satisfaction, it is paramount to address these systemic imbalances, ensuring that teachers are adequately supported in their roles. By recognizing the essential connection between workload management and resource provision, educational stakeholders can better equip teachers to navigate the challenges inherent in the Title I context.

Theme: Positive and Negative Experiences in Title I Schools

The theme positive and negative experiences in Title I schools provides a nuanced understanding of Title I schoolteachers' lived experiences regarding perceived job stress. This theme reveals that educators navigate a complex landscape where both positive and

negative experiences coexist, shaping their perceptions of stress and their intentions to remain in the profession. While negative experiences, such as inadequate resources, challenging classroom environments, and behavioral issues, contribute to heightened stress, positive experiences, including meaningful interactions with students and a sense of making a difference, can serve as protective factors that mitigate this stress. Teachers articulate the significance of their positive experiences, which often serve as a source of motivation and fulfillment. Participant 1 reflects on the enriching interactions with diverse cultures, stating, “The interaction with the different cultures. To me, that’s the experience in itself. Just seeing their appreciation for the education that we take for granted sometimes.” This sentiment is echoed by Participant 3, who emphasizes the emotional rewards of teaching, noting, “Just the love you get from the kids who have never received some of that stuff before... that’s always a positive experience.” Such affirmations highlight how positive student relationships can buffer the emotional toll of job-related stress. Conversely, negative experiences can exacerbate feelings of overwhelm and lead educators to contemplate leaving the profession. Participant 2 describes the challenges faced in special education, stating, “There’s a lot of neglect... a lot of just food insecurity. You know, we would have to go buy clothes for our students.” This acknowledgment of systemic challenges illustrates how negative experiences can contribute to a sense of burden among educators, potentially affecting their retention intentions.

From the perspective of Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, both positive and negative experiences play critical roles in shaping

teachers' emotional responses. Negative experiences can induce emotional distress, while positive experiences may function as emotion-focused coping strategies that provide relief and enhance overall well-being. According to Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) job demand-resources model, negative experiences signify stress-inducing job demands, while positive experiences serve as stress-relieving job resources that promote job satisfaction. The interplay between these experiences significantly influences teachers' overall well-being and their intentions to remain in the profession. Research findings corroborate the complexities inherent in the experiences of Title I schoolteachers. Stressors such as insufficient funding, increased workloads, and behavioral challenges are prevalent in high-poverty schools (Ryan et al., 2017; Thompson, 2017). Participant 6 notes, "Title I school is somewhat challenging at times... the most difficult part about Title I schooling is probably discipline and classroom management." Recognizing and addressing both the positive and negative experiences within Title I schools is essential for understanding how these factors shape perceived job stress and inform teachers' decisions to stay or leave.

Ultimately, this theme underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to improving the teaching environment in Title I schools. By providing adequate support and resources, educational stakeholders can help teachers navigate the unique challenges they face while also fostering the positive experiences that reinforce their commitment to the profession. As Participant 9 articulates, "Seeing them grow up and be successful... is the positive end because their environment does not really suggest success in school." This perspective highlights the profound affect that positive experiences can have on

teachers' intentions to remain in Title I schools, emphasizing the importance of cultivating an environment that supports both educators and their students.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The findings from this study critically engage with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, offering a deeper understanding of how Title I teachers navigate the complexities of their work environments. According to Lazarus and Folkman, stress arises from the interplay between environmental demands and the perceived coping resources available to individuals. This study's findings affirm this perspective by illustrating how Title I teachers frequently encounter high demands, such as large class sizes, limited resources, and socio-emotional challenges among students, that overwhelm their coping capacities. Teachers who felt supported through professional development opportunities and positive feedback reported enhanced coping strategies and resilience, demonstrating the theory's applicability.

Furthermore, the JD-R model posits that job resources, such as support from colleagues and access to professional development, can mitigate the impact of job demands and foster employee well-being and engagement. In this study, when Title I teachers perceived a lack of recognition and support, their job demands became overwhelming, leading to increased stress and intentions to leave the profession. Conversely, when teachers reported access to adequate resources, they experienced heightened job satisfaction and commitment to their roles, supporting the assertion that

enhancing job resources can buffer against the burdens of high job demands (Bakker et al., 2005). These findings may advocate for a shift in focus towards resource enhancement in Title I schools, aligning with prior literature that emphasized the importance of supportive work environments in retaining effective educators (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005).

The perspectives shared by Title I teachers resonate with previous findings that emphasize the role of supportive leadership and a positive school climate in mitigating teacher stress and enhancing job satisfaction (Billingsley, 2004; Gningue et al., 2022). As such, this research enriches the dialogue around the pressing issue of teacher retention in high-poverty areas and underscores the necessity of prioritizing teacher well-being through systemic changes in school environments. In summary, this study attempts to meaningfully contribute to understanding the dynamics of stress and support in Title I schools through the frameworks of Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory and Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R model. The interplay of job demands and resources highlighted in the findings advocates for targeted interventions that bolster teacher support and enhance professional development, ultimately leading to improved retention and educational equity in underserved communities. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring more extensive and diverse samples to validate further and generalize the results, thereby deepening our comprehension of the factors influencing teacher experiences in Title I schools.

Practical Implications

The insights derived from the study hold substantial implications for professional practice, particularly in developing effective strategies to mitigate stress, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately improve teacher retention in high-poverty schools. First, the findings underscore the necessity for customized professional development that addresses the unique challenges faced by Title I teachers. Schools can implement mentoring programs that pair novice teachers with experienced colleagues who understand the specific demands of teaching in these environments. This individualized support could include pedagogical techniques, classroom management strategies, and coping mechanisms for managing stress, fostering resilience and efficacy in teaching practices (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of a supportive school climate. Educational leaders should prioritize initiatives that foster a collaborative and inclusive environment, encouraging teachers to participate in team-building activities, staff retreats, and professional learning communities focused on collegial support (Billingsley, 2004; Gningue et al., 2022). Regular opportunities for open dialogue about challenges and successes can build trust and rapport among staff, contributing to a more positive workplace atmosphere. Additionally, ongoing feedback and recognition were identified as crucial for enhancing teacher satisfaction. Schools could establish formal systems for providing constructive feedback through peer observations and walk-throughs, alongside informal recognition initiatives, such as “Teacher of the Month” programs or appreciation events. Publicly recognizing teachers’ efforts can foster a sense of value and belonging,

countering feelings of isolation typically experienced in challenging teaching contexts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Given the significant stress reported by Title I teachers, schools could also introduce wellness programs aimed at promoting mental health and stress management, including workshops on mindfulness, time management techniques, and self-care strategies (Bakker et al., 2005). Schools can equip teachers with effective coping mechanisms by prioritizing well-being initiatives, leading to improved retention and job satisfaction. Strengthening community partnerships is another vital approach to enhancing teacher experiences. Schools can actively engage with local organizations, businesses, and parents to create collaborations that provide resources, mentorship, and additional support. Community involvement might involve hosting events that celebrate educational achievements and encourage volunteerism, cultivating a sense of shared responsibility toward student success and lessening the burden felt by teachers (Johnson et al., 2005).

Moreover, fostering leadership opportunities can provide teachers with additional resources and recognition, helping them feel more engaged in their work. Schools should consider creating leadership roles for teachers, such as lead teacher positions or inclusion in decision-making committees (Ingersoll, 2001). According to the participants, empowering teachers to take ownership of initiatives within the school can enhance their sense of purpose, mitigating stress and burnout. Lastly, engaging in ongoing research and feedback loops is crucial for adapting to the changing educational landscape. Participants emphasized the importance of continuous dialogue among educators, administrators, and

researchers to ensure that their voices are heard and to create responsive strategies that address the unique challenges faced in Title I schools. This collaborative approach can help educators feel more valued and equipped to manage their responsibilities, ultimately leading to improved well-being and retention in the profession. Schools can implement regular surveys and focus groups to gain insights into teacher needs and perceptions of support mechanisms, allowing timely interventions that address actual conditions on the ground (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

By applying these insights, educators can implement practical strategies to address immediate needs and long-term challenges faced by Title I teachers. These efforts may contribute to improved teacher well-being and enhance educational outcomes for students in underserved communities, ultimately fulfilling the broader mission of educational equity and excellence. Participants in the study indicated that when teachers feel supported and empowered through structured professional development and collegial collaboration, their motivation and engagement in the classroom tend to increase. This, in turn, can lead to more effective teaching practices that directly benefit students, fostering a richer learning environment where all students have the opportunity to thrive. Furthermore, the participants believe that through the process of prioritizing teachers' mental health and overall job satisfaction, schools may cultivate a more stable workforce, reducing turnover rates that often disrupt student learning and community cohesion. Additionally, engaging with families and local organizations creates a support network that reinforces learning beyond the classroom, ensuring that students access the resources they need, both academically and socially. Collectively, these collaborative and multi-

faceted approaches create a robust educational ecosystem, promoting resilience among educators and, in doing so, instilling a sense of hope and achievement in students. Ultimately, these comprehensive strategies serve as a potential pathway for enhancing teacher retention and efficacy.

Social Change Implications

The study's focus on the beliefs, experiences, and perceptions of Title I teachers provides a valuable foundation for enacting changes in educational practices that are essential for social change. The insights gleaned from a small sample of participants highlight the critical need for systemic improvements aimed at supporting these educators. When these teachers reported feeling supported and empowered through structured professional development and collegial collaboration, it underscores the potential for increased motivation and engagement in their classrooms. This directly ties back to the broader implications for social transformation, as their improved well-being can lead to enhanced job satisfaction and retention. For instance, several participants expressed a strong belief that empowering teachers to take ownership of initiatives within their schools fosters a renewed sense of purpose, which in turn mitigates stress and burnout. This emphasizes the importance of creating an environment where educators can thrive, which ultimately has ripple effects extending beyond the classroom. By focusing on tailored teacher training and professional development programs that specifically address the challenges faced in high-poverty schools, we can cultivate not only skilled educators but also passionate advocates for their students. This, as noted by participants,

could greatly enhance student engagement, leading to improved academic achievement and a more equitable distribution of success across socioeconomic backgrounds.

Moreover, the participants in the study highlighted the need for robust support systems, such as mentorship programs and wellness initiatives, which can contribute to a sustainable teaching workforce. A stable cohort of experienced teachers nurtures lasting relationships with students, fostering trust and belonging, all of which are essential for effective learning outcomes. One teacher emphasized that when teachers feel supported, that positive energy radiates to students, fostering a conducive learning environment. Such sentiments illustrate the profound impact of teacher well-being on student success and community engagement. Additionally, the implications of these findings extend beyond the classroom and into community empowerment. As participants indicated, schools that serve as hubs of support for teachers, students, and families can play a pivotal role in revitalizing neighborhoods. By creating collaborative efforts among educators, local organizations, and families, communities can cultivate a sense of responsibility and shared purpose, which is vital for promoting educational and economic advancement.

Ultimately, while the study does not propose definitive practices for change, it highlights the critical areas where educators believe improvements can be made. The research attempts to lay the groundwork for advocacy in policy and educational reforms by synthesizing the collective voices of a small population of Title I teachers. When teachers, administrators, and community members unite to champion these necessary changes, they can potentially influence local and state education policies to promote more

equitable funding, resources, and support for high-need schools. By prioritizing systemic improvements, the findings of this study can serve as a preliminary draft for broader social change that benefits the greater good, setting the stage for a more equitable society where every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to succeed.

Recommendations for Future Research

In conducting the study on the lived experiences of Title I teachers, particularly focusing on their perceptions of stress and its meanings on their intent to remain in Title I schools, I identified several critical recommendations for future research. These recommendations aim to deepen the understanding of the challenges faced by these educators and address existing gaps in the literature, ultimately contributing to efforts aimed at enhancing teacher retention and promoting educational equity. One primary recommendation is the need for longitudinal studies that explore how teachers' perceptions of stress evolve over time and how these perceptions affects their intent to remain in Title I schools. Current research often provides only snapshots of stress levels and retention intentions (Farmer, 2020; Steiner & Woo, 2021). Understanding the long-term trajectories of these experiences could reveal essential insights about the relationship between stress and retention. Such studies would help clarify how varying stress levels and sources related to workload, student behavior, or resource limitations affect teachers' decisions to stay or leave (Agyapong et al., 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). By tracking these experiences over time, future researchers could better link specific stressors with job satisfaction and commitment levels, ultimately informing targeted interventions to support teachers.

Additionally, I emphasize the importance of examining the intersectionality of stress perceptions among Title I teachers. Future research should consider how factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status influence teachers' experiences of stress and their intent to remain in their positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Vescio et al., 2008). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing support programs sensitive to educators' diverse backgrounds. For instance, teachers' experiences from marginalized communities may be shaped by unique challenges, and recognition of these differences could lead to more effective retention strategies geared toward supporting all teachers. Moreover, I recommend delving into the impact of school culture and leadership on teachers' stress perceptions and retention intentions. Investigating how support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and collaborative planning time, are implemented in Title I schools could provide valuable insights into effective practices that mitigate stress (Thien & Lee, 2023). Understanding how supportive leadership and a positive school culture can buffer against stress could guide administrators in creating environments that promote teacher resilience and retention.

Another area of exploration I suggest involves the role of community and parental engagement in influencing teachers' stress levels and their intent to remain in Title I schools. Research that investigates how strong community partnerships and active parental involvement can alleviate some of the stressors faced by educators may uncover practical strategies that enhance teacher morale and commitment (Wang & Degol, 2014). Engaging families as active participants in the educational process can help create a more

supportive environment for teachers, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction and retention. In light of the shift to remote and blended learning modalities during the pandemic, I also highlight the importance of exploring how these changes have affected teachers' stress perceptions and retention intentions. Future studies could examine the unique stressors associated with virtual teaching and how these experiences differ from those in traditional classroom settings (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Understanding how the integration of technology affects teacher workload and stress levels will be critical in developing effective support systems for educators in varied learning environments.

Overall, this study's findings significantly contribute to understanding Title I teachers' lived experiences regarding stress perceptions and their intent to remain in their positions. They underscore the complex relationship between stress, job satisfaction, and retention in high-need educational settings (Ingersoll, 2001; Agyapong et al., 2022). By identifying key areas for further inquiry, this research lays the foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher retention in Title I schools. I call on scholars to utilize interdisciplinary approaches, drawing from fields such as psychology, sociology, and education, to gain a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by Title I teachers. Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods will enrich the data and provide a more nuanced view of the lived experiences of educators (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). For instance, in-depth interviews coupled with surveys could yield a rich qualitative understanding alongside measurable trends, thereby enhancing overall insights.

By focusing on these recommendations and exploring the diverse avenues outlined, I am optimistic that future studies can greatly enhance the understanding of effective strategies for supporting Title I teachers. This knowledge is vital for fostering improved outcomes for both educators and their students, ultimately contributing to the creation of equitable learning environments (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Vescio et al., 2008). In conclusion, this study not only highlights the pressing issues affecting Title I teachers but also emphasizes the critical need for ongoing research to inform meaningful interventions that promote teacher well-being and retention.

Limitations of the Study

While phenomenological qualitative research offers profound insights into individuals' lived experiences, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations inherent in a small sample size, as seen in this study with its ten participants. This limited number introduces the possibility of not capturing the full range of experiences and perspectives within the target population, potentially leading to gaps in understanding and restricting the transferability of the findings (Smith et al., 2009; Creswell, 2013). The nuanced and diverse realities of Title I schoolteachers regarding job stress and their intentions to persist in the profession may not be adequately represented within such a small cohort, ultimately limiting the richness of the qualitative data. Individual experiences can vary widely based on factors such as geographic location, school culture, personal backgrounds, and teaching philosophies.

Several methodological strategies were employed to mitigate this limitation and enhance the trustworthiness of the results, including triangulating data sources,

conducting member checks to confirm the accuracy of participants' reflections, and maintaining a comprehensive audit trail throughout the research process. While these strategies strengthen the depth of analysis, they do not fully compensate for inherent biases that might arise from a small participant pool. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for biases, as individuals may present their experiences in socially desirable ways, affecting the authenticity of their accounts (Robson, 2011). Future researchers should consider employing a larger and more diverse sample size to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Title I teachers' experiences. Additionally, employing stratified sampling methods could ensure that various subgroups within the teacher population, such as new versus veteran teachers or those working in different community contexts, are adequately represented.

The use of virtual interviews as the primary data collection method also introduces unique constraints. Virtual interactions can affect the establishment of rapport between the participants and the researcher, potentially compromising the richness and depth of the data gathered (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The absence of in-person engagement may result in missed non-verbal cues and subtle communicative nuances, which are essential for a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and emotional landscapes. While virtual interviews can facilitate access to a wider range of participants, especially those in diverse geographic locations, I must be cautious of these limitations. In future studies, blending virtual interviews with some in-person interviews, if feasible, could create a more engaging environment that fosters openness and encourages participants to share more deeply.

Technical disruptions or distractions during virtual interviews may also interrupt the flow of conversation, compromising the reliability and validity of the collected data. Such interruptions might skew my understanding of the discussions or lead to participants feeling frustrated or disengaged. Conducting pilot interviews to identify potential technical issues and proactively addressing them would be beneficial in future research. Ensuring both participants and researchers have the necessary technical support and resources can contribute to a smoother and more productive data collection process.

Additionally, the timing of data collection, spanning from late fall in November to early spring in January, presents challenges that may affect the research findings. Teachers' job stress and their intentions to remain in the profession vary significantly throughout the academic year, shaped by fluctuations in workload, student dynamics, and external pressures. Capturing data at a singular moment may fail to reflect the dynamic nature of teachers' experiences over time, potentially overlooking important seasonal variations in job stress and motivation. For instance, the emotional toll of report cards, parent-teacher conferences, and holiday preparations can uniquely influence teachers' mental states during this period. The increased workload during this timeframe may affect participants' availability, engagement, and capacity for reflection, influencing the depth and richness of the information collected. Teachers might feel overwhelmed, leading to truncated responses or reluctance to engage fully in the interview process. To enhance the robustness of the findings, future research should consider a longitudinal approach that allows for data collection at multiple points throughout the academic year. This would provide a richer and more comprehensive view of how experiences of stress

and intentions to remain in the profession evolve over time, capturing the cyclical nature of stressors in the teaching profession.

By recognizing these limitations, future research can strive for more comprehensive approaches that consider varied methodologies and a broader sample size. Incorporating mixed-methods designs could facilitate a more holistic understanding of teachers' lived experiences, blending qualitative insights with quantitative measures of stress and job satisfaction. Surveys or scales measuring job-related stress could complement in-depth interviews, providing a fuller picture of teachers' challenges within the context of Title I schools. In summary, while the current study contributes valuable insights into the experiences of Title I teachers, it is vital for researchers to critically assess the limitations of their methodologies. By addressing issues of sample size, data collection methods, participant engagement, and timing, future research can better represent the complexities of teachers' lived experiences in Title I schools, ultimately enhancing the efficacy of interventions aimed at supporting them.

Conclusion

This chapter presents comprehensive recommendations and implications aimed at improving teacher retention in high-poverty settings, specifically focusing on teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its meaning on their intentions to remain in the profession and at Title I schools. By synthesizing the research findings and insights gleaned throughout the study, a roadmap for fostering a supportive and sustainable work environment for Title I educators has been delineated. The recommendations emphasize the necessity of prioritizing teacher well-being, addressing systemic barriers, and

adopting a holistic approach to support educators in these challenging educational contexts. A key insight emerging from this chapter is the critical need for targeted support and resources to assist teachers in effectively managing job-related stress.

Moreover, the chapter underscores the importance of addressing the systemic challenges that contribute to teacher stress within Title I schools. Research by Ganotice et al. (2022) highlights the value of establishing cohesive professional networks and nurturing an atmosphere characterized by trust and collaboration within educational settings. Encouraging collaborative decision-making, facilitating avenues for teacher participation and leadership, and promoting a collective sense of efficacy can help create a nurturing and empowering work environment for educators. The chapter advocates for a comprehensive and collaborative strategy to bolster teacher well-being and retention in Title I schools. Studies conducted by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) further emphasize the significance of mitigating workload challenges and providing opportunities for professional growth and advancement. By implementing strategies that alleviate workload pressures, offering meaningful professional development opportunities, and recognizing and rewarding educators' contributions, schools can enhance job satisfaction and retention among Title I teachers.

To cultivate a positive work environment that values and supports Title I educators, stakeholders should adopt the evidence-based recommendations and strategies outlined in this chapter. By addressing individual well-being, systemic challenges, and fostering a culture of collaboration and support, educational leaders can contribute to the establishment of a sustainable educational framework that promotes teacher retention and

enhances student outcomes in high-poverty settings. Ultimately, these identified ten themes—Impact of Job Stress on Daily Life and Work Experiences, Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands, Role of Self-Care in Maintaining Well-Being, Motivation to Continue Teaching Despite Challenges, Considerations of Leaving the Profession, Perceived Importance of the Role in Students' Lives, Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support, Personal Growth and Enrichment from Working in Title I Schools, Alignment of Workload with Available Resources, and Positive and Negative Experiences in Title I Schools—can guide the development of interventions to address ongoing teacher turnover challenges and provide more practical guidance for policy implementation affecting teachers.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Flyer

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Title: Demographic Questionaire for Title I Teacher Research Study

Introduction:

This demographic sheet is part of a research study on the lived experiences of Title I teachers. Your information will help the researcher better understand Title I teachers' experiences and how they may vary across different demographic groups. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. Please note that all the information you provide in this survey will be kept confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Gender Neutral
- Other: _____
- I prefer not to answer.

Age:

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 or older
- I prefer not to answer.

Race/ethnicity:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White

- Two or more races/ethnicities (Please specify: _____)
- I prefer not to answer.

Marital Status:

- Married
- Never Married
- Divorced, Separated, or Widowed

Highest level of education:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other: _____

Certification:

- National Board Certification
- State Teacher Certification/License (Please specify state: _____)
- Teach for America
- Troops to Teachers
- TeacherReady
- American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE)
- The New Teacher Project
- Urban Teacher Residency
- Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL)
- Other: _____

- **Overall years of teaching experience:**

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- More than 20 years
- Other: _____

Title I teaching experience:

- ☐ I have taught at a Title I school for 1-3 years
- ☐ I have taught at a Title I school for 4-6 years
- ☐ I have taught at a Title I school for 7-10 years
- ☐ I have taught at a Title I school for more than 10 years
- ☐ I am not currently teaching at a Title I school
- ☐ Other: _____

What grade level(s) do you currently teach in your Title I school? (Please select all that apply.)

- ☐ Pre-K
- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ 1st Grade
- ☐ 2nd Grade
- ☐ 3rd Grade
- ☐ 4th Grade
- ☐ 5th Grade
- ☐ 6th Grade
- ☐ 7th Grade
- ☐ 8th Grade
- ☐ 9th Grade
- ☐ 10th Grade
- ☐ 11th Grade
- ☐ 12th Grade

What subject(s) do you currently teach in your Title I school? (Please select all that apply.)

- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Science
- ☐ English/ Language Arts
- ☐ Social Studies/History
- ☐ Foreign Language
- ☐ Physical Educations
- ☐ Fine Arts (Music, Art, Drama, etc.)
- ☐ Other (Please specify:_____)

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral study. Your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives with me is invaluable, and I truly appreciate the time and effort you devoted to our interview.

Before Beginning the Interview

Our interview today will be recorded. Participation is entirely voluntary. This means that at any point in the process if you wish to not answer a question or choose to discontinue your participation you can do so. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the study or express any concerns before, during, or after participation. Partaking in this interview does not involve any risks beyond those that are typically encountered in your daily life. Your contribution to this research will help deepen our understanding of teacher turnover and attrition tendencies in Title I schools. It will have important implications for shaping future policy and practice aimed at improving Title I programs for teachers and students. Your insights and experiences are an integral part of this study and will help to make this research more impactful. All information collected during our interviews will be kept completely confidential, and the data will only be used for purposes related to this research. To respect your anonymity, any identifying information will be removed from transcripts and replaced with a pseudonym.

Introductory Interview Statement

This study aims to explore teachers' lived experiences of perceived job stress and its meaning on their intentions to remain in the profession and at a Title I school. Your

position as a teacher in a Title I school provides valuable insights and experiences that create an exceptional opportunity to promote an exploration of how Title I teacher experiences shape decisions on continuing to work in a Title I school. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Interview Questions

- Can you describe your experience working at a Title I school?
- How has your role and responsibilities as a Title I teacher impacted your daily life and work experiences?
- Could you describe a time when you felt particularly overwhelmed by the demands of your job as a Title I teacher?
- In your opinion, what are the most important resources needed to handle the demands of your job effectively?
- Can you discuss a time when a lack of job-related resources hindered your ability to perform in your role as a Title I teacher?
- How well do you think your current workload as a Title I teacher aligns with the necessary resources provided to help you manage that workload?
- How do you cultivate self-care and maintain your well-being in this demanding work environment?
- Can you describe any positive experiences you've had teaching at a Title I school?
- What motivates you to continue teaching at a Title I school despite the challenges?

- Have you ever considered leaving your role as a Title I teacher? If yes, why, and if no, why not?
- How do you perceive the importance of your role as a Title I teacher in the lives of these students?
- Can you describe any changes or improvements you would like to see in the educational system to better support Title I schools and students?
- How has your experience working at a Title I school enriched your life and impacted you as a person?

Closing Statement

I truly appreciate you taking the time to meet with me and share your personal experiences. Before we conclude the interview, is there anything you would like to ask or any additional information you'd like to share?

Appendix D: Codes, Categories, Themes, and Example Quotations from Title I Teachers' Lived Experiences

Code	Category	Theme	Example of quotations
Physical Manifestations of Stress, Work-Life Intrusion, Preparation Anxiety, Post-Work Unwinding Challenges. Desire for Mental Separation, Behavioral Response to Stress, Classroom Management Issues, Stressful Work Environment, Work-Home Boundary Management	Intersecting Dimensions of Job Stress	Impact of Job Stress on Daily Life and Work Experiences	Participant 2: "I hold a lot of stress. I get more migraines now. I mean, it's definitely the stress definitely manifesting into physical symptoms, 100 percent. It's kind of like, well, I mean, it's either, you know, you deal with it. You bring work home like they always tell you not to, or you stress even worse because you know you're not doing it at home, so you're not getting it done, you know, at school. So, it's like I'd rather just do it at home and be ready instead of worrying about, oh my gosh, well, I'll have time tomorrow to do it, you know." Participant 5: "But I have my own stuff going on, you know, after work, too. And that's when they get a little stressful. You know, you get home. I want to sit on the couch, unwind, and not think about what happened." Participant 6: "I did at one point in time have a temper […] in Title I schools because of such the discipline problems, the distractions of headphones and phones and those things, which can really make you start stressing about things that you can't control." Participant 10: "It can be stressful, but you have to learn how to separate work from home and leave work at work sometimes."
Multitasking Demands, Mental Fatigue, Slipping Accommodations, Special Education Challenges, Implementation Overload, Lack of Continuity, Organizational Skills Deficit, Concurrent Task Overload, Seeking	Experiences of Overwhelm		Participant 1: ". So, being able to juggle is almost like having to be an octopus. You have to have several hands everywhere to make everything function, so that can be tiring, and you can go slightly cuckoo dealing with the mental breakdown of that." Participant 2: "Working in special ed too, you know, that's just important to me, but I can see how easy those accommodations will slip because teachers are so

Help, COVID-19 Challenges, Technological Barriers, Student Performance Pressure, Testing Deadlines			overwhelmed with so much going on, they forget." Participant 5: "But this year, it did get a lot of overwhelming because they wanted us to implement this. It's like once they tell us to do one thing, they don't even let us do it long enough to see if it will actually work." "Participant 6: "It's overwhelming to those that don't have good organizational skills. It's very hard to do. You can forget things very easily because they all come at the same time sometimes." Participant 7: "I've told them numerous times, hey, I'm overwhelmed. I need help." Participant 9: "I'll say probably during COVID, that was the most overwhelming time, simply because, you know, the kids, even though the school provided them with devices, some of them didn't have Wi-Fi." Participant 10: "So that was overwhelming because my kids were so behind, and then, you know, testing was coming up in April."
Partial Resource Availability, Adequate Resource Assistance, Resource Enhancement, Resource Needs for Title I Teachers, Information Deficit, Insufficient Resource Provision, Student Impact from Resource Deficiency, High Expectations vs. Limited Resources, Inadequate School-Provided Resources, Personal Resource Supplementation, Need for Reading Resources, Resource Cycle Challenges	Resource Availability and Adequacy	Importance of Resources in Managing Job Demands	Participant 1: "Also, being resourceful because there are some resources that we receive, and there are several resources that we still need. Participant 2: "So now I do have that adequate resource that has been helping me, and they've enforced that they've added some more things that we need to start doing that I think are helping, you know, big time." Participant 5: "I feel like, as a Title I teacher, we need a lot more resources." Participant 6: "I think sometimes we are not given enough information. We don't get some of the resources that we need."

		Participant 7: “I feel like my kids suffered because I didn’t have the resources that I need.”
		Participant 8: “I feel the sense of being like, you know, overworked a lot and having a lot of expectations with very limited resources or lack of resources at all.”
		Participant 9: “If we talk about this resource provided by the school, then no. Okay. No, it’s not enough. I keep an Amazon order.”
		Participant 10: “They need more reading resources.”
		Participant 10: “Like I can’t. I don’t have what I need to do my job, but it’s not because I’m asking for stuff and they and my admin won’t buy it. It’s just, it’s been like a cycle, like with these like pushing these, these, these children on, and I think retention is a resource.”
Crucial Role of Administration, Critical Nature of Administrative Support, Effective Scheduling, Impact of Poor Administration on Teacher Retention	Role and Impact of Administrative Support on Professional Experience	Participant 2: “Having someone to be supportive and give you advice, like, my principals have really been that way.”
		Participant 4: “Because like that was the big thing that drove me to want to quit was that I felt like I had nobody there to support me.”
		Participant 5: “Our administration is lovely, like our school counselor. In my personal opinion, I think when she’s not there, then the school is just going to go downhill. I really feel like my principal really makes it happen.”
		Participant 8: “The most important resource to handle the job demands most effectively is just administrative support, making sure that there’s an appropriate schedule to meet the needs of the different students.”
		Participant 10: “Like I said in the beginning, admin, admin, admin support because they can make it hell. That’s why I think we had a lot of teachers last year

			who just went home for Christmas break and didn't come back."
Neglect of Self-care, Prioritizing Health, Effective Stress Management	Self-Care Practices and Challenges	Role of Self-Care in Maintaining Well-Being	Participant 2: "Well, I want to say I try. But honestly, I can't think of the last time I've done anything for myself. I'm just going to say, the few days in the hospital is probably the most sleep I've gotten in a long time." Participant 5: "Music, music is my escape. I listen to music at work. I listen to it in the car. I get to sing it in the shower. It doesn't matter to me; it's just music. That's how I cope." Participant 6: "Self-care for me, I'm pretty good at making sure my health is right. I don't get stressed out a lot."
Leaving Work at Work, Health Wake-Up Call, Strict Work Boundaries, Prioritizing Personal and Family Time, Scheduled Non-Work Days, Mental Breaks, Organized Task Management, Healthy Lifestyle Maintenance, Accepting Incomplete Work	Work-Life Balance and Well-Being		Participant 1: "When I leave work, I leave work. When I walk out that door, I don't work on it at home. I learned that about my second or third year because I actually caught Bell's Palsy or had Bell's Palsy my first year." Participant 3: "Man, having strict boundaries, you know, I'm saying, leaving, you know, I leave my computer at work, every day, you know, like, don't do work at home. I have like set schedules like it's time when it's time to go, it's time to go, you know, I'm saying I don't. If it didn't get done, you know, as I get it done tomorrow, like I have, you have to, you know, protect your time as well." Participant 4: "So I guess creating more opportunities, like in the sense of like okay, I know whatever three days I need this week, I'm going to leave it at home, you know, or at work and then go from there." Participant 7: "Mental days. My thing is I keep my iPad on me, and I read. I'm a reader when I get a break if I'm not going over my checklist because I literally have a checklist, so I know what needs to be done when it needs to be done."

			Participant 8: “So when I leave school, I’m not doing anything work-related. I’m not responding to emails. No work. You know, on Monday or Friday, it’s a right beginning end of the week to kind of set up for next week a little bit longer, but just having those times where I am strict, and I cut it off, and I actually do no work. And, you know, just making sure I’m also healthy like I have a good lunch and try to stay active throughout the week.” Participant 9: “So I have to make time to focus on just me and my needs and my family, and, you know, I can’t let work consume me. And it’s almost like, you know if it gets done, it gets done. And there are times when it doesn’t get done, and I just have to bite the bullet.”
Student-Centered Motivation, Freedom in Resource Utilization, Flexibility in Teaching Methods	Motivations and Flexibility in the Educational Environment	Motivation to Continue Teaching Despite Challenges	Participant 7:” The kids, it’s literally my why.” Participant 8: “I would say being at Title I schools, and especially charter schools, you have a lot more freedom as an educator to decide how you use the resources they provide for you. And you also have freedom in the sense that if you want to try something different with your students, you can take them outside to learn and go on different field trips.”
Impact through Student Success, Love for Children in Need, Student-Centered Motivation, Teaching in Familiar Environments, Financial Necessity Acknowledgement, Sense of Duty, Embracing Challenges, Passion for the Job, Role Model Aspiration	Educator Motivations and Ethos		Participant 1: “I see my impact in the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college. So I’m able to see, not necessarily what I’m doing right now, but I’m able to see what I input into them come back out full circle.” Participant 2: “Well, I mean just the love of children that need me.” Participant 3: “Well, it’s always the kids, the kids are the motivators, you know, you know, and then just the population.” Participant 4: “I think there’s something special about, like, teaching kids that are from where you’re from, like, grow up around the same neighborhood.”

			Participant 5: “Bad, but I do need my bills paid, but that’s not even, that’s not the worst case. And my opinion, if not me, then who?”
			Participant 6: “Well, for me, I would say I’m a soldier. I’ve always liked a challenge. So even though, you know, there’s a lot of things that go on with the Title I school, I think that’s where I belong.”
			Participant 7: “It’s my dream job. I love my babies, even though they get on my nerves sometimes, but I love my babies.”
			Participant 9: “Being able to be that example of a true, like role model for these kids.”
			Participant 10: “Who else will do it? Who else will do it?”
Self-identification as a Soldier, Embracing Challenges, Sense of Belonging in Title I Schools	Resilience and Sense of Purpose in Education		Participant 6: “Well, for me, I would say I’m a soldier. I’ve always liked a challenge. So even though, you know, there’s a lot of things that go on with the Title I school, I think that’s where I belong.”
Desire for Advancement, Curiosity about Other Opportunities, Conflict with Administration, Pressure from Standardized Testing, Administrative Turnover, Strict Work Environment, Lack of Joy in Teaching, Demands of Teaching, Fatigue and Longevity	Reasons for Considering Departure from Educational Roles	Considerations of Leaving the Profession	Participant 1: “Yes, to move up to a higher position. That can be more effective.”
			Participant 3: “I consider leaving because I just want to see what it’s like on the other side, you know, see what it’s like.”
			Participant 4: “My principal and I necessarily didn’t get along. I felt just like bogged down, too. Like in a tested subject, it’s hard to, you know, stay positive sometimes when like so many other things impact this score that they’re going to determine you on.”
			Participant 6: “Yes, I have before thought about leaving my role as a Title I teacher, and that just basically because of where I’ve been, I’ve had a lot of turnover in administration, the constant changing, the constant personalities of some of the administrators.”

			Participant 8: “Um, I did after my, when I took a break from the first school because it was so strict.” Participant 9: “Why? Because teaching is not fun anymore. Not just in a Title I school, just teaching overall, the demands of teaching, you know, you don’t really get to teach anymore.” Participant 10: “I’m tired. And then I’ve been doing this 20 years.”
Guiding Life Preparation, Providing a Safe and Caring Environment, Beyond Traditional Teaching, Empathy from Personal Experience, Highlighting Representation, Individualized Attention, Multiple Roles and Parental Figures, Ongoing Connection with Students, Positive Representation	Educator Roles and Impact on Students	Perceived Importance of the Role in Students’ Lives	Participant 1: “I’m able to give them the next steps in life on how to prepare because since I’m dealing with so many nationalities and a lot of refugees, they don’t know what’s needed to go further.” Participant 2: “. I just want them to know I’m here for them and I care for them and that I’m a safe person to come to things and that I’m somebody that can understand them and isn’t going to judge them.” Participant 3: “I perceive my role to be important…I like to think of myself as more than just a teacher.” Participant 4: “I know how important my own teachers were when I was in middle school. Like middle school was my least favorite time; that’s why I teach it.” Participant 5: “Oh, man. I think for me, I always tell them, y’all are so lucky. Because the majority of the children I teach are black or Hispanic. I tell, especially my male students, I’ll tell them I didn’t have my first black male teacher to 10th grade.” Participant 6: “I think that I play an important part each, you know, each student is different.” Participant 7: “I see myself, like I said, as a mom, big sister, counselor, whatever role I need to take on because a lot of them don’t have parental figures at home.”

			Participant 8: “I would say pretty important. I would say it’s pretty important. I have not a great deal, but, you know, get a handful of I still communicate with, and they’ll send me photos and pictures of them in karate or when in the spelling bee and, you know, doing good on math testing students and parents.”
			Participant 9: “It’s necessary because the kids need to see somebody that looks like them doing good things.”
Long-term Impact, Facilitating College Entry, Full-Circle Gratification, Enjoyment from Making an Impact	Recognition of Impact and Fulfillment in Education		Participant 1: “I see my impact on the students when they come back from graduating from college or helping them get into college. So I’m able to see, not necessarily what I’m doing right now, but I’m able to see what I input into them come back out full circle.”
			Participant 8: “I do enjoy education, and it’s mainly because of those moments when I see that I’ve made an impact.”
Enhanced Counseling Services, Importance of Partnerships, Appropriate Curriculum and Resources, Needs for Stability, Inclusive Special Education Training, Consistency in Funding and Standards, Accountability for Students and Parents	Suggestions for Improvements in Title I Schools	Suggestions for Improvements in Educational Support	Participant 1: “I think we could improve our counseling services. Since we deal with a lot of students with different backgrounds, they have different types of traumas that teachers aren’t, we’re not prepared for dealing with.”
			Participant 4: “I think one thing that is hard because I’ve, you know, money, those kinds of things, but I think partnerships are really like a good thing.”
			Participant 5: “I would really love for them to change the curriculum. In my opinion, if they don’t want textbooks, good for you. But I feel like at Title I schools, especially take the Chromebooks away, get the actual books, libraries need to come back.”
			Participant 6: “Yes, there could be more, I would say, more stability. I think in some of these Title I schools, there’s such high turnover rates that the stability is not there.”
			Participant 7: “Changes would be having all teachers take a special education class

			to know how to help their students, not just the special education teachers, because not all kids are just in all special education classes." Participant 8: "Just finding more appropriate curriculum resources for Title I teachers and students." Participant 9: "Like I said, the consistency amongst the schools. Even though you know every school gets funding, but you know, making it more consistent like for the child, you know how they say they want kids to have common standards and things, so if you like transfer, you'll see the same thing…No, it needs to be like that with funding." Participant 10: "Make these students and parents accountable."
Fair Compensation for Teachers, Increased Teacher Salaries	Advocacy for Improved Teacher Compensation		Participant 2: "I think that paying teachers what they're worth." Participant 3: "Oh, more money always for the teachers." Participant 9: "Teacher Pay increase."
Mental Breaks for Teachers, Paid Mental Health Days	Mental Health Support for Teachers		Participant 1: "I think additional resources that could possibly be more beneficial for Title I teachers is more mental breaks where they can either take, even if it's a PL day, just being able to have someone step in to have a little mental moment to wu -sa." Participant 2: "I think that, you know, like having days where they allow teachers to have like a professional development paid like a day where they go and do something for themselves. Like that would be nice, like a paid mental health day." Participant 7: "I believe mental days are needed."
Increased Patience and Openness, Grace and Understanding, Greater Compassion, Acceptance and	Personal Growth and Outlook Shaped by Teaching	Personal Growth and Enrichment from Working	Participant 1: "It's taught me to give more, be more giving, be more receiving of others in what they believe in, and be patient."

Problem-Solving, Personal Growth, Thankfulness and Perspective, Impact and Representation		in Title I Schools	Participant 3: “Giving people grace, giving myself grace. So yeah, understanding, trying to be more understanding of people’s situations and things like that.” Participant 4: “I feel like that really made me a more present person and a more caring and empathetic person because I never knew how much I could care about another person until I became a teacher.” Participant 5: “It has made me more compassionate.” Participant 6: “As the years went by, me thinking about some of the things that I’ve done and some of the problems I encountered as a teacher, I just started telling myself that, you know, you can’t be mad at something that you can’t control and things that you can’t control, you either have to deal with it, find a way to deal with it, or then you have to get out of it. So that’s the approach I’ve always taken from then at that point on.” Participant 7: “It has taught me patience. It has pushed me to my limits and out of my comfort zone.” Participant 8: “I think overall, it also has made me just more, I would say thankful because I also went to a Title I school and not knowing, like being a teacher now, being a Title I school, I can only imagine back in the 90s without technology and places you could go to get resources, how much of a struggle it could have been for teachers to, I don’t know, make learning fun, but I never felt like I went without in my learning experience.” Participant 9: “Just being able to look back and see, you know, I made a difference in the lives of kids that look like me.”
Special Education Experience, Lifelong Learning and Impact, Recognition of Student Potential	Valuable Experiences and Insights from Teaching		Participant 2: “I got so much special education experience with students that were so different, so funny.” Participant 8: “It’s allowed me to, it’s allowed me to be, I think I look like a

			forever learner in a sense, and it's created a certain drive in me to just make an impact in education that will one day help those other students similar to who I've served in their communities." Participant 10: "It shows me that our kids, man, they have so much potential."
Workload Increase with Career Advancement, Heavy Workload in Upper Elementary Grades	Working and Role Changes in Teaching	Alignment of Workload with Available Resources	Participant 2: "Well, so I didn't see as much stress when I was a paraprofessional. I didn't have as much of a workload. I stopped being a para. I went to school to get my degree." Participant 5: "So with this big old workload I have, it's up to basically, it's literally up to the third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers."
Lack of Mentor Support Due to Budget Cuts, Sufficient Physical Education Resources, Personal Support System, Adequate Classroom Resources, Abundant District Resources, Consistent Availability of Resources, Insufficient School-Provided Resources, Resource Challenges and Retention Issues	Resources and Support in Teaching		Participant 2: "I was getting my bachelor's degree, and so I got hired in May when I graduated, and I started in August, so essentially, I was supposed to have a mentor teacher. I was supposed to have these resources, but our budget was cut, and that made it to where our mentor teachers were. Basically, a lot of them were laid off and they were having to spread maybe five throughout 10 different campuses." Participant 3: "Well, I mean I'm I teach health and physical education, right? They give me… right now, I don't teach health, so the book issue is not an issue. I have balls, and like, you know, everything my classroom requires." Participant 4: "I have a to-do list and a set of friends." Participant 6: "I think that basically, the resources that we have are adequate and that we as teachers are able to use those to give to the classes that we have in order for the students to be able to learn." Participant 7: "It definitely helps because this is my first year as a special education teacher. But it helped. I have with my district. I have so many resources. I told

			them at the district, I've never felt more prepared in my life." Participant 8: "There hasn't been a time where there were resources that I needed, whether that be personal or for my students, and the parents weren't available for the administrators." Participant 9: "If we talk about this resource provided by the school, then no. Okay. No, it's not enough. I keep an Amazon order." Participant 10: "Like I can't, I don't have what I need to do my job, but it's not because I'm asking for stuff and they and my admin won't buy it. It's just, it's been like a cycle, like with these like pushing these, these, these children on, and I think retention is a resource."
Cultural Appreciation, Student Appreciation and Love, Student Self-Discovery, Student Progress in Reading, Growth in Special Education Students, Overall Positive Teaching Experiences, Student Gratitude, Student Growth Against Odds	Positive and Fulfilling Experiences in Teaching	Positive and Negative Experiences in Title I schools	Participant 1: "The interaction with the different cultures. To me, that's the experience in itself. Just seeing their appreciation for the education that we take for granted for sometimes." Participant 3: "Just the love you get from the kids who have never received some of that some of that stuff before, you know, that's the always a positive experience, the young people, you know, who know that you are going above and beyond." Participant 4: "And so like to see that like cultivated as young as like 12 is really awesome to see too. Cause they're like finding theirself. And I found to, you know, like being from a low income area that's like not in a city." Participant 5: "I don't care what nobody says, to hear a child who wants to read and actually figure like from August they were struggling with the word back to December they get in the word and I don't have to help them to now they're raising their hand, and they are starting to get it better." Participant 6: "Like I said, I work with special ed students. They also had to pass

		a test at one time to be able to graduate in economics. When I first came to[...] when I was changing from a different county, it was a very enjoyable challenge to try and see these students grow and just learn something to take with them when they left school, even though their education levels were lower than the general education students." Participant 7: "All my experiences are really positive." Participant 8: "I would say positive experience: just the students and their gratitude." Participant 9: "I would say the overall, like, overall is a positive experience. Because, you know, you get to see the kids grow and work with kids who society may say, they won't succeed, or there'll be another statistic. Seeing them grow up and be successful, you know, honor roll kids and graduating from school is the positive end because, you know, they are, their environment does not really suggest success in school."
Student Neglect and Food Insecurity, Challenges in Title I Schools, Resource Disparities in Title I Schools, Behavioral Issues and Lack of Accountability	Challenges in Teaching Environments	Participant 2: "There's a lot of neglect, a lot of, especially in the special ed room where they're severe. There was a lot of neglect. There was a lot of just food insecurity. You know, we would have to go buy clothes for our students." Participant 6: "Title I school is somewhat challenging at times. We have a different variety of students coming in, some economically and some racially, but the most difficult part about Title I schooling is probably discipline and classroom management. Those probably would be the two most difficult things about Title I schools." Participant 8: "However, there is a lot of lack of resources compared to the private and non-Title I school that I had been at previously."

Participant 10: “Behavior is an issue. Lack of accountability for the parents is an issue. And lack of discipline is an issue.”