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Strerss on Educators at a Discipline Alternative Education Program

Anthony G. Murray
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Anthony G. Murray

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Review Committee
Dr. Gabriel Telleria, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Timothy Fadgen, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Gema Hernandez, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2019

Abstract

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Anthony G. Murray

MPA, Walden University, 2007

MS, Amberton University, 2001

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Interaction with their students during classroom instruction is often a source of stress among many teachers. The academic setting of Disciplinary Alternative Educational Programs (DAEP) poses a risk factor for teachers to experience stress, given that student disruptive behavior has been associated with higher stress levels among teachers. The problem underlying this study was that most studies on DAEP have focused on the experiences of students, with limited information available about the experiences of teachers in this type of academic setting. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. This exploration was grounded in the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping, which served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs. The geographical setting of the study was a single DAEP campus. Data were collected using 20 individual, face-to-face semi structured interviews. Data were analyzed using the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis, which involves the systematic analysis of data through the process of dividing large quantities of qualitative data into smaller units of meaning. The results produced significant thematic themes. The findings from this study could help scholars and practitioners gain important insight about job-related stressors in DAEP, which could facilitate the improvement of administration and development policies in order to promote a positive work environment in DAEP settings.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mother, Georgia Murray; to my late grandmother, Dorothy “Doll” Murray; and to my ancestors, who all struggled mightily in their own way so that I might have this literary opportunity. I am eternally indebted for their love and sacrifices.

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There is a profound African proverb that states, “It takes a village to raise a child.” In this culminating work, I was raised up by so many who supported me with their wisdom, prayers, expertise, and counsel. It is with prodigious appreciation and heartfelt feelings that I thank the following for their noteworthy contributions to my journey.

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To my son, Anthony George Murray, II, thank you for being the best gift that God has given me. May you find forte and persistence in knowing that "Education is the great equalizer of the conditions of men."

Finally, to my wife, Sherry Taylor-Murray, I am extremely thankful for your presence in my life. Your patience, understanding, and sacrifices were paramount to my completion of the doctor of philosophy degree. Your encouragement and prayers strengthen me to endure the severities of the iterative process of completing the dissertation. Words cannot articulate enough my sincere thanks. I have been blessed by your union. This journey was so arduous. I close with words of strength and purpose from Dr. Mae Jemison for any scholar who might need them: "Never be limited by other people's limited imagination."

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Stress is a common experience of educators, even among those who experience fulfillment in their work. Teacher stress is both serious and endemic within the education profession (Beshai, McAlpine, Weare, & Kuyken, 2016). Teachers who report high levels of occupational stress are more likely to experience burnout and difficulties in managing their classrooms (Fitchett, McCarthy, Lambert, & Boyle, 2017). One type of classroom setting that can be particularly stressful for teachers is the Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP), an academic setting wherein students who have committed delinquent or deviant behaviors are detained for a period of 45 days (Herndon, Bembenutty, & Gill, 2015). DAEPs pose a risk factor for teachers to experience stress because of constant exposure to disruptive behaviors from students (Skaalvic & Skaalvic, 2015). As a result, this stress can lead to various administrative and policy-based issues that leaders need to address such as diminished work performance, ineffective communication, problems with job satisfaction, and teacher turnover (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). In this study, I focused on the stress and coping experiences of teachers in DAEP.

In this chapter, I provide an in-depth introduction of the current. This section begins with a background of the research problem, followed by the problem statement. The next sections include the purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, and a list of key definitions relevant to the study. The next sections include the study's assumptions, scope and delimitation, and limitations. I will conclude the chapter with a summary of the key points of the chapter.

Background

Teacher stress is often a result of different factors, which may include individual, environmental, and coping factors (Foley & Murphy, 2015). One particular type of stressor in the classroom, student disruptive behavior, is associated with higher stress levels in teachers (Skaalvic & Skaalvic, 2015). Compared to other occupational stressors, teacher stress is more associated with mental health challenges and difficulties (Schonfeld, Bianchi, & Luehring-Jones, 2017). For instance, teachers who worked extensively with students who exhibit disruptive behavior experienced stress and burnout (Schonfeld et al., 2017).

Given the negative effects of stress on teachers in terms of experiencing burnout and fatigue (Schonfeld et al., 2017), stress management among teachers is important to minimize these negative outcomes that can affect their job performance (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Being able to cope with stress among educators is generally regarded as important to prevent teacher attrition (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Coping serves a buffer for the negative effects of psychological stress for many employees (Zurlo, Pes, & Capasso, 2016). Some of the factors that can help teachers cope with stress include organizational and social support, mindfulness-based strategies, and enhancement of emotional resilience (Zurlo et al., 2016).

In terms of stress management among educators, organizational and social support appears to be one factor that can be instrumental in the ability of teachers to cope with occupational stress (Malik & Noreen, 2015). Scholars have also cited mindfulness-based strategies as effective methods of coping with stress among educators (Beshai et

al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017). Beshai et al. (2016) found that mindfulness-based interventions were effective in lowering stress and enhancing well-being, mindfulness, and self-compassion among teachers. Jennings et al. (2017) also found that mindfulness-based interventions had a statistically significant and positive effect on the emotional regulation, mindfulness, and psychological distress of teachers. Finally, researchers have also shown that emotional resilience can be an important component of coping among teachers during stressful situations (Day & Hong, 2016; Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016; Vance, Pendergast, & Garvis, 2015). The limitation of these studies was that the researchers based their interventions on teachers who were working in traditional mainstream classrooms.

Stress management among teachers is particularly important in DAEP settings because of the nature of these programs and the fact that students who are assigned to these settings require disciplinary actions because of disruptive behaviors. DAEP is a common program that educators use to prevent student dropout (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Whitford, Katsiyannis, & Counts, 2016). DAEP is a publicly mandated exclusionary educational setting in which students who have committed delinquent or deviant behaviors are detained for a period of 45 days as a result of a court order (Herndon et al., 2015). The 74th Texas legislature in 1995 required school districts to establish DAEPs in order to assist students who have committed disciplinary infractions (Texas Education Code-TEC, Chapter 37). Previous investigators have concluded that alternative education is a widely practiced disciplinary measure to address different

problem behaviors among adolescents (Maillet, 2017; McGee & Lin, 2017; Pennacchia, Thomson, Mills, & McGregor, 2016).

Problem Statement

An understanding of how stress can affect the health of educators is particularly important for public administrators and policymakers because it can inform the development of policies to encourage positive work environments (Bellou & Chatzinikou, 2015; Li et al, 2014). Job-related stress can produce negative consequences for educators in many areas, such as work performance, effective communication, job satisfaction, physical and mental health, remuneration, and retention (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). This issue is significant in the context of public administration and public policy because educator stress can lead to various administrative problems caused by burnout, attrition, and poor job satisfaction (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). It is important to understand how DAEP teachers experience and cope with stress related to student disruptive behavior in order to influence public administration and policies from the perspective of facilitating successful coping with stress (Bellou & Chatzinikou, 2015; Li et al., 2014). Teachers in DAEP school environments are experiencing elevated stress levels, as a result of student disruptive behavior (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Likewise, special education teachers who work extensively with students who exhibit disruptive behavior also report high stress levels, which likewise can lead to burnout and turnover (Schonfeld et al., 2017).

Researchers have suggested that the academic environment of DAEPs poses a greater risk for teachers to experience stress, given that student disruptive behavior has been associated with higher stress levels among teachers (Skaalvic & Skaalvic, 2015). According to Abudu and Miles (2017), teachers who are assigned to lead disciplinary programs for students with problem behaviors often face challenges in addressing the different learning styles of students. Moreover, teachers experience challenges based on different behavioral problems that may be related to intellectual disabilities or emotional problems (Abudu & Miles, 2017).

The majority of researchers who explored this topic have focused on the experiences of students, with limited information available about the experiences of teachers in this type of academic setting (Meiners, 2015; Randle, 2016). Researchers have previously concluded that alternative education is a widely practiced disciplinary measure to address different problem behaviors among adolescents (Maillet, 2017; McGee & Lin, 2017; Pennacchia et al., 2016). A weakness in the literature is the limited research on the experiences of teachers working in DAEP settings, including the different types of stressors that these teachers experience, and the strategies used to cope with these challenges. Consequently, a study that explores the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers would help fill this perceived gap in the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers from a transactional

theory of stress and coping approach. From this theory, I explored the role of the following elements: (a) that persons often cope with stress by engaging in transactions between themselves and their environment; (b) that persons who engage in such transactions do so using multiple systems including cognitive, physiological, neurological, psychological, and affective; and (c) that such stress coping skills can be learned and improved over time (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). I designed the research questions below to explore these elements of the theory. I collected data from one DAEP in the state of Texas using individual semi structured interviews, which I conducted face-to-face.

Research Questions

From the problem and purpose described above, the following research question emerged: How does transactional theory of stress and coping describe the impact of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers? To answer this principal research question, I developed the following secondary questions:

1. What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?
2. How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?
3. How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that I chose this study was the transactional theory of stress and coping (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This theory was helpful in understanding the relationship between the psychological experiences of teachers and the successful administration of public program by linking stress and coping as influential in the job performance of employees. I used the transactional theory of stress and coping in this study as a framework for understanding how policies and public administration can be designed to assist employees to successfully cope with work-related stress in order to facilitate a positive working environment.

The emphasis of the transactional model of stress and coping theory is on the appraisal of an individual about his or her own situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This appraisal is responsible for how an individual views stress, including the coping strategy that he or she adopts (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Per this theory, individuals experience stress in terms of their thoughts, emotions, feelings, and behaviors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Individuals experience stress when internal and external demands exceed their available internal and external resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This information highlights how administration and policies can influence the ability of public employees to cope with stress in order to facilitate positive working environment in DAEP.

According to this theory, which Lazarus and Folkman first introduced in 1987, an individual's cognitive and emotional responses to stressors involve a primary and secondary appraisal of the stressor. In the primary appraisal, the individual assesses the

stressor to determine whether it presents a threat; in the secondary appraisal, the individual assesses whether it might be possible to cope effectively with the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Based on the nature of the stressor, then, the individual may choose to use emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This information highlights how administration and policies can be developed that facilitate either emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies in order to assist public employees to cope with stress to facilitate positive working environment in DAEP.

Previous researchers have adopted the transactional theory of stress and coping in other studies involving public administration and policies (Bellou & Chatzinikou, 2015; Li et al, 2014). Bellou and Chatzinikou (2015) used the theory to frame the prevention of employee burnout during episodic organizational changes in public organizations. These investigators emphasized the role of the psychological health of public employees in developing policies and making administrative decisions to improve work conditions and service to the public. Li et al. (2014) also used the transactional theory of stress and coping to frame a study about work stress, work motivation, and their effects on the job satisfaction of public health workers. Li et al. also emphasized the role of developing policies and making administrative decisions rooted from helping employees successfully cope with stress in order to facilitate a positive working environment.

Nature of the Study

I developed this study using the qualitative method. I selected this method based on its capacity to bring out or reveal meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative

methods are most useful in exploring understudied topics for which previously established instruments do not exist (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, I aimed to explore the descriptions and experiences of the participants, and the qualitative method captures the phenomenon of "what is going on…and why" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39).

I applied a phenomenological design to discover the lived experiences or phenomenon that educators experience at the workplace (see Creswell, 2003). Phenomenological researchers focus on consciousness and perceptions of the participants (Coffey, Holbrook, & Atkinson, 1996). Phenomenology was the appropriate design for this study because my purpose was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach.

Definitions

In this section, I define several key terms that are pertinent to the study's identified research problem:

Coping: Coping refers to the ability of an individual to adopt strategies that can alleviate stress (Putwain, Daly, Chamberlain, & Sadreddini, 2016).

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP): DAEP is a temporary educational setting wherein students who have committed delinquent or deviant behaviors are detained for a period of 45 days as a result of court order (Herndon et al., 2015).

Disruptive behaviors: Disruptive behaviors are any action from students that disrupt classroom activities, such as aggression or noise (Miller, Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Fabiano, 2014).

Occupational stress: Occupational stress refers to work-related psychological syndrome characterized by exhaustion, burnout, and distress (Quaresma et al., 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions are factors within a study that the researcher assumes to be true or correct without the presence of actual proof or evidence (Simon & Goes, 2013). The key assumptions of the study included participant honesty and sample composition. These assumptions are discussed in this section.

The first assumption of this study involved the honesty of the participants during the individual semi structured interviews. I assumed that all participants would be candid and truthful about their responses for every question during the interview. This assumption was necessary in order to assert confidence that the data were valid.

Another assumption of this study was that the participants selected for the sample were reflective of the experiences and perceptions of an average teacher working in DAEP. This assumption was necessary because the results of qualitative studies are usually used as the foundation of future quantitative studies for verification and expansion (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I assumed that the findings are an accurate representation of the experiences and perceptions of DAEP teachers in the sample.

Scope and Delimitations

Scope refers to the factors that provide boundary to the study, whereas the delimitations describe the rationale of the researcher for setting the scope of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The scope and delimitations of the study pertain to the study's selection of participants and the research setting. These scope and delimitations are discussed in this section.

The study was bounded by the experiences and perceptions of teachers who are part of a DAEP in Texas. The rationale for selecting DAEP teachers as the participants was that firsthand experience would likely result in a more accurate understanding of the research phenomenon. Focusing on the perspectives of school leaders, students, and colleagues might not be ideal given that their views do not necessarily reflect the true experiences of DAEP teachers.

Another factor that defined the scope of the study is that the focus would be on DAEP. The rationale for focusing on DAEP is that teachers are exposed to an environment wherein their students have been punished for disruptive behaviors. Although teachers can experience stress even in mainstream classrooms (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), limited literature exists about the experience of teachers in DAEP settings.

Limitations

Limitations describe the factors within a study that contribute to possible weaknesses (Simon & Goes, 2013). The limitations of this study included factors such as

the small sample size and the use of semi structured interviews for the data. I discussed those limitations in this section.

The first limitation of this study involved the small sample size of 20 participants, which limited the generalizability of the findings to all DAEP teachers. The findings reported in this study may not be applicable to all DAEP teachers in the United States and the state of Texas. Through naturalistic generalization, however, the results may be transferable if enough similarities between different contexts are apparent (see Hellström, 2008).

Another limitation of this study was my reliance on semi structured interviews to understand how educators in DAEP experience and cope with stress from working with students who exhibit disruptive behavior. I used no other data sources to triangulate the data. I believed that capturing the experiences and perceptions of educators would be more effective through semi structured interviews wherein participants have the benefit of having more control of how to tell their stories.

Significance

Previous scholars have performed significant work in the area of stressors (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014; Permuth-Levine, 2007), but none in the area of alternative educators in DAEP. Permuth-Levine asserted as a limitation that different population groups should be studied to broaden the scope on stressors. Other researchers have called for further studies in the area of stressors to center around themes and patterns exhibited by teachers in different settings (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). These researchers addressed the impact of job-related stressors on educators, as well as how

teachers can cope most effectively with stressors related to their job and students' disruptive behavior.

The findings from this study may help scholars and practitioners gain important insight about job-related stressors in DAEP. Beyond that, the findings of this study can produce important new knowledge that can lead to greater understanding of the experiences of teachers working in exclusionary and disciplinary environments. It is important to understand how DAEP teachers experience and cope with stress related to student disruptive behavior in order to address the limitations of the current literature regarding this topic and possibly facilitate the improvement of administration and development of policies that facilitate positive work environment in DAEP. This study is significant because while it does not completely fill the gaps on research related to DAEP teachers concerning stressors and work place experiences with disruptive students it does generate important new knowledge that may open the door for more robust research in this area. This study sheds light on an understudied area and helps to generate new knowledge about a phenomenon. The results and conclusions from this study may serve public administration scholars and practitioners as a first step guide, by laying the foundation for future research and providing preliminary findings on the role of stressors among DAEP teachers. It this way, policymakers and education administrators have some feedback to view and analyze as they initiate future policies. This is an important step because of the implication educational policies play on public administration and public policy.

Summary

Teachers can experience high levels of stress and exhaustion, despite receiving fulfillment in their role as educators (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Teacher stress is both serious and endemic within the education profession (Beshai et al., 2016). Teachers who have high levels of occupational stress are more likely to experience burnout and more likely to experience difficulties in managing their classrooms (Fitchett et al., 2017), possibly putting teachers more at risk for experiencing stress for working in academic settings populated with students who have been penalized for disruptive behaviors such as DAEP (Herndon et al., 2015).

The problem was that historical studies on DAEP focused on the experiences of students, with limited information available about the experiences of teachers in this type of academic setting (Meiners, 2015; Randle, 2016). Job-related stress can produce negative consequences for the educator in many areas: such as work performance, effective communication, job satisfaction, physical and mental health, remuneration and retention (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), which can be problematic in the successful administration of DAEP. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. I grounded this exploration using the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping, which served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs.

The next chapter includes in-depth reviews of the literature. In this chapter, I elaborate upon the selected theory for the study's framework. The key topics reviewed in the next chapter include stress in the educational setting, coping strategies that past researchers have found to be used by educators, and the literature on DAEP.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. This exploration was grounded in the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping, which served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs. In this chapter, I provide in-depth reviews of the existing literature pertinent to the key concepts of the current study, such as teacher stress, coping, disruptive behaviors of students, and the DAEP academic setting.

The first section of the review is a discussion of the literature search strategy that was used to write this chapter. The second section involves an elaboration of the theoretical framework, which focuses on the transactional theory of stress and coping. In the third section, I focus on the stress in the educational setting, focusing on the different stressors that have been identified to be common among teachers. In the fourth section, I focus on defining disruptive behaviors and providing examples of how these behaviors manifest among students. In the fifth section, I review the different coping strategies that past researchers have found to be used by educators to cope with stress. Focus was also placed on the literature on DAEPs. The last sections of the chapter are the conclusions and the summary of the literature review, in which I highlight the key findings from the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The strategy that I used for this literature review was based on the use of inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to have a more focused set of data that directly address the research problem. Through the inclusion criteria, I ensured that all data that were included in the review had direct relevance to the phenomenon being explored in this study. The use of exclusion criteria in this review ensured that extraneous information that did not have relevance to the research topic was excluded from the review. The use of exclusion criteria also facilitated a more focused review that excluded specific studies that do not add value to the enhanced understanding of the current research.

For this literature review, I specified several inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to determine which sources could be used. The inclusion criteria for this review included the following: (a) peer-reviewed journals that were published within the time frame of 2014-2018, (b) publications that specifically focused on the experiences of high school teachers and educators, and (c) studies involving teacher-related stress that was experienced in the educational setting. The exclusion criteria for this literature review included the following specific factors: (a) sources that have been published earlier than 2014 except for seminal studies involving the theoretical framework, (b) nonpeer-reviewed journal articles or edited books except government data when using statistics, and (c) findings generated from college and postgraduate educators.

In order to find relevant literature that illuminates the research problem that was identified in the first chapter, several books and peer-reviewed journal articles were reviewed and used. Online databases such as Academic Search, ERIC: Educational

Resource Information Center, SCIndeks - Serbian Citation Index, Google Scholar, Ingenta Connect, JournalSeek, and JSTOR: Journal Storage were searched. A large majority of the articles were searched from Google Scholar because many of the articles included in that database can be accessed online without any fee. These online databases served as the source of all the data that were presented in this critical evaluation of the literature on teacher stress.

I used several keywords and phrases to write and compose this literature review. The keywords and phrases that I used in this comprehensive review search of the literature were the following: *stress, teacher stress, educator stress, occupational stress, disruptive behaviors of students, transactional theory, transaction theory of stress and coping, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, coping strategies of teachers, stress in the educational workplace, alternative education, Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs,* and *DAEP*. The information and findings that resulted from using these keywords served as the foundation of the literature review in this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study was grounded on the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The emphasis of the transactional model of stress and coping theory is on the appraisal of individual about his or her own situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This appraisal is responsible for how an individual views stress, including the coping methods that he or she adopts. From this theory, individuals experience stress in terms of their thoughts, emotions, feeling, and behaviors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Individuals will likely experience stress if internal

and external demands exceed the available internal and external resources of an individual.

The transactional theory of stress and coping highlights the interaction between the individual and the environment. According to this theory, which was first introduced by Lazarus and Folkman in 1987, an individual's cognitive and emotional responses to stressors involve a primary and a secondary appraisal of the stressor. The primary appraisal is the determination whether something that affects the well-being of an individual occurs, whereas the secondary appraisal involves the different possible coping strategies that can be used (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

In the primary appraisal, the individual assesses the stressor to determine whether it presents a threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). At this stage of the transactional theory of stress and coping, the individual directly evaluates the situation as either stressful or not stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The three components of the primary appraisal stage are the following: (a) goal relevance, (b) goal congruence, and (c) type of ego involvement (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Good relevance pertains to encounter that an individual perceives to be relevant (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Good congruence pertains to an encounter is consistent with an individual's personal goal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

In the secondary appraisal phase, the individual assesses whether he or she might be possible to cope effectively with the perceived stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). At this stage of appraisal, individuals evaluate personal and social resources for coping. In terms of social support, the appraisal of an individual is based on the perceived support

from a given situation, both in terms of the actual availability of support and the quality of support that can be attained (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1987), there are three forms of secondary appraisal: (a) blame or credit, (b) coping potential, and (c) future expectations. Blame or credit refers to the attribution of the source of an event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Coping potential refers to the appraisal of an individual regarding the likelihood of generating behavioral or cognitive processes that are expected to be beneficial to a personally relevant event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Finally, future expectations refer to an individual's appraisal of the course of an encounter based on perceived goal congruence or incongruence (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Based on the primary and secondary appraisals of individuals, stress can manifest in terms of three different forms: (a) harm, (b) threat, and (c) challenge (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Harm pertains to psychological event that is damaging that has already occurred (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Threat refers to the anticipation of an imminent harm (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Finally, a challenge is a personal demand that is based on the confidence of an individual about his or her own mastery (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). According to Lazarus and Folkman, the three different types of psychological stress are emotion based, highlighting the interrelated nature of psychological stress and emotions.

Based on the nature of the stressor, then, the individual may choose to use emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Emotion-focused coping strategies pertain to internal emotion states that focus on altering

emotional responses to a stressor through techniques such as avoidance or minimization (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Problem-focused coping, on the other hand, involves the altering of the stressor through direct action (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Through problem-focused strategies, coping manifests in terms of actions such as learning of new skills, developing new behaviors, and finding different channels (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Both emotion and problem-focused coping can involve seeking of social support. According to Lazarus and Folkman, emotion-focused strategies are more likely to be used when the environment causing the stressor has been appraised as not capable of being altered or modified. Conversely, problem-focused strategies are more likely to be used when there is a perception that the environment or situation is amenable for change (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

The transactional theory of stress and coping was helpful in understanding how DAEP instructors appraise student disruptive behavior in terms of threat and also in understanding the adaptiveness of their coping strategies. The transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) highlights the interaction between the experiences of teachers and the DAEP environment as instrumental in the appraisal of stress. This interaction plays an important role on how teachers appraise stress and the individual and situational resources to cope with the perceived stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987).

Previous researchers have applied the transactional theory of stress and coping in the educational setting to understand the experiences of educators (Boujut, Dean, Grouselle, & Cappe, 2016; Lambert, McCarthy, Fitchett, Lineback, & Reiser, 2015; Park

et al., 2016; Yoon, Sulkowski, & Bauman, 2016). Using the transactional theory of stress and coping, Lambert et al. (2015) conceptualized teacher stress as based on the perceived imbalance of demands and resources in the classroom. Specifically, these researchers reported that teachers experience stress when their internal demands are not matched or fulfilled thorough the external resources. Park et al. (2016) used the transactional theory of stress and coping as a framework for explaining the relationship between personality, sense of efficacy, and stress among teachers. Specifically, Park et al. hypothesized that perceived stress was predicted by the personality of teachers.

Researchers such as Boujut et al. (2016) also used the transactional theory of stress and coping as a theoretical framework for using the classroom environment of the teachers as part of the explanation for how stress was perceived and appraised. Specifically, the researchers argued that the classroom environment of having special education students was instrumental in the perception and appraisal of stress among teachers (Boujut et al., 2016). Yoon et al. (2016) also used the transactional theory of stress and coping to frame the responses of teachers about bullying, which was conceptualized as a situation that is stressful for teachers. From this theory, teachers cope with this stressful situation by appraising the available individual and situational resources (Yoon et al., 2016).

The results of the four recent studies that I reviewed in this section highlight the continued relevance of the transactional theory of stress and coping as a theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of teachers with regard to both stress and coping (Boujut et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2015; Park et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2016).

The authors of these four research studies highlighted the transactional relationship of teachers and their environment in terms of their perception of stress as educators and how individual and situational factors are used to cope with these perceived stressors (Boujut et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2015; Park et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2016). In the current study, I used the same theory as framework for understanding how teachers in DAEP perceive stress and how these stressors are addressed by appraising individual and situation resources.

Stress in the Educational Workplace

Although the educational profession provides satisfaction and fulfilment to many educators, many teachers also experience stress, burnout, and exhaustion (Beshai et al., 2016; Fitchett et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). The teaching profession is a generally considered a stressful occupation (Katz, Harris, Abenavoli, Greenberg, & Jennings, 2017). According to Beshai et al. (2016), stress among teachers is both serious and endemic within the education profession. Due to the nature of the work of teachers where disruptive behaviors from students can be common, Schonfeld et al. (2017) reported that many teachers experience mental health difficulties.

Compared to other occupational stressors, teacher stress is more associated with mental health challenges and difficulties (Schonfeld et al., 2017). Teachers who have high levels of occupational stress are more likely to experience burnout and more likely to experience difficulties in managing their classrooms (Fitchett et al., 2017). Teachers who are stressed are also susceptible to various negative outcomes such as absenteeism, attrition, errors, tardiness, and low productivity (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016). High stress

also compromises the educators' ability to help children who are having social and emotional difficulties (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014).

In a qualitative study conducted by Tsang (2018), the researcher explored the sources of negative emotions of teachers. Based on in-depth interview involving 21 teachers, Tsang posited that alienation or the sense of feeling powerless, meaningless, and isolated, may be encountered as a result of the nature of the teaching profession itself, the status of their employment, and their structural positions in the school. These findings suggested that the negative emotions of teachers can be influenced by occupational and organizational of teaching, which means that differences in environment can be critical in the experience of stress (Tsang, 2018).

Given the negative outcomes associated with stress, stress management is important in order to enhance the job satisfaction of teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). When teachers are more satisfied with their job and experience less stress, high levels of attrition among teachers can be prevented (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). High teacher turnover can affect the educational quality provided to students, highlighting the importance of focusing on stress in understanding the experiences of teachers in the classroom (Jennings et al., 2017).

Teacher stress is often a result of different factors that include individual, environmental, and coping factors (Foley & Murphy, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (year) found that the different stressors that teachers experience are often independent from each other, which means that focusing on each stressor is

important. The implication of these findings is that individual consideration should be given to each stressor in order to fully address the challenges that teachers experience.

Researchers exploring the sources of teacher stress have primarily focused on general work-related stressors and the traits of educators as contributing factors (Bernard, 2016; Ferguson, Mang, & Frost, 2017; Foley & Murphy, 2015; Park et al., 2016; Schmidt, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Möller, & Kunter, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Zurlo et al., 2016). When considering traits that are typically associated with increased predisposition for occupational stress among teachers, Park et al (2016) found that personality traits such as persistence and self-directedness were negatively correlated with teachers' perceived stress. Zurlo et al. (2016) reported that Type A behaviors had many negative interaction effects with psychological health.

Teacher beliefs can also influence levels of teacher stress (Bernard, 2016; Popov, Popov, & Damjanović, 2015). For instance, Bernard (2016) found that low levels of self-downing and frustration level tolerance were associated with teacher retirement from stress. Popov et al. (2015) cited that irrational beliefs mediated the predictive relationship of sources of occupational stress and the general stress experienced by teachers. The mediating role of irrational beliefs suggests that teachers' beliefs are a critical component of stress.

When it comes to general work-related stressors, researchers have shown that dealing with students is often a strong contributor in the stress experienced by many teachers (Silva, 2016). Other work-related stressors that teachers usually experience include relationship with coworkers, societal attitudes, and working conditions (Ferguson

et al. 2017). De Simone, Cicotto, and Lampis (2016) found that perceptions about work environment, senior management, and organizational change are factors that contribute to occupational difficulties among teachers.

Researchers have cited excessive workload as a contributing factor to the stress experienced of many high school teachers (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016; De Simone et al., 2016; Paškvan, Kubicek, Prem, & Korunka, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Excessive workload can affect the well-being and job satisfaction of many types of employees (Paškvan et al., 2016). For example, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) found that workload and pressure are strong predictors of stress among teachers. Banerjee and Mehta (2016) also found that excessive workload can be a contributing factor to the stress that high school teachers experience.

One research study provided in-depth data about the experiences of high school teachers regarding stress and quality of working life. Silva (2016) examined the quality of working life and occupational stress among high school teachers in north Portugal. The study involved a sample of 100 teachers, of which 60 were women and 40 were men, with a mean age of 43.2 years old (Silva, 2016). Silva administered several questionnaires to examine various aspects of their working life and occupational stress. The results of the study revealed that many teachers perceived poor working life and experience various job-related stressors (Silva, 2016). Many teachers reported low job satisfaction and job frustration, with 33% reporting no expiations for a better future and 40% reporting limited career development (Silva, 2016). The results of the study also revealed that there is a significant negative association between stress and perceived

quality of working life (Silva, 2016). The limitation of this study was that the sample consisted of teachers who were teaching in mainstream classrooms, which may not be generalized to alternative education settings such as DAEP (Silva, 2016).

In explaining workplace stress among teachers, Schmidt et al. (2017) focused on exploring the day-to-day experiences of educators in the classroom. Through this day-to-day exploration of the experiences of teachers, Schmidt et al. aimed to examine how the common tasks performed by teachers are being perceived in terms of uplifts and hassles. Uplifts pertain to resources whereas hassles refer to stressors. Based on a sample of 141 new teachers who were asked to complete an online diary for a continuous period of 14 days, the researchers revealed that teaching their students and interacting with colleagues served as the main uplifts and hassles. These daily hassles and uplifts served as the source of emotional exhaustion for teachers (Schmidt et al., 2017).

When understanding the stress of educators, exploring the perceptions of teachers provides a rich source of data (Fitchett et al., 2017; McCarthy, Lambert, Lineback, Fitchett, & Baddouh, 2016). For instance, Fitchett et al. (2017) found that the classroom appraisal of teachers influenced their vulnerability for occupational stress. McCarthy et al. (2016) also noted that the appraisals of teachers regarding the available resources and demands can influence their experiences of occupational stress. McCarthy et al. found that job satisfaction and commitment, symptoms of burnout, stress prevention resources, and difficult student interaction all have moderate association with the resource and demand appraisal of teachers, highlighting the subjective nature of the experiences of teachers.

In conclusion, researchers have generally indicated that the stress teachers experience in school can be a result of different factors, ranging from individual traits, contextual conditions, and professional factors (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016; Fitchett et al., 2017; Foley & Murphy, 2015; McCarthy et al., 2016; Silva, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). The main weakness of the studies that the researcher reviewed in this section is that none specifically featured teachers who are in DAEP settings. The results from the studies reviewed in this section are related to DAEP settings because of the pronounced cases of disruptive behaviors in this academic setting. In order to address the weaknesses and limitations of previous studies, the current researcher explored the different stressors that DAEP teachers experience teaching an academic setting characterized by disruptive behaviors.

Disruptive Behaviors of Students

Disruptive behaviors include action by students that interrupts the classroom activity, such as aggression or noise (Miller et al., 2014). Disruptive behaviors include less serious offenses such as truancy, use of inappropriate language, or habitual misbehavior (Waller & Waller, 2014). Disruptive behaviors are often a manifestation of other psychological problems, which underscores the complexity of working in an environment where these are issues are predominant and pervasive (Kuhn, Ebert, Gracey, Chapman, & Epstein, 2015).

Disruptive behaviors among adolescents can negatively affect the classroom learning environment (Archambault, Vandenbossche-Makombo, & Fraser, 2017; Collins et al., 2016; Kuhn et al., 2015). For instance, Archambault et al. (2017) noted that

children who exhibit disruptive behaviors tend to have low engagement in class, compared to students who do not exhibit disruptive behaviors. Disruptive behaviors of one student could also affect the learning process of other students in the class (Archambault et al., 2017).

Disruptive student behaviors in the classroom often leads to teachers requesting assistance or referrals to other mental health professionals for support (Kuhn et al., 2015). Dealing with disruptive behaviors in class is a source of stress for many teachers (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Collins et al., 2016). In the next sub-section, I focus on the literature on the relationship of disruptive behaviors of students and teacher stress.

Disruptive behaviors and teacher stress. The relationship and interaction of students with their teachers is often a source of stress for educators (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Collins et al., 2016). For instance, a warm relationship between teachers and students is a protective factor against disruptiveness in class (Archambault et al., 2017). Disruptive student behaviors, however, generally present a challenge for many teachers (Collins et al., 2016). Ball and Anderson-Butcher (2014) also found that the perceived mental health needs of students predicted the level of stress of teachers.

Different social and emotional behaviors of students have effects on the level of self-efficacy of many teachers in the classroom (Zee, de Jong, & Koomen, 2016; Zee, de Jong, & Koomen, 2017). Zee et al. (2017) found that the relationship and interaction between teachers and students has an indirect role in the level of self-efficacy of teachers. Zee et al. (2016) also found that externalization behaviors from students such as aggression and disruptive behaviors were negatively associated with the self-efficacy of

teachers in terms of their classroom instruction, behavior management, emotional support, and student engagement. Moreover, teachers' perceptions about disruptive behaviors in classrooms intensified the negative correlation between externalized student behaviors and the self-efficacy of teachers to manage disruptive behaviors in their classrooms (Zee et al., 2016).

In a qualitative study, Cochran, Cochran, Gibbons, and Spurgeon (2014) explored the experiences of educators in an urban elementary school with high incidence of disruptive student behaviors. The teachers participated in this study through a survey exploring their experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding their work in an environment that can be characterized as highly disruptive. The results of the study revealed that many teachers experienced high levels of frustration from working with students who were exhibiting disruptive behaviors. Although these researchers specifically focused on disruptive academic environments, the main weakness of this study was that the sample consisted of elementary students.

Contrary to the findings of previous researchers on the relationship between disruptive behaviors of students and teacher stress (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Cochran et al., 2014; Collins et al., 2016; Zee et al., 2016), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) found that discipline problems in classroom were not significant predictors of stress among high school teachers. To explain this deviation from the literature, Skaalvik and Skaalvik noted that the deviance can be explained by the sample composition, wherein previous studies usually involved a mix of elementary and high school students. These

findings suggest that high school teachers may be less affected by exposure to students with disciplinary problems (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016).

In conclusion, researchers have previously concluded that disruptive classroom behaviors negatively affect teachers in terms of elevated level of stress (Archambault et al., 2017; Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Cochran et al., 2014; Collins et al., 2016; Zee et al., 2016). The main weakness of the studies that I reviewed in this section is that few specially focused on the experiences of high school teachers and alternative education settings (Cochran et al., 2014). To address these weaknesses and limitations, I focused on exploring how working in a DAEP setting affects teachers' stress levels and ability to cope.

Coping Strategies of Educators

Coping refers to the ability of an individual to adopt strategies that can alleviate stress and manage problems (Putwain et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2016). Being able to cope with stress among educators is important in the educational profession at large in order to prevent teacher attrition (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Coping serves a buffer for the negative effects of psychological stress for many employees (Zurlo et al., 2016). According to Schonfeld et al. (2017), there is currently limited empirical information about the coping of teachers. Landsbergis et al. (2017) noted that most of the studies that involved examining the effectiveness of interventions have failed to demonstrate stress reduction among teachers.

Despite the weakness in research about teachers' coping (Landsbergis et al., 2017; Schonfeld et al., 2017), few researchers have identified different strategies that educators

need or can use to cope with job-related stress (Beshai et al., 2016). Some of these strategies include seeking of social support, the enhancement of emotional resilience, and mindfulness-based interventions (Beshai et al., 2016; Day & Hong, 2016; Jennings et al., 2017). These strategies often require institutional support through professional development or education-sponsored interventions (Hong, Day, & Greene, 2017; Vance et al., 2015). In this section, I discuss each of these coping strategies and interventions in order to identify what strategies have been proven to be effective in reducing the stress of teachers.

Organizational and Social Support

Organizational and social support appears is one factor that can be instrumental in teachers' ability to cope with occupational stress (Ferguson et al., 2017; Malik & Noreen, 2015). Malik and Noreen conducted a quantitative study to determine whether organizational support moderates the relationship between occupational stress and the affective well-being of educators. The study sample consisted of 210 teachers, whom the researchers purposively selected based on age, education, job experience, and nature of institution. Based on the data collected from survey questionnaires, the results of the analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between occupational stress and the well-being of teachers, with perceived organizational support as a mediator of this relationship.

Social support is another protective factor that can buffer the negative effects of teacher stress (Fiorilli, Albanese, Gabola, & Pepe, 2017; Paquette & Rieg, 2016). For example, special education teachers are able to alleviate stress through social support in

terms of communication and reassurance from other people. Social support can be received internally or externally, wherein internal support refers to personal resources and external support refers to the organization or other people (Fiorilli et al., 2017).

One factor that may contribute to the exacerbation of teacher stress is the failure to seek professional support from mental health practitioners. For instance, Ferguson et al. (2017) found that teachers rarely seek professional help when dealing with occupational stress. Instead, most teachers relied on social support from family, friends, and co-teachers. Ferguson et al. also found that teachers who frequently talked to their friends for support generally had lower levels of career intent and commitment. The results also revealed that male teachers were less likely to seek social support when dealing with stress.

Enhancement of Emotional Resilience

Researchers have shown that emotional resilience is an important component of coping among teachers during stressful situations (Day & Hong, 2016; Mansfield et al., 2016; Vance et al., 2015). The enhancement of teachers' emotional resilience, therefore, may be a helpful strategy for teachers who are experiencing occupational stress (Day & Hong, 2016). Institutional support is often an important component of programs that intend to develop the emotional resilience of teachers (Hong et al., 2017).

Within the specific context of the educational profession, scholars have conceptualized emotional resilience either in terms of capacity, process, or outcome (Beltman, 2015). The capacity for emotional resilience pertains to the ability of a teacher to use both personal and contextual resources in order to cope with stress. The process

component of emotional resilience pertains to the interaction between personal and contextual factors over time that enable teachers to cope with challenges. Finally, outcome pertains to the experiences of professional satisfaction, growth, and well-being as a result of having emotional resilience (Beltman, 2015).

Teachers' capacity for emotional resilience is influence by individual, professional, and external factors (Day & Hong, 2016; Mansfield et al., 2016). Hence, improving the emotional resilience of teachers is a collective and relational process that requires the integration of different actors (Day & Hong, 2016). According to Mansfield et al. (2016), there is a need for personal and contextual support in order to enhance the psychological resilience of high school teachers, emphasizing the importance of both the individual and institutional support through education. Education can provide teachers with insights about their own resilience and knowledge of how to use that quality to enhance their professional performance (Vance et al., 2015).

In conclusion, organizational support through school-sponsored interventions and programs are often necessary to enhance the coping of teachers (Landsbergis et al., 2017; Schonfeld et al., 2017). Previous researchers have suggested that enhancing the emotional resilience of teachers through education can be an effective strategy to minimize the stress of teachers (Day & Hong, 2016; Mansfield et al., 2016; Vance et al., 2015). The main weakness of the studies that I reviewed in this section primarily involved teachers who were not teaching students DAEP or other alternative education settings (Day & Hong, 2016; Mansfield et al., 2016; Vance et al., 2015). To address these weaknesses and

limitations, I explored the coping strategies that DAEP teachers use to cope with the stress of working in this particular academic setting.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Previous investigators have identified mindfulness-based interventions as one of the strategies that can be used to reduce stress among teachers (Beshai et al., 2016; Frank, Reibel, Broderick, Cantrell, & Metz, 2015; Harris, Jennings, Katz, Abenavoli, & Greenberg, 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Mindfulness-based interventions can be instrumental in cultivating the mindfulness and self-compassion of teachers, which may be used to relieve occupational stress (Beshai et al., 2016). Mindfulness is the ability of an individual to be conscious and aware of his or her own feelings and emotions (Beshai et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017). Mindfulness can include mental techniques and strategies such as observation, nonjudgement, and nonreacting (Frank et al., 2015).

Scholars have provided empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention in reducing teacher stress (Beshai et al., 2016; Frank et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Based on a quantitative feasibility trial study, Beshai et al. (2016) found that mindfulness-based interventions were effective in lowering stress and enhancing well-being, mindfulness, and self-compassion compared to the control group. Beshai et al. noted a limitation of these findings, however, in that the results were based on preliminary data and that randomized controlled trial is needed to strengthen the findings. Harris et al. (2016) also found support for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention called the

Community Approach to Learning Mindfully (CALM) program based on a 16-week intervention involving 64 educators. The results of the pretest/posttest study revealed that the CALM program was effective in terms of improving mindfulness, tolerance for distress, and physical health such as lowered blood pressure and cortisol response (Harris et al., 2016).

Similar to the findings of Beshai et al. (2016) and Harris et al. (2016), Jennings et al. (2017) also found support for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing the stress of teachers. Jennings et al. examined the effect of a mindfulness-based intervention program called Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) for Teachers on the social and emotional competence levels of teachers. The randomized controlled trial involved 224 teachers in 36 urban elementary schools, wherein in the intervention was a 30-hour training conducted in-person and through phone. The results of the data analysis revealed that CARE for Teachers had a statistically significant and positive effect on the emotional regulation, mindfulness, and psychological distress of teachers.

Similar to the findings of Beshai et al. (2016), Harris et al. (2016), and Jennings et al. (2017), Frank et al. (2015) also found support for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing the stress of teachers. Frank et al. examined the effects of an adapted mindfulness-based intervention called mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) on the stress levels and overall well-being of high school teachers. These researchers recruited 36 high school teachers to participate in an 8-week intervention program. The results of the experimental study indicated that high school teachers who

participated in the MBSR program showed significant improvements in their ability to self-regulate; have more self-compassion; enhance mindfulness related skills such as observation, nonjudgement, and nonreacting; and improved quality of sleep. Through these findings, the researchers suggested that mindfulness-based interventions such as MBSR can be useful in helping high school teachers develop coping strategies to minimize stress.

Similar to the research focus of Frank et al. (2015), Reiser, Murphy, and McCarthy (2016) examined the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention on the stress levels and overall well-being of high school teachers. The intervention was a 6-8-week mindfulness program involving a psychoeducation and support group for teachers. The quasi-experimental mixed-method study was evaluated using quantitative and qualitative techniques. The results of the quantitative analysis revealed that the participants who attended the mindfulness-based intervention reported higher levels of mindfulness compared to the control group. The qualitative analysis supported the findings based on the satisfaction of the participants regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention.

In conclusion, researchers have generally indicated that mindfulness-based interventions can be an effective strategy to minimize the stress of teachers (Beshai et al., 2016; Frank et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Reiser et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2016). The main weakness of the studies that I reviewed in this section was that the participants primarily involved teachers who taught in mainstream classrooms (Beshai et al., 2016; Frank et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Reiser et

al., 2016). These findings may not be generalized in an alternative education setting such DAEP wherein students are expected to exhibit more pronounced disruptive behaviors. To address these methodological weaknesses and limitations of past research studies, I explored the different coping strategies that DAEP teachers use to cope with the stress of working in this particular academic setting.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education provides students a different educational track for not meeting the goals or standards of traditional mainstream schools (McGee & Lin, 2017). Alternative education programs place students in an exclusive setting in order to develop certain skills or address particular behaviors, with the goal of eventually returning them to regular school settings (Pennacchia et al., 2016). Alternative education is an opportunity for educators to reformulate or reform negative behaviors of students who have been disciplined for various infractions or disciplinary actions (Kraftl, 2016). According to Pennacchia et al. (2016), alternative education has been practiced in many educational landscapes in the United States for more than 50 years.

Students who are placed in alternative education settings usually have emotional or behavioral problems that can be disruptive to a traditional classroom (Zolkoski, Bullock, & Gable, 2016). In addition to disruptive behaviors, alternative education can be beneficial to a wide range of school problems such as failing grades, poor attendance, and low motivation (Maillet, 2017). Regardless of programs, the goal of alternative education is generally to help these at-risk students from equipping with the necessary behaviors or emotional stability in order to succeed in traditional classrooms (Kraftl, 2016).

DAEP is an example of an alternative education program (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Kraftl, 2016; Whitford et al., 2016). DAEP is one of the most commonly-used disciplinary strategies in the prevention of student dropout (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Whitford et al., 2016). DAEP is an exclusionary educational setting wherein students who have committed delinquent or deviant behaviors are detained for a period of 45 days as a result of court order (Herndon et al., 2015). The placement of students in DAEP determined by the individual guidelines of states (Waller & Waller, 2014). Students can also be placed in DAEP multiple times within a given year if certain offenses are committed again (Waller & Waller, 2014).

Students who are placed in DAEP settings can be categorized into two main groups: (a) mandatory placement and (b) discretionary placement (Waller & Waller, 2014). Mandatory placement encompasses students who are considered a danger to themselves and other people as a result of committing felony offenses, ranging from assault, drug use, possession of weapons, theft, terroristic threat, manslaughter, and murder. Discretionary placement, on the other hand, involves students who have committed less serious offenses such as truancy, inappropriate language, or habitual misbehavior.

The use of DAEP as an exclusionary alternative school for addressing behavioral problems among students remains controversial (Gregory et al., 2016; Kennedy-Lewis, Whitaker, & Soutullo, 2016; Meiners, 2015; Randle, 2016). One criticism leveraged against the use of DAEP and other exclusionary disciplinary methods is that children are driven towards the criminal justice system (Meiners, 2015). The discriminatory and

exclusionary practice of DAEP can inadvertently encourage adolescents to a path to criminal behaviors (Whitford et al., 2016).

Another criticism against the use of exclusionary alternative education is that African American students are disproportionately placed in these academic settings when compared to their Caucasian counterparts (Gregory et al., 2016; Waller & Waller, 2014). For instance, Gregory et al. (2016) found that African American students are more likely to be placed in DAEP settings for committing infractions that are subjectively determined such as excessive noise, disrespectful conduct, inappropriate language, and threats. Waller and Waller (2014) also reported that African American students are more likely to be placed in DAEP academic settings compared to both their Caucasian and Hispanic counterparts.

Another criticism against the use of DAEP is the lack of empirical evidence supporting the program's effectiveness in facilitating positive change from students (Randle, 2016). There is currently limited empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of DAEP given that very few researchers conducted an experimental study to test the program's effectiveness. Randle reported that students who were placed in DAEP did not exhibit improvements based on lowered academic averages, decreased attendance rates, and increased incidents of disciplinary infractions after leaving the program.

Experiences of Teachers in DAEP

Limited researchers have focused on the perceptions and experiences of teachers in DAEP, including the stressors that they experience, and the strategies used to cope with these stressors. I identified several studies, however, that provided some information

about the experiences of teachers who are assigned in DAEP environments. These experiences are characterized by mixed feelings, challenges, and emotional difficulties (Abudu & Miles, 2017; Kennedy, Acosta, & Soutullo, 2017; Menendez Alvarez-Hevia, 2018).

Teachers in mainstream classrooms often find disruptive behaviors in class challenging to address, which could explain why many choose to refer these students in alternative education settings such as DAEP (Collins et al., 2016). According to Kennedy et al. (2017), teachers have the tendency to use excessive exclusionary measures to address problem behaviors among students, which results in many students being sent to DAEP. The main goals of placing students in DAEP are to increase the opportunity for students to succeed academically, correct problem behaviors, adhere to acceptable conduct, and learn from their mistakes (Waller & Waller, 2014).

According to Abudu and Miles (2017), teachers who are assigned to lead disciplinary programs for students with problem behaviors often face challenges in addressing the different learning styles of students. Moreover, these teachers are challenged by various behavioral problems that may be related to intellectual disabilities or emotional problems. These issues highlight the stress that teachers who are working in student disciplinary environments can experience. A limitation of this study, however, is that the researchers' perspective was from a policy and legal perspective, and they failed to explore the in-depth experiences and perceptions of teachers working in student disciplinary environments.

Another possible relevant experience of teachers working in student disciplinary programs is their emotional involvements with their students. Menendez Alvarez-Hevia (2018) found that teachers working in these disciplinary environments often engage in overcoming emotional distance in order to facilitate their effectiveness of educators of excluded students. Menendez Alvarez-Hevia reported that teachers described their experience in these disciplinary environments as a dynamic process that can shape the outcome of students, underscoring the perceived responsibility that educators feel when teaching in this exclusionary educational setting.

As reviewed in this section, most of the researchers studying DAEP have focused on the students (Gregory et al., 2016; Kennedy-Lewis et al., 2016; Meiners, 2015; Randle, 2016). Few researchers have focused on the perceptions and experiences of teachers in DAEP, including the stressors that they experience, and the strategies used to cope with these stressors. One such study was conducted by Kennedy-Lewis et al. (2016), with the results showing that teachers have mixed feelings about the use of DAEP, seeing the method as both punishment and an opportunity to provide support for students. In another study, Abudu and Miles (2017) noted that teachers in these environmental settings face challenges in addressing the different learning styles of students and addressing different problem behaviors that may be rooted in intellectual disabilities and emotional problems.

In conclusion, researchers have previously concluded that alternative education is a widely practiced disciplinary measure to address different problem behaviors among adolescents (Maillet, 2017; McGee & Lin, 2017; Pennacchia et al., 2016). The main

weakness of the studies that I reviewed in this section is that very limited information exists about the experiences of teachers working in DAEP settings, including the different types of stressors that these teachers experience, and the strategies used to cope with these challenges. To address these methodological weaknesses and limitations of previous studies, I focused on exploring how educators in DAEP settings experience and cope with stress from working with students who exhibit disruptive behaviors.

Conclusion

Previous scholars have explored the nature of the stress and coping among teachers (Beshai et al., 2016; Foley & Murphy, 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Previous researchers have cited that teachers' stress may result from different factors, ranging from individual traits, contextual conditions, and professional factors (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016; Fitchett et al., 2017; Foley & Murphy, 2015; McCarthy et al., 2016; Silva, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). In terms of teacher coping, the strategies commonly used by teachers include seeking social support, enhancing their emotional resilience, and implementing mindfulness-based interventions (Beshai et al., 2016; Day & Hong, 2016; Jennings et al., 2017). These findings, however, may not be generalized to DAEP settings due to the higher incidence of students exhibiting disruptive behaviors.

The gap in the literature is that limited information appears to exist regarding the experiences of teachers in DAEP, particularly the stressors that these teachers encounter, and the coping strategies used to cope with these stressors. To address this literature gap, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-

related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. This exploration was grounded on the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping, which served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs.

Summary

Many educators experience stress and exhaustion at work (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Teachers who are stressed are also susceptible to various negative occupational outcomes such as absenteeism, attrition, errors, tardiness, and low productivity (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016). Teachers who have high levels of occupational stress are also more likely to experience burnout and more likely to experience difficulties in managing their classrooms (Fitchett et al., 2017), thereby compromising their ability to help children who are having social and emotional difficulties (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014).

Teacher stress often comes from different sources, ranging from individual traits, contextual conditions, and professional factors (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016; Fitchett et al., 2017; Foley & Murphy, 2015; McCarthy et al., 2016; Silva, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Researchers have specifically identified disruptive student behaviors as a major stressor for many teachers (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Cochran et al., 2014; Collins et al., 2016). Scholars have previously indicated that disruptive behaviors in class negatively affect teachers in terms of experiencing elevated level of stress (Archambault

et al., 2017; Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Cochran et al., 2014; Collins et al., 2016; Zee et al., 2016).

Researchers who have explored teacher coping strategies have reported organizational and social support, developing mindfulness, and enhancing emotional resilience as effective techniques (Beshai et al., 2016; Day & Hong, 2016; Ferguson et al., 2017; Frank et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jennings et al., 2017; Reiser et al., 2016; Vance et al., 2015). Coping serves a protective factor for the negative effects of stress (Zurlo et al., 2016). Schonfeld et al. (2017), however, contended that there is currently limited empirical information about the coping of teachers that were based on experimental studies.

An assignment to a DAEP is a commonly-used disciplinary strategy in the prevention of student dropout (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2017; Kraftl, 2016; Whitford et al., 2016). The main goals of placing students in DAEP are to increase the opportunity for students to succeed academically, correct problem behaviors and adhere to acceptable conduct, and learn from their mistakes (Waller & Waller, 2014). Students who are placed in DAEP are those who have committed felony offenses or less serious offenses such as truancy, inappropriate language, or habitual misbehavior (Waller & Waller, 2014).

The current qualitative exploration was grounded on the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The emphasis of the transactional model of stress and coping theory is on the appraisal of an individual about his or her own situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). This appraisal is responsible for how an individual appraises stress, including the coping that the individual adopts to

deal with that particular stress. From this theory, individuals experience stress in terms of their thoughts, emotions, feeling, and behaviors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Individuals experience stress when internal and external demands exceed the available internal and external resources of an individual.

In the next chapter, a detailed discussion of the study's research methods was presented. This chapter included key discussions of the selected research method and design, the role of the researcher, the participant logic selection, population and sample, and sampling strategy, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis plan, and ethical procedure of the study. Chapter 3 concluded with a summary of the main points of the study's methodology and design.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. This exploration was grounded in the theoretical lens of the transactional theory of stress and coping, which served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs. In this chapter, I focused on the in-depth discussion of the study's methodology and design.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the selected research method and design. In the second section, I focus on the role of the researcher. In the third section, I explain the methodology of the study, including the participant logic selection, the population and sample, and the sampling strategy. The fourth section includes an explanation of the instrumentation or materials that I used in the study. In the fifth section, I describe the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. The sixth section of this chapter includes a discussion of the data analysis procedures, including the processes for ensuring trustworthiness. In the seventh section, I discuss the ethical procedure of the study. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the main points of the study's methodology and design.

Research Design and Rationale

I posed one primary or central question to guide this study: How does the transactional theory of stress and coping explain how educators in disciplinary alternative

educational programs experience and cope with stress from working with students who exhibit disruptive behavior in order to improve their work environment? To help answer this principal research question, I also developed the following secondary questions:

1. What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?
2. How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?
3. How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

I chose a qualitative method to guide this study based on its capacity to bring out or reveal meanings by interacting with the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative methods are most useful in exploring understudied topics for which previously established instruments do not exist (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, this method speaks about descriptions and experiences of the participants. This method captures the phenomena of "what is going on…and why" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 39).

I applied the phenomenological design to discover the "lived experiences" or phenomenon that educators experience at the workplace (see Creswell, 2003, p. 15). Phenomenology focuses on consciousness and perceptions of the participants about a specific phenomenon (Coffey et al., 1996). Phenomenology is appropriate for this study because the purpose of the study is to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping

approach. Phenomenological research enables researchers to use their expert insights in order to make sense of the meaning of this phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

As the primary instrument of the study, my role was to perform all the key processes needed to successfully complete this study. These tasks included securing all the necessary permits and requirements for the study, recruiting DAEP teachers, conducting the individual semi structured interviews, analysis of data, writing of the results, and the dissemination of findings. I was responsible for all these tasks but used the assistance of a mentor.

To minimize bias and conflict of interest, I did not recruit any participants with whom I have any personal relationship. Although I am an educator and was previously employed in a DAEP facility, recruitment from the same institution was avoided. I did not coerce anyone to participate in the study. During recruitment, I also emphasized voluntary participation so that no individual felt forced to agree to be part of the study.

I gave each voluntary participant a $20.00 gift card voucher for their participation. In order to attract participants during the recruitment of the study, I emphasized the benefits that could be attained by other teachers and school leaders as a result of the findings of the study. I informed potential participants that the findings would be sent to them after the study is completed so that improved insights about effective coping techniques may be adopted.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The logic for focusing on DAEP teachers to understand their experiences of stress and coping in DAEP was that their direct involvement in the research topic that I explored. I believed that using the perceptions and experiences of teachers would be instrumental in understanding the specific phenomenon being explored in this study. The same depth and relevant information may not have been acquired through other stakeholders such as the students, principals, and other school leaders.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included teachers of one DAEP in Texas. From this population, the sample included 20 DAEP teachers in a single facility in the state of Texas. All data came from the careful selection and recruitment of these 20 participants.

I based the rationale for the sample size on the concept of data saturation, a nonfixed number that signifies that all of the key features of a phenomenon have already been uncovered or identified (see Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). According to Francis et al. (2010), a sample of 10 participants is usually considered the minimum number needed to reach data saturation. To increase the likelihood that data saturation is achieved, the sample size for this study was increased to 20 participants; however, data saturation cannot be determined until the actual analysis revealed that the responses of the succeeding participants are becoming repetitive (Guest et al., 2006). I would have recruited more DAEP teachers to the study if data saturation was not achieved by the initial 20 participants.

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling strategy is the technique chosen for the selection of participants. Purposeful sampling is the strategic selection of participants based on critical characteristics that are assessed to be important in a specific phenomenon (Suri, 2011). Purposeful sampling is also non probabilistic in nature, which means that participants are not randomly selected (Suri, 2011). Purposeful sampling was particularly appropriate for this study because the selected participants had to not only qualify all the inclusion criteria but should also had to be able to provide rich and relevant data based on their presumed closeness to the phenomenon being explored.

Given the importance of identifying participants who can provide rich information based on the phenomenon being explored, eligibility criteria are often defined when using a purposeful sampling technique. The criteria for eligibility included the following: (a) being employed as a full-time DAEP teacher, (b) having at least 1 year of work experience in DAEP to have sufficient insight to respond informatively, and (c) being willing to participate in face-to-face interviews. All criteria were required to be satisfied in order to qualify for this study as participants.

I identified, contacted, and recruited participants through a single DAEP facility in Texas. I sought formal written approval from the leader of the DAEP institution in order to commence the recruitment process. Once approval was granted, written advertisements were posted within the premises of the selected DAEP. My email address was included in the advertisement so that interested DAEP teachers could formally express their interest to be part of this study.

Instrumentation

In qualitative studies, the main instrument is the researcher (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). As the main researcher, my tasks included securing all the necessary permits and requirements for the study, recruiting DAEP teachers, conducting the individual semi structured interviews, analyzing the data, writing the results, and disseminating the findings. Given the scope of my responsibility as the researcher, this study was a reflection of my rigor and competence (see Walker et al., 2013).

The actual instrument that I used to collect data was a semi structured interview guide. The interview guide included a set of questions that are framed to provide answers to the study's research questions. The questions from the guide were open-ended in nature to encourage participants to be as descriptive as possible. The questions were informed by the body of previous literature and the theoretical framework in order to elicit data that are directly relevant to the study's research questions.

The use of a semi structured interview as the data source for this study was sufficient to answer the research question and the corresponding sub questions because the tool allows participants to describe their experiences and perceptions with as much detail as possible. One of the main advantages of semi structured interviews is that the questions are open-ended so that the interviewees are not restricted by yes or no answers (Galletta, 2013). In this method, interviewees are also exposed to questions that are not directive because questions framed as open as necessary.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I first arranged the individual semi structured interviews through email or phone for each participant. The actual interviews were conducted in an office within the DAEP premises in order to make the process as convenient as possible for the participants; however, I was open to the preferences of each participant. One day prior to the scheduled interview, I contacted the participant to confirm the date, time, and place of the interview.

Prior to the collection of data, I secured the participants' informed consent during the recruitment phase of the study. I explained the contents of the informed consent form individually so that each participant had the opportunity to inquire and ask questions. If all concerns were addressed during the discussion, I asked the participants to sign the forms as a sign of their formal agreement to be part of the study.

For the collection of data in order to address the research question and the corresponding sub questions, semi structured interviews were used. The interviews were approximately 60-90 minutes in length, which provided the participants with sufficient time to express their opinions and feelings about the topic. The amount of the time allotted for the interview enabled me to ask several main questions and follow-up inquiries at a comfortable pace. I asked probing questions to further extract relevant information from the participants during the interview.

The individual interviews were audio-recorded to preserve the accuracy of the data. The audio recording device was turned on as soon as I was able to secure the consent of the participants during the day of the interview. After the interview, I

transferred the audio file directly to a computer, labelled with the assigned pseudonym for the participants and the date of the interview. I made backup copies of these tapes in an external disc drive to make sure that data were not lost in case the files from the computer became damaged or lost.

Participants exited the study through a debriefing procedure. This process entailed informing the participants of what can be expected in the remaining course of the study. I reminded the participants to occasionally check their emails because all further contact would be confined to messages sent from emails. I also reminded the participants to send their concerns and questions through email if they wanted to contact me.

Member checking was also a part of the debriefing process. Member checking is a credibility-based strategy of going back to the participants to verify that the data are representative of their true experiences (Carlson, 2010). I implemented this technique by emailing the summary of the analysis to each participant once the themes have been developed. I used their feedback to finalize the themes of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Analytical Procedure

I analyzed the data using the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological analysis involves the systematic analysis of data through the process of doing large quantities of qualitative data into smaller units of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). In this section, I discuss the specific data analysis steps that I used in this study.

The first step was the process of horizontalization, which involved the listing of experiences extracted from the interview transcripts (Moustakas, 1994). I used a Microsoft Word document to list all the relevant themes from the transcripts with the corresponding source of the data. I did not use the real names of the participants, but rather used their assigned pseudonyms.

This step also entailed the coding of the data by assigning names or labels to all relevant experience. For every response in the questions from the transcripts, I analyzed the meaning of the content and assigned a corresponding label. These names or labels were referred to as invariant constituents (see Moustakas, 1994). Invariant constituents are the smallest unit of information that serve as the foundation of the organization of data into clusters and themes (Moustakas, 1994).

The second step involved the reduction and elimination of data that were listed in the previous stage (Moustakas, 1994). This process entailed assigning labels called invariant constituents for every experience that was listed. The invariant constituents were based on the salient meaning of the experiences using a descriptive single word or a couple of words.

The third step involved the clustering of the invariant constituents into themes (Moustakas, 1994). The clustering of themes entailed grouping invariant constituents that are related with each other in terms of meaning and content. Every invariant constituent was compared and contrasted with each other so that a reasonable grouping could be generated. These groupings served as thematic categories that reflect interrelated invariant constituents.

The fourth step involved the finalization of the invariant constituents and themes (Moustakas, 1994). I reviewed the invariant constituents and themes by going back to the interview transcripts to analyze whether the findings can be supported by the raw data. Based on this review, I performed actions such as combining similar invariant constituents, rearranging the groupings and clusters, and deleting repetitions.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh steps were the respective creation of individual textural description, individual structural description, and individual textural-structural description (Moustakas, 1994). The individual textural description pertains to a narrative of the key experiences of each participant using their own words. The individual structural descriptions were the narratives that situate the experiences of participants with imaginative variation rooted from the literature and the theoretical framework. The individual textural-structural description pertained to the combination of both the textural and structural descriptions that were generated in the previous stages of the analysis.

The final step of the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis was the generation of the composite experience of the sample (Moustakas, 1994). This composite description, although not a complete representation of single participants, was the amalgamation of the themes developed from all the participants. The composite description was an abstracted representation of the experiences and perceptions of the entire 20 participants (see Moustakas, 1994). This composite description reflected the essence of the lived experience of the group and served as the in-depth answer to the research questions of the study.

The software I used to assist during the qualitative analysis was NVivo. NVivo is a tool that enables qualitative researchers to perform various coding procedures such as coding, clustering of codes, table and graph generation, and pattern analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). I loaded the interview transcripts into the software to facilitate the data analysis. Despite the features of NVivo that can be helpful in the analysis, I served as the main determinant of the invariant constituents, the thematic categories, and the themes.

I addressed discrepant cases by including experiences that did not become themes in the presentation of data. These discrepant cases were used as a strategy to make sure that a more complete and precise description of the phenomenon. Although these discrepant cases only reflected the experiences and perceptions of a few participants, their inclusion provided alternate perspectives about the phenomenon.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility is the qualitative equivalent of internal validity, which pertains to the accuracy of the findings rooted from the true experiences and perceptions of the participants who were part of the study (Shenton, 2004). The strategies that I used to increase the study's credibility were member checking and peer review. Member checking is a credibility-based strategy of going back to the participants to verify the accuracy of the data (Carlson, 2010). This technique was implemented by emailing the summary of the analysis to each participant once the themes had been developed. I analyzed their feedback to finalize the themes of the study. I also implemented peer review by allowing the my mentor to review the data in order to check their quality.

Transferability refers to the external validity of the findings or the extent to which the findings have application outside the context of the study (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). In order to establish the study's transferability, I developed a thick description of the context of the study. I was specific about the description of the selected DAEP site so that future researchers can determine whether the findings can be applied in other DAEP sites.

Dependability is the qualitative counterpart of the concept of reliability in quantitative research (Shenton, 2004). Dependability refers to the extent to which the findings can be reliable in such a way that other researchers would arrive at the same results after conducting the same procedures. In order to establish the dependability of the study, I used audit trails and the audio recording of the interviews. Audit trails entailed the use of a log that indicates the corresponding rationale for every decision that was made for every key aspect of the study. I recorded the interviews to ensure a more accurate transcription process.

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the study (Shenton, 2004). The objectivity of the study was established using the process of reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process of being transparent about the researcher's own positions, values, and biases (Walker et al., 2013). I was transparent about these issues in order to situate the findings from a perspective of honesty.

Ethical Procedures

I secured all of the necessary permission and approvals from the institution, research site, and participants. I submitted an institutional review board (IRB) application

in order to commence with the collection of data. In order to start with the recruitment process, I secured permission from the leader of the educational institution where the research took place. Once all participants were identified, I secured their informed consent by explaining the key components of the study. Specific focus was given to written assurance of confidentiality, voluntary participation, process for early withdrawal, and proper elimination of data after the study was completed.

I emphasized voluntary participation during the recruitment procedures. No teacher was coerced to be part of the study. I also emphasized the anticipated educational and societal benefits that could be gained from this research to encourage teachers to join the study as participants.

Because the nature of the study was only confined to face-to-face interviews, I anticipated that no significant risk is involved in this study. I retained the right to refer certain participants to mental health professionals who can help them with the concerns regarding workplace-related stress. I also honored any request for early withdrawal to uphold the right of the participants to determine their own decisions. The participants would not receive any penalty for early withdrawal from the study, regardless of the reason for their exit.

Because I conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants, completed participant anonymity could not be accomplished. I had the ethical responsibility to keep the data confidential and properly handled. In order to keep the data confidential, I used pseudonyms during the transcription process, the analysis of data, and the presentation of findings. The pseudonyms were two-digit numbers that I randomly assigned to the

participants. All data were stored in a password protected folder, which limited the access of the files to only myself. No other individuals had access to these documents. Seven years after the dissertation has been officially accepted by the university, I will permanently destroy all electronic data through deletion.

There were no monetary incentives for participating in the study, however a $20.00 gift card voucher was given to each participant for their inconvenience. In order to attract participants during the recruitment of the study, I emphasized the benefits that could be attained by other teachers and school leaders as a result of the findings of the study. I informed potential participants that the findings would be sent to them after the study is completed so that improved insights about effective coping techniques may be adopted.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on the job performance of DAEP teachers, from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. The transactional theory of stress and coping served as the link between the importance of the psychological health of teachers and the successful administration of public programs. In this chapter, I provided an in-depth discussion of the study's methodology and design.

The selected research method and design for this study was qualitative and phenomenological in nature. Qualitative researchers explore the descriptions and experiences of the participants, which can be acquired by maintaining a positive interactive relationship with the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam &

Tisdell, 2015). Focusing on the consciousness and perceptions of individuals, I applied a phenomenological design to discover the lived experiences of the phenomenon of educators' workplace stress (see Coffey et al., 1996; Creswell, 2003).

The population for this study included 20 DAEP teachers in a single facility in the state of Texas. I accomplished the selection of participants using purposeful sampling, a technique rooted from the deliberate selection of participants who have the necessary qualifications or characteristics to provide information about a phenomenon (Suri, 2011). I collected data using individual semi structured interviews, which I conducted face-to-face. I audio-recorded the interviews to enhance the dependability of transcripts, which I placed and organized using the qualitative software called NVivo. I analyzed data using the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis (Moustakas, 1994). The end result of the analysis was a composite description of the shared lived experience of the sample as single group of individuals.

The next chapter contains a detailed report of the study findings. The results chapter included the main themes extracted from the analysis of the interview transcripts. The central themes of the phenomenological analysis serve as the foundation of the essence of the experience of the participants regarding their work as educators in DAEP.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the study. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. Through the results of this study, the following research question was answered: How does transactional theory of stress and coping describe the impact of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers? The following secondary research questions were also answered:

1. What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?
2. How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?
3. How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

In this chapter, I describe the sample of the study and the data collection and data analysis procedures. I describe the procedures that I took to conduct the semi structured interviews and analyzed the data using the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis (see Moustakas, 1994). I will present the results of the analysis based on the experiences of each participant, and then combine these into a composite textural-structural description. I will also discuss the essence of the participants' experiences to conclude the chapter.

Setting

The setting of this study was a single facility for DAEP located in Texas. The facility offers alternative education for students who have committed delinquent or deviant behaviors are detained for a period of up to 45 days as a result of court order (Herndon et al., 2015). DAEP teachers generally had experiences with students who have emotional or behavioral problems, and may disrupt classes in traditional classrooms. The goal of DAEP is to equip students to be successful in traditional classrooms. At the time of the study, the participants did not report any organizational conditions affecting the facility that may have influenced the participants' experiences of job-related stress and coping on job performance.

Demographics

The sample of this study consisted of 20 DAEP teachers in a single facility in the state of Texas. The samples were selected using purposeful sampling. The inclusion criteria were: (a) full-time DAEP teacher, (b) at least 1 year of work experience in DAEP to have sufficient insight to respond informatively, and (c) willingness to participate in face-to-face interviews. The majority of the participants were of African American ethnicity (n=15). The participants consisted of 12 females and 8 males. The participants' years of teaching experience ranged from 4 to 36, with an average of 15 years. The participants' taught different courses and different levels. The demographic data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Participant	Ethnicity	Gender	Years in Teaching	Certification Area (s)
#1	African American	F	4	Science 8-12
#2	African American	M	4	Life Sciences
#3	African American	F	21	Reading 6-12 & ELAR 8-12
#4	African American	F	13	ELAR 4-8
#5	African American	F	12	Speech 8-12 & Principal 1-12
#6	African American	M	6	Business Education 6-12
#7	African American	M	21	Vocational Trades & Industry Pre-employment 6-12
#8	African American	F	6	ELAR
#9	African American	F	11	Business Education 6-12 & Principal 1-12
#10	African American	F	4	ELAR 4-8
#11	Angelo	M	18	Industrial Technology 6-12
#12	Hispanic	M	18	Industrial Trades & Industrial Technology 6-12
#13	Angelo	F	4	Chemistry
#14	African American	F	23	General Education-PreK-6
#15	African American	F	38	Elementary Self Contained 1-8, Elementary Speech 1-8, Speech & Hearing Therapy, PK-12, & Mentally Retarded PK-12
#16	African American	M	20	Computer Science 6-12
#17	African American	M	10	Composite Science & Computer Science
#18	African American	F	13	Math 4-8 & Principal 1-12
#19	African American	M	36	Vocational Trades & Industry 6-12
#20	African American	F	18	Business Education 6-12

Data Collection

All the data that I collected for this study were from the semi structured interviews of 20 DAEP teachers. Each participant was interviewed individually for a duration of about 60 minutes. The interviews generated a total of 200 pages of transcript. After obtaining permission from the IRB and the facility in Texas, prospective participants were contacted through phone or email. The IRB approval number is 01-16-19-00148858. Participants were introduced to the study, and asked for convenient schedules for the interviews. A private room in the facility was secured to conduct the interviews; however, each participant was provided the choice of a setting more convenient for them. One day prior to the participants' selected interview schedule, the participant was called to confirm the selected date, time, and place. Contacting the participants prior to the interview also allowed me time to build rapport with the participants. Being familiar with me may have increased the participants' comfort level and increased the chances of providing richer data.

Prior to the interview, each participant was provided the informed consent form. Once the participant understood the scope and limitations of their participation, they were asked to sign and return the informed consent forms. The participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any point without consequences on them. The participants also understood that I would uphold the confidentiality of their identities. At that point, the participants were assigned a random two-digit number from 01 to 20 in place of their names. I made sure that the participants were aware and consented to having the interview audio recorded.

The interviews were divided into three sections, with each section focusing on one of the three secondary research question. At the beginning of each section, I introduced the secondary question. Then, the questioning guided by the interview protocol followed. The semi structured nature of the interviews allowed me to be guided by the protocol, while being allowed the flexibility to ask follow-up questions as needed. As such, I was able to collect rich data. At the end of each section, each participant was asked if they wished to have a break or to continue with the interview. At the end of the interviews, I thanked the participants for their time, and reminded them that they would be contacted if further questions surfaced. I reminded the participants that they would receive a copy of the transcript and the interpretation for review as part of the member checking process to increase the trustworthiness of the results.

Data Analysis

Data analysis procedures were guided by the modified van Kaam method of phenomenological analysis (see Moustakas, 1994). The modified van Kaam method included seven cyclical steps. The analysis went back and forth among the steps as needed. The steps were: (a) horizontalization, (b) reduction and elimination of data, (c) clustering of the invariant constituents into themes, (d) finalization of the invariant constituents and themes, (e) individual textural description, (f) individual structural description, and (g) individual textural-structural description (see Moustakas, 1994).

The first step was horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). The transcripts were imported saved as Microsoft Word format to NVivo 12 Pro, a qualitative data analysis

software. This software was used to store, manage, and organize the data. The automatic coding feature was not used, as the transcripts were manually coded using the software.

Once all the transcripts were uploaded, I read and re-read each transcript carefully. In re-reading the transcript, I became more familiar with the data, and was able to list initial ideas and relevant themes. The transcript was re-read, and coding began. Coding entailed assigning labels to chunks of data relevant to the experience and may help answer the research questions. In NVivo, a code is represented through a node. Each node represented a unit of meaning, which in the van Kaam method is referred as invariant constituent (Moustakas, 1994).

After identifying invariant constituents, the second step was to reduce and eliminate data (Moustakas, 1994). Data that appeared irrelevant to the experience of the influence of job-related stress and coping on job performance were eliminated. Invariant constituents that appeared to be duplicates were combined to reduce the data.

The third step was clustering of the invariant constituents into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Invariant constituents with related meaning and content were grouped together. In NVivo, nodes that were related were grouped together in a node hierarchy. To determine whether the nodes were related, the invariant constituents were compared with each other. The node hierarchy was assigned a label through a parent node, while the units of meaning became child nodes. Each node hierarchy represented a thematic category reflecting interrelated invariant constituents.

The fourth step was the finalization of the invariant constituents and themes (Moustakas, 1994). The thematic categories were reviewed through using the raw data to

confirm that the findings emerged from the participants' experiences. In this step, I also finalized the themes through combining similar invariant constituents, rearranging the groupings and clusters, and deleting repetitions.

The fifth step was the creation of the individual textural description. The individual textual description contains what the participants experienced. I extracted quotes from the data to form the individual textural description. The sixth step was individual structural description. The individual structural description described how the participants experienced their experiences. The description involved a narrative that included imaginative variation rooted from the literature and the theoretical framework, which reduced the findings into the essence of the participants' experiences. To capture the essence of the participants' experience as a whole, I generated a composite textural-structural description. I presented this composite textural-structural description in the next section.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I employed several methods to increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of this study. Member checking and peer review were used to increase the credibility of this study. Member checking involved sending the transcripts and the themes to the participants for review and feedback. Peer review was conducted with a mentor, in which the mentor reviewed the quality of the study. Increased transferability was established through thick descriptions. The procedures performed during data collection and data analysis specific to the selected DAEP facility were described in detail so that readers may be able to judge whether the findings may be

applicable to another DAEP facility. Dependability was established through proper documentation and cross checking of references. The documentation process involved the storage and organization of data, as well as recording the rationale for the decisions involved in data collection and data analysis. Cross checking of references involved using the raw audio recordings of the interviews to verify the accuracy of the transcripts. Confirmability was increased through reflexivity. In practicing reflexivity, I self-inquired throughout the processes involved in the study, and was honest about my positions, values, and biases (see Walker et al., 2013).

Results

This section contains the composite textural-structural description derived from the modified van Kaam method. In the subsections below, I present the thematic categories that represent that participants' experience of the impact of stress and coping on job performance as a DAEP teacher. I also describe the discrepant cases. Through the results of this study, the primary research question was answered: How does transactional theory of stress and coping describe the impact of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers? The following secondary research questions were also answered:

1. What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?
2. How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

3. How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

Research Question 1

The first RQ asked: What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers? This section contains the answer for the first secondary research question. The composite textural-structural description answering the first question was derived from three thematic categories. The categories were: (a) emotion-focused coping, (b) problem-focused coping, and (c) stress from administration and policies.

Emotion-focused coping. The first category, emotion-focused coping, supported the job performance of DAEP teachers, as the participants were generally able to apply emotion-focused coping to overcome primary and secondary appraisals. Emotion-focused coping generally involved altering emotional responses to a stressor. The participants generally believed that living a "balance" and "healthy" lifestyle helped balance their emotions when dealing with primary and secondary appraisals. Participant 05 stated, "One of the things that I found was very important for me was to have a balanced life and so, I have really been working out more." Participant 05 further explained:

> Not so much just to lose weight or just for my body, but more so for my mind. The demands on my tasks were so much heavier. At the beginning of the year because it was my first year doing middle school, I was starting off going to work. I would come home. I started off walking off the dog. Eventually that just turned into letting her out. Take a bath and get in the bed. I was so wiped out. So, I had

> to have a routine for myself and so, allowing that time to work out where I was wearing my body and my mind down, allowing me to rest well. It allowed me to have something outside of the classroom instead of just focusing on the role of just being a teacher. So, being able to be balanced was very helpful for me.

Participants 09, 17, and 19 also mentioned exercise helped them cope in the classroom. Participant 09 mentioned that exercise helped her "make sure I'm doing something outside." Participant 17 claimed that physical activities helped relieve stress. Participant 17 stated:

> I try to exercise at least three to four times a week and yes, it does help you to kind of relieve stress and also increase blood flow to the brain so therefore it kind of helps with clarity too.

Participant 19 claimed that exercising helped in staying active to "deal with" students who have high energy. In addition to exercise, the participant mentioned living a healthy lifestyle in general. Participant 19 shared:

> Well, I consider my daily routine at the gym as a part of equipping me to be prepared to deal with younger kids who are more energetic than I might be, and I try to eat right. And then each morning I get to school early, that's one of my, that's one of the ways I deal with stress and emotional issues, is not to walk in with everybody.

Participant 19 also claimed to have a spiritual moment as part of the routine, in reading a Bible verse before classes start. Participant 19 revealed:

> I get there early enough, and then I also read my Bible to get me ready for the day and that's just part of my routine and it's been that way for enough years that the emotional aspect of the job has not overwhelmed me to this point.

Participants 07 and 12 also preferred spiritual reflections before classes started. Participant 12 stated, “I do talk about it and I self-reflect and I talk to myself. I talk to God. And sometimes just doing that I feel better and I get the answers that I want.” Participant 07 shared how praying helped in getting ready for class. Participant 07 expressed:

> Okay. One example, I'm a believer. Before that bell sounds and students come into my classroom I'm praying. Now, that's just me. Okay? That's just straight up. I'm praying for the day. I'm praying for that student, wherever that student is coming from, and that student is coming to the classroom ready and prepared to receive instructions. That is the biggest thing that has been helpful to me. And when I pray that's preparing me also. Getting me ready. There is no need just because a student ran inside the classroom to jump up and down and shout and be very disrespectful in my communication approach toward that student.

Years of teaching experience taught Participant 01 what to expect in class. Participant 01 claimed that stress has been part of the teaching experience, and dealing with disruptive students did not really increase her stress levels. Participant 01 shared:

> I mean, I think my stress level is the same, just because I know what to expect. Like, testing doesn't really increase my stress. I mean like I know that I'm

> accountable for something, and because the date for that is closer, I'm more aware of it. But I don't really think it influences my stress more than any other time.

When dealing with a disruptive student, the majority of the participants employed various methods that alter their emotional response either by removing oneself from the presence of the disruptive student or removing the disruptive student from class. The majority of the participants preferred to remove oneself from the situation. Participant 02 was also experienced in teaching, and also claimed that situations in the classroom tend to be predication. Participant 02 stated, "You know that things are going to happen to you anyway, so head to the ground keep moving." The participant claimed to set her focus on the goal, and "depersonalize" from the situation if a student were disruptive. Participant 02 claimed:

> Kind of like one of the things you said earlier, sort of depersonalize whatever is going on in the situation. Everybody is there to do their job, and I think that everybody for the most part wants to do their job and wants to be good at their job.

Participants 06 and 08 both claimed that disruptive students were a part of their jobs, nothing more. Both participants also did not want to jeopardize their jobs when chastising disruptive students, which was how they remained calm. Participant 06 noted:

> I mean you have to understand from when you enter the building, it is your career and you're here for the students. You can't ... everything else is going out the window, so you're here for the students so therefore you remain calm. They are students, they are kids for the most part, so therefore you remain calm. You want

> your job, you want to keep your job, so therefore just remain calm in that situation, do what you supposed to do, follow the rules. Follow the rules, it shouldn't be an issue.

Participant 20 also mentioned refocusing her sights when dealing with disruptive students. Participant 20 shared, "I refocus. I try to take myself out of the situation, if I was to need to call an administrator, [and ask] 'Hey, can you just stand here for a second? I need to refocus.'" Participant 12 mentioned that the students were aware when she needed time to calm down. Participant 12 shared:

> When I get to that stage, and it's not always that I do but there's times that I do, I kind of walk away from the situation. And the kids know that I'll go into my office and sit down for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, just relax a little bit, process everything that just happened in my classroom, and then I'm fine.

Participants 07, 11, and 15 claimed that they needed to be calm to show that they were in control of the situation. Participant 11 explained, "You don't have a choice as an educator because once you've gotten crazy and noisy back at a child you've lost it, you might as well go home." Participant 07 claimed that she set the example for her students, and if she started yelling and "act[ing] stupid," then her students may get the impression that they were allowed to do the same. Participant 15 shared:

> Quite frequently sometimes after weekend, if something has happened on the weekend, the kids come in and bring it in to the classroom setting, it takes more energy to bring them back into their classroom setting, that has happened quite frequently and it's frustrating because they know what your expectations are and you have to try to remain calm, try to keep the voice level at a moderate level

> without escalating so that they know that they're not in control of you, but you are still in control of yourself.

Some participants shared that taking a moment and practice breathing exercises usually calmed them down. Participants 10, 12, and 15 practiced breathing exercises by themselves. Participant 18 used an “Apple watch” to remind her to practice breathing exercises. Participant 15 further added that she taught similar breathing exercises to her students to help them calm down. Participant 15 shared:

> The deep breathing techniques, for as far as helping them to be able to come de-escalate, to be able to get to a point where they can use their words to communicate what exactly it is they're feeling, if they can.

Participant 02 perceived that breathing exercises helped in relaxing. Participant 02 reasoned, “I think taking the time to sit, breathe, relax, take a deep breath, ground yourself, figure out where you are in your surroundings.” Participant 04 similarly shared, “Oh, that's easy. I take a deep breath. I count to 10. I think about my house note, my car notes, my light bill. I do my 1-minute breathing exercises again. And I'm ready to face the world.”

Participants 08 and 17 put on music in class to help calm themselves, as well as their students. Participant 08 also mentioned that music did not only relax her students, but also promote productivity. Participant 08 stated:

> Absolutely. Kids love music and sometimes it's hard for them to work in silence. They like that, sometimes they catch a rhythm or something that makes that light bulb go off, to make them work, or they find a beat it's something that they really

> like, you know as a kid I loved doing my home-work with music, it made me focus better. So, I see that in a lot of youth also.

Some participants practiced removing disruptive students from class to calm down. If the student were disruptive to a seatmate, Participant 06 shared that she would resort to changing the seating arrangement. If the student were being disruptive to the class, and the teacher was stressed, some participants generally asked the disruptive student to step out of the class. Generally, the teachers took some time to compose themselves, then approach the student one-on-one outside the classroom. Participant 03 narrated:

> And in that moment, once they out of my classroom and waiting for me to come speak with them, I just gather my thoughts and take deep breaths and tell myself to be patient, be calm, it's not ... I don't need to get so worked up, because I need to calm myself and I need to talk to the student. And if I'm worked up, then the student's going to get worked up, so if I can remove them out of my vicinity for a little bit, then that usually helps me.

Outside the classroom, the majority of the participants “vent” out about their stress in class to a co-worker, to a significant other, or to a family member who was also a teacher. Participant 04 shared:

> My strategy, humor. There's a network of teachers, and we text each other each morning to motivate us to go on, to strive. I'm also a member of a chat group, and we get together. We vent on the chat group and ask for suggestions and reach out to each other. I also read in order to reduce my stress, and I find that if I'm reading, it helps me cope a lot better.

Some participants talked to co-workers to "process" the situation. Participant 15 stated, "Sometimes we can bounce strategies off of one another, so we're kind of debriefing about our day, every day." Participant 20 also mentioned "collaborating" with a co-worker to gain a new perspective. Participant 20 shared:

> Yeah, by talking about it, it allows you to process the situation, process what's going on. And allow you to see, someone else's perspective of what's going on. And maybe the two of you collaborating can help or provide that support you need, and that situation may not happen again.

Participant 08 claimed that she talked to other teachers about disruptive students, and actively sought tips from other teachers. Participant 08 claimed:

> Yes, because there are sometimes where a kid, they might react to the other teacher better than they react to me, if I had this communication with the teacher, or I ask teacher he can let [student] come in for 5 or 10 minutes and work on this assignment in your classroom, cause he relates to better than he relates to me right now, and if we had that agreement then yeah, and it helps, it really helps.

Some participants revealed that they "talked" to God about helping them be better teachers for disruptive students. Participant 11 shared, "I have a relationship with God." Participant 12 claimed, "I do talk about it and I self-reflect and I talk to myself. I talk to God. And sometimes just doing that I feel better and I get the answers that I want." Participant 12 added:

> Coping with classroom demands. I don't really stress out a lot. I kind of leave a lot of things—and I know this sounds cliché—I leave a lot of things in God's hands. I

> self-meditate by talking to Him, how weird that may sound, but that's what I do. And before I get out of my truck every day, I say a little prayer, "Get me through the day. Let me do the best job I can and get me home safely."

Overall, emotion-focus coping involved changing the stressful situation to be calm, and perform well as a DAEP teacher. Outside the classroom, the participants practiced living a balanced, healthy lifestyle to be ready to face disruptive students. When students became disruptive in class, the participants generally practiced removing themselves from the situation through depersonalizing, letting students know the teacher was in control, and practicing breathing exercises. The participants also reported removing the disruptive students from the situation to allow both teachers and students to calm down before talking to each other. Teachers usually approached the students one-on-one. The participants generally talked to co-workers, spouses, or family members about disruptive students to process what they experienced, and to gain ideas and perspectives on how to deal with disruptive students. Some participants prayed to God to help them be a better teacher.

Problem-focused coping. The second thematic category supported the job performance of DAEP teachers through applying problem-focused coping to overcome primary and secondary appraisals. Problem-focused coping involved altering actions to deal with disruptive students and be a better teacher. The majority of the participants experienced that learning the skill to talk to their students was an effective problem-focused coping strategy. Some participants believed in building a relationship with

students to establish their role as the teacher and the figure of authority in the classroom. Participant 11 shared:

> I told the students, “Please don't do that again, should you do that again, and just let me finish this out, hear me out please, I love you and I think the world of you but I'm about to give you an all-expense paid trip to 102, now that's going to handle you for today but here's the other side of that coin, not only am I going to handle it for today I don't want you coming back in here and acting a fool like this anymore because this actually hurts me, this is deep, you're being unbelievably disrespectful, you don't need to be disrespectful to me, I'm your biggest advocate on this campus, if you can't make it in this class, dude, you're not going to make it anywhere.” And if I need to I'm going to have mom come in and she's going to come in and we're going to have a discussion about it as well because I am not going to tolerate it anymore.

Participant 19 claimed they discussed life lessons in class not to “take up time,” but to get to know the students more. Participant 12 claimed that to be respected by the student, she needed to respect the student as well. Participant 12 mentioned:

> The actions that I took well I addressed the issue number one, I talk to the student, find out what's going on, have a conference with them. I don't call home right away; I don't think that's the solution. I try to allow the student to express themselves, let me know what's wrong and we address it from there.

Participant 20 shared an instance in which talking with the students helped her learn how to become a better teacher. Participant 20 narrated:

> Then once it was brought to my knowledge that the lesson made them feel uncomfortable. I talked with the administrator about it and then, I went back to the class and I was like, “I prefer ... I had that conversation with them. Instead of getting upset and being irrational, going off at the students, I came back in, and was like, “Okay, this is my intent, and if anyone has any questions, please feel free to ask. Because I don't want anybody to feel uncomfortable.” Instead of just blowing up and going off on the students, I took a timeout and said, “Hey, maybe they did misunderstand it. Maybe they did have a problem with it.” I'd come back and reevaluate it, and retaught it in a way that they would understand it [inaudible 00:19:52]

Participants 11 and 12 reiterated that teachers needed to remain professional while show care and concern when talking to students. Participant 11 emphasized:

> Me, personally? I conduct myself as a gentleman, that simply means I don't get loud and noisy and start, do that again and you're out. We don't go there. I have and I can but I don't. Maintain, be professional, and whatever, professional or nonprofessional show the kid you love them. If you love them, show them. If you don't then shut the hell up, don't tell them that.

Generally, the participants also developed behaviors and pedagogies to cope with disruptive students. Some participants believed that it was helpful to adjust their behavior and instruction based on the needs of the students. Participant 11 shared:

> So you've got a different group of kids this year. Well so? You expected that much. So you're going to tweak your system and you're going to change what

> you're doing and how you're doing it but it's still going to remain the same. You're still the teacher, you're still in control, and never forget that. If you ever forget that you might as well go home.

Participants 08 and 09 shared that introducing new material helped in capturing the students' attention and dealing with disruptive students. Participant 08 stated:

> Absolutely, I tried to reverse my habits. So a lot of times professionals get in the box of habits that we do every day and we feel like it's working, and sometimes it doesn't, so just using things that I would normally do just kind of like, switching it up, moving furniture, things like that, kind of helps be because kids, I feel like they react better to change a lot, if you could do the same thing consistently you kind of get the same consistent results. Switching it up has kind of helped so you have my strategies of switching up my habits basically.

The majority of responses revealed that teachers generally used student-centered approaches to deal with students. Student-centered solutions were believed to provide students an opportunity to speak and be heard. Some teachers believed that some students act out because they lacked attention. Participant 04 reiterated, "It's successful to let that student or students vent and let them know that somebody's listening to them and that they are being heard." Participant 04 shared that the "circle" technique helped in providing the student a platform to be heard. Participant 04 expressed:

> One of the most ... Well, one of the effective strategies that I've been using for the last couple years is a circle. We do a circle, and we talk about the problems. Everybody gets to talk about how did they feel when little [student] acted out.

> What did it make you feel? How do you feel when certain things happen to you? And everybody has a chance to voice their opinion. They can come out and tell you what's happened, why they feel that way, why they feel that they needed to do that. And the other students can let them know how they felt about their reaction to where they reacted to a problem.

Participant 05 and 08 claimed that getting to know their students at the beginning of the schoolyear helped build the rapport which made students more comfortable to share. Participant 08 reported:

> Well I think that the strategy that works best is when the first day of school you start to get to know your kids, and so when you have a problem with the kids, you would have some idea how the best approach that kid individually. And some kids you can talk to, some kids you have to have a stern tone with, but I want to be the one to take the initial action, I don't want it to be a parent, I don't want it to be an administrator, so it's to my benefit to get to know my kids so I know how to deal with them.

Participant 03 believed that student-centered strategies involved the participation of parents. The participant believed that some students were disruptive and uncooperative in class because the parents were uncooperative. Participant 03 claimed, “Some of the 15% [uncooperative students] do have a lack of structure in environment at home.”

Some participants believed that the problem in class may be addressed by quick fixes. Participant 04 believed that since the duration of classes were only 45 minutes, fixing problems should not take more than a few minutes. Participant 04 shared, “So if I

am presenting something or something going wrong, I have to immediately stop, regroup, reassess the problem, and start on it a different way, find a different way to do it." Participant 10 usually put on calming music to refocus the students. Participant 10 mentioned, "And usually that music is something that the kids also like to listen to, so that takes their focus off of me, and onto their work." Participant 15 sought help from teachers in the neighboring classroom when time-out was needed. Participant 15 shared:

> Quite frequently I have to call in my neighbor to either let me have a time-out, or the student have a time-out. In some instances, at that particular point in time, I may have to ask someone to come and help my class, while I have a one on one time with the student, I may be incorporating the time-out and walking and deep breathing for myself, or I may be walking and talking with the student and engaging in the mindful breathing, so that we can bring the situation down and discuss it and find out what the root is or, if it's gotten too escalated, then that means to just have the time out, the cool off period and then come back.

Some participants mentioned the Teach like a Champion book which contains strategies to deal with students. Participants 01 and 15 claimed that being prepared was the top strategy they gained from the book. Participants 02, 04, and 08 claimed that goal-setting and being goal-oriented was a strategy they often employed in class. Participant 08 reported:

> Yes, it has been successful. You find youth that, like having goal tree, having kids write down their goals and you put them on a sticky note and we're creating a tree, they can go back to that goal tree, you know, when they feel like they're slipping,

> they forget what goals they're trying to accomplish, you know, they can go back to things like that.

Generally, the participants were able to perform their jobs as DAEP teachers well, despite the primary and secondary appraisals through problem-focused coping. The participants generally developed new behaviors and techniques, found new approaches, and learned new skills to cope with disruptive students. The majority of the participants' experiences focused on having a student-centered approach, in which teachers built a relationship with mutual respect with the students.

Stress from administration and policies. The third theme category, stress from administration and policies, played a role as primary and secondary appraisals impacting the job performance for DAEP teachers. Some participants believed that the policies surrounding DAEP were not fixing the root of the problem. Participant 02 mentioned:

> I don't know. I think a lot of the things that the schools use to address behavior are sometimes short fixes. Short fixes, that's what they are, they work in the moment, but eventually they will fail you. Eventually you're going to end up back in the same place that you have. I think that the people, for the most part, are there. I think training could be better at all the different levels, especially there's a continuity of it.

Participant 01 revealed that students had many teachers, and teachers were mostly inconsistent in the way they discipline students. Disruptive students, therefore, generally lacked reinforcement. In addition, Participant 01 believed that the facility need to train teachers. Participant 01 articulated:

> Because I think a lot of the times, teachers sit in on training sessions for whatever it is that the campus wants to do, but I think it was either a poorly developed plan to begin with, or there wasn't buy in for what teachers felt that what was being said was important. Because I think, if you want change to happen, you have to get buy in, like, just like teachers want buy in from their students, you need to create buy in for teachers so that they'll actually care about what it is that you're saying so that they'll think like, oh, I can incorporate that or incorporate some variation of that.

Participant 01 added that administration in the facility recently experienced transition of leaders, and the new administration "resisted to feedback." Participant 01 believed, "And if you speak up, then you tend to develop problems, whereas I feel like leadership should seek feedback to see what people think, versus getting upset." Participant 10 believed that the administration "did not want" to deal with bad behavior. Participant 10 shared, "If that student has a reputation, and they've done something, and the behavior continues, sometimes they just let it slide because they don't want to deal with it." Participant 03 reiterated that the administration "may not know" how to deal with disruptive students. This participant mentioned:

> I do think kids that are unruly and that are disruptive, I think it does do something to the learning environment, I think it does something to the school itself. Especially when you have administration that may not know how to handle those kids in the best way for those students to be productive.

Participant 11 believed that the teachers knew the students better than the administrators did; therefore, the teachers should make the decisions in handling disruptive students. Participant 11 expressed:

> And the administration needs to understand that they need to follow up with where the teacher's at and help the teacher. Don't question the teacher, they're not stupid, they're very educated for the most part. And you know what? The teachers love the kids probably more than some of the administrators do. They know the kids better than some of the administrators do, so follow up with that teacher, help that teacher, stroke that teacher, ask that teacher what I can do to help you. That's what I want from you as an administrator. I don't need any of these 95 questions why I did this to that kid when he's got a broken home and a stressful situation and a poor morning. I understand all that. I read my kids. I know my kids. But the administrators need to understand that most of the teachers, if I don't, I shouldn't be here, right.

Overall, the participants believed that the administration needed to provide better training for the teachers to be able to perform better as DAEP teachers. Training may equip teachers with consistent methods to deal with disruptive students. Some participants believed that the policies upheld by the administration was causing stress, as the solutions did not fix the root of the problem. Some participants believed that the administration may be too lenient or did not care as much about disruptive students as teachers did. One participant reiterated that teachers should have the autonomy to handle their own students instead of following the recommendations of the administrators.

Research Question 2

The second RQ asked: How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers? In this section, I reviewed the participants' experiences that were related to the second secondary research question. The composite textural-structural description answering the second question was derived from two thematic categories. The categories were: (a) drive to work harder to help students, and (b) left lasting change of behavior.

Drive to work harder to help students. Emotion-focused coping strategies generally supported the job performance of DAEP teachers through driving teachers to work harder to help the students. The majority of the responses emphasized the drive to remain a professional despite emotional situations. Participant 08 claimed that when the students were not in the classroom, "pouring out" feelings and emotions—especially feelings of aggression or through crying—was acceptable. Participant 02 claimed that being "emotionally stable" was part of classroom management and job performance. Participant 02 shared:

> Classroom management and your performance, they go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. If I can keep myself emotionally stable, emotionally calm, to where I'm in a better head space to deal with students who are being disruptive, most of the time I'm going to get better outcomes out of handling the actual disruptive behavior. For students that are being disruptive again, if I could just disconnect and make sure that I'm not perceiving their behavior as personal even if they call me every name in the book, I'm not going to take that personally.

> That helps me reset relationships. I think a lot of times students will follow the teacher's lead in terms of how that relationship is going to be managed.

Participants 04, 07, and 17 were motivated to learn new ways to manage their emotions. Participant 04 stated, "I'm looking for other ways or other techniques that I need in order to deal with it to see what I can do to improve my scores, to improve the environment in my class." Participant 17 shared, "Yes, they help you teach better. Like I said, I think the music mentally helps you and the exercise physically help you." Participant 07 incorporated military experience into maintaining discipline in the classroom. Participant 07 claimed:

> Well, now when I came into education I came in well prepared. I came in education out of 25 years of military service. I was very disciplined as far as things not being decent and in order. I knew what to do. I came in with learned experience. It didn't just come from the classroom. I brought learned experience of situations into the classroom.

Some participants attempted to make a positive, fun, and calm learning environment for the students. Participant 18 shared:

> Yes. I think it does. What I try to do is enjoy my students and my classroom every day and so I tell the students if I'm not having fun, I know they are not having fun. I try to create an environment that is fun engaging and also conducive for teaching and learning and that helps with my emotional ... the emotional stress.

Two participants shared that when their emotions slipped, they sometimes felt that they did not cope well, and they created negative learning environments. Participant 13

shared, “I feel like if I'm doing a good job at coping with my stress and I've been taking care of myself to where I don't get too stressed out then I am a more effective teacher.” Participant 09 stated:

> I guess I have to admit sometimes I feel like I don't cope appropriately because sometimes the stress is so high, or you're having so many difficulties, maybe in that one particular class. I had one class last year. It's a hard class so I had to really prepare my mind to deal with those particular students.

Generally, the participants used emotion-focused coping as motivation to work harder to help the students, and coping support their job performance as DAEP teachers. The majority of the participants aimed to remain professionals despite emotional situations. Remaining professional helped the participants to improve their job performance. In addition, the participants generally learned new techniques to manage their emotions, which also helped improve job performance. Some participants worked to create a positive, fun, and calm learning environment to be able to deal with disruptive students better. Some participants believed that when they let emotions take over, their performance became affected, and were not able to perform their jobs as well.

Left lasting change of behavior. The theme category of leaving a lasting change of behavior was a result of emotion-focused coping that supported the job performance of DAEP teachers. Some teachers emphasized that disruptive students were still “kids.” Participant 11 reiterated:

> I like to step back, I like to ponder the situation. You got to be here for that reason and the reality is you've got to remind yourself you just sometimes have got to

> shut up and realize, hello, you're dealing with kids and you chose to be here. You don't have to be here. Well maybe some people do. I don't have to be here. I choose to be here. And I make a difference.

Participant 12 similarly believed that "seeing the goodness" in disruptive students helped improve job performance of DAEP teachers. The participant reiterated that disruptive students made "bad choices" but were not "bad kids," and that kids were allowed to make mistakes. Participant 12 shared:

> It helps me to get me through the day. It helps me to see the goodness in these kids whether they're bad, good, or indifferent. Every kid is a good kid. Now do they make bad choices? Yes. Are they bad kids? No. It allows me to see them in that light. It allows me to look at them that way. They're kids they're not adults, they're kids. And they're going to make kid mistakes.

Participant 05 likewise argued that students made "mistakes," and they were allowed to redeem themselves. Participant 05 learned to not take the students' behavior in class personally. Participant 05 explained:

> On my performance, the ability to cope is my ability to see the bigger picture. A student that happens to misbehave in class. That's not something you take personal. It's something you have to look at holistically and the power of building a relationship is that you allow that student an opportunity to start anew. That just because they made a mistake, they don't have a scarlet letter. They're not forever hated and so to cope is just to simply see the bigger picture so that when those

> challenges come, you're able to grow through those challenges instead of break down in the middle of those challenges.

Participants 06 and 09 stated that letting the students know and understand the consequences of their behavior helped in reinforcing good behavior—which, in turn, helped the teachers perform their jobs. Participant 06 stated:

> I think I have the ability to bring about lasting change because you let them know that you know, there's a future outside of today, you know, there's a future outside of today so whether you want a great career or you want to go to college, things of that nature. You let them know what's in store for them, you know, you give them some type of hope, some type of encouragement to graduate, that's first and foremost. Then we're going to go from there, what you want is the ability and you want success and you want ... you want to ... the people that you stated to be proud of you to be proud of you.

Participant 06 also stated, however, that leaving lasting behavioral change depended on the student. Participant 16 claimed that being consistent with how teachers approached disruptive students may left long-term changes in behavior, and make teaching easier. Participant 16 mentioned, “Well, I would think you would just need consistent consequences and be consistent with it.”

Generally, the participants believed that leaving lasting change of behavior was an emotion-focused coping that supported the job performance of DAEP teachers. The participants generally believed that seeing the students as kids who were allowed to make mistakes and learn from them helped in dealing with disruptive students. Some

participants believed that students should be made aware of the consequences of their actions to leave long-term behavioral change. Nonetheless, long-term behavioral change was believed to be dependent on the student. Some participants believed that being consistent in the approach helped reinforce lasting behaviors.

Research Question 3

The third RQ asked: How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers? In this section, I present the data to answer the third secondary research question. The composite textural-structural description answering the third question was derived from three thematic categories. The categories were: (a) not discouraged by stress or burnout and (b) learned to be reasonable yet consistent with disruptive students.

Not discouraged by stress or burnout. The participants generally perceived that staying motivated to teach despite stress or burnout from dealing with disruptive students was a problem-focused coping supporting the job performance of DAEP teachers. The majority of the participants expressed that they have experienced stress and/or burnout in their teaching career; however, they coped with stress and overcame burnout. Participant 17 perceived that most teachers believed similarly, and stated:

> Yeah I think it's really that first semester it makes you be like "Okay I'm not coming back next year." And I hear a lot of other teachers say the same thing, but usually by the spring where they stop trying to put all this extra busy work on you and things are a little bit back to normal and you actually can focus on teaching then it kind of changes your mind. Say "Oh yeah I can do this again."

Participant 05 remained positive about teaching and dealing with disruptive students, and overcame burnout through having a life outside the classroom. Participant 05 shared:

> Burn out is something that you're going to experience, but having that balanced life where you are more than just a teacher going into the classroom, has helped me to still believe that the students can be successful and that why burn out may occur, it's up to me to be able to balance. Change my routine and be able to get my why or refresh myself, but it has not caused me to lose any hope in the educational system itself.

The majority of the participants expressed they were passionate about teaching, and helping students. Participant 12 emphasized, “I would stay in it because I love what I do. I love what I do and I don't think... if I was planning to leave I think I would've left a long time ago.” Participant 19 claimed:

> I still love teaching and I think people become burn out because they don't fight burnout, and they take the term and they focus on it, I tend to focus on achievements around me, goals, activities, things that I want the kids to accomplish, and that counteracts burnout when you getting things achieved. And I still think there's not a day that goes by where I don't think, I don't have anything to offer, or that I'm done, but there's more I want to do and it's like I say, it's about the next big thing.

Participant 18 claimed that she has experienced burnout, but was motivated by her love for what she does. Participant 18 mentioned:

> I always feel tired and burned out but what I try to do is engage in something that I really enjoy and so that way then gives me the fresh start. When I come back, like all my breaks I try to take a loose small trip. Just do something that I really, really enjoy doing. That gives me that ... it rejuvenates me. That way I come back fresh but, yeah, I'm always feeling burn out constantly.

Some participants shared that they enjoyed the challenges associated with teaching. Participant 03 stated, "I don't think I'm at the point where I'm burnt out just yet. I think I am at the point where I would love to be in an environment with less stressors. I do enjoy the challenge." Participant 20 articulated:

> My love for teaching, is my love for teaching. I'm up for the challenges that it brings. Not saying how long I will be able to stay. But as of now, my mindset is that, this is what my profession is, and I have to maintain my professionalism, and stay professional. That should allow me to be a teacher for quite a long time.

In summary, the majority of the participants viewed stress and burnout as part of the job. Coping and overcoming stress and burnout was a problem-focused strategy that improved job performance. The majority of the participants were able to perform well despite stress and burnout because of being passionate about teaching. Some participants claimed to enjoy the challenges associated with teaching.

Learned to be reasonable yet consistent with disruptive students. The participants generally perceived that being reasonable yet consistent with disruptive students was a problem-focused coping supporting the job performance of DAEP teachers. Some participants believed that establishing clear expectations from students

served as a guideline for consistency for disruptive students. The participants cited that the expectations established at the beginning of the school year may also be used as reminders for disruptive students. Participant 06 shared:

> I think the strategy is that letting them know the classroom rules and the vision of the classroom and you know, you say that continually, you know. Say that on a consistent basis so they can understand the importance of you being in this class and receiving credits and doing the work and doing it to the best of your ability and what can be next.

Participant 09 reiterated that having clear rules established consistency in class, and decreased arguments when the teacher reinforced the rules. Participant 09 mentioned:

> Consistent in disciplinary rules, making sure that they know what the rules are so it isn't a big issue when I say "hey, hey. Put your phone up. This is not a phone time." So, they know what the rules are before I even know what the rules are.

Participants 07 and 13 claimed that they did not immediately punish disruptive students. The participants shared that they were reasonable reinforcing punishments. Participant 13 shared:

> I think another thing also has to do with I have a very relaxed atmosphere in my classroom. So, I'm not so strict with my students, you don't have to remain seated the whole time. If you need to stand up because you get bored sitting down or something like that, you need to stretch or something like that, just go ahead and do that. I'm not going to ask you questions about why you're doing that. If you need to talk to your neighbor a little bit, ask them questions, or whatever. Even if it's not exactly about the subject I'll let them do that as long as they're still staying

> focused. And I think because of that some of the more disruptive students tend to do better in my classes than others because I don't put such of a ... they don't feel so constrained, I think.

Overall, the participants believed that reasonable yet consisted with disruptive students was a problem-focused coping strategy that helped improve the performance of DAEP teachers. Some participants believed that teachers needed to have clear expectations and establish rules at the beginning to be able to have a reference that was consistent when reprimanding students. One participant believed that the role of the teachers was to guide and inspire students such that they were motivated to change their behavior.

Summary

The primary research question that I answered in this chapter was: How does transactional theory of stress and coping describe the impact of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers? This theory highlights the interaction between the individual and the environment. Primary and secondary appraisals impact the job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers, as the participants generally experienced stress from the administrators and policies. The essence of the participants' experiences was that teachers knew the students more than the administrators did; however, the administrators were generally involved in dealing with disruptive students. The teachers, therefore, generally experienced stress towards the administration. Policies were believed to be unhelpful towards disruptive students. Emotion-focused coping was another concept of the transactional theory of stress and coping. The participants generally used emotion-focused coping strategies to help support

their job performance. Emotion-focused coping involved altering emotional responses to stressors. The participants generally employed methods such as living balanced and healthy lifestyles, breathing exercises, removing oneself from the presence of the disruptive student, and removing the disruptive student from the classroom to give space to calm down. The participants generally experienced that emotion-focused coping supported their job performance, as they were driven to work harder to help students, and they left lasting behavioral change.

Problem-focused coping involved strategies manifested in actions. The participants generally applied actions such as developing new habits and pedagogy, finding different approaches and channels, and learning new skills to cope with job-relates stress and support job performance. The majority of the participants believed that a student-centered approach permitted the students to speak and be heard, as well as to understand the source of the students' problems. The majority of the teachers learned to talk to the students such that the message was conveyed firmly and professionally, yet in a caring manner. The teachers generally learned to develop and adjust instruction based on the behavior of the students. Problem-focused coping supported job performance, as teachers generally learned to not get discouraged by stress and burnout, and to be reasonable yet consistent with disruptive students. Teachers were generally driven by their passion to teach, and some teachers enjoyed the challenges associated with teaching. The participants generally believed that teachers' roles involved guiding and inspiring the students, allowing them to make mistakes, and learn from those mistakes.

The essence of the participants' lived experiences regarding the role of job-related stress and coping on job performance from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach concludes this chapter. In the following chapter, I presented a discussion of the results, as well as the implications, recommendations, and conclusions of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Teachers experience elevated stress levels due to student disruptive behavior (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). These reported high stress levels can result in increased frequencies of burnout and turnover among teachers (Schonfeld et al., 2017). There was a dearth of research, however, focusing on the experiences of DAEP teachers, the stressors that they encounter, and how they cope with the demands of the job. Thus, I conducted this qualitative phenomenological study to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. The transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) served as the theoretical framework of the study. The study was guided by one central research question: How does transactional theory of stress and coping describe the impact of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers? The following were the secondary research questions:

1. What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?
2. How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?
3. How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

The results of the analysis revealed that administrators and policies have an impact on the teachers' experiences of job-related stress and coping on the job

performance. The participants believe that the policies towards student disruptive behaviors are unhelpful. The policies are unhelpful in that they are tied to administrative functions and actions and fail to adequately address the human side of disruptive behavior. The participants believe a restructure of policies that are more inclusive of teacher's input and concerns would be beneficial. The participants further revealed that administrators can play a better role in assisting with student's disruptive behaviors by listening to their concerns and being more responsive. To cope with job-related stressors, the participants generally reported using emotion-focused coping such as living balanced and healthy lifestyles, breathing exercises, removing oneself from the presence of the disruptive student, and removing the disruptive student from the classroom. These methods help increase teachers' motivation in working hard for their students. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework which emphasizes caring as a positive coping mechanism. Further, it connects the person and environment. Another coping method that the participants reported using is problem-focused coping, which includes developing new habits and pedagogy, finding different approaches and channels, and learning new skills to cope with job-relates stress and support job performance. This is a tenet of the theoretical framework which promotes effectively managing the problem to get a positive outcome. Further, teachers support each other because they are in a similar situation. These practices made teachers realize that it is important to use a student-centered teaching approach that allows students to grow and learn from their mistakes. By employing these coping methods, teachers are able to adapt to the needs of

the situation and of their students, while simultaneously developing their own competencies as educators.

In the first section of this chapter, the results are discussed further in light of the existing literature on teachers' experiences of job-related stress and the coping methods that they employ. In the second section, focus was placed on the limitations that arose throughout the study. In the third section, a discussion was provided on the recommended topics for future research. The fourth section includes my elaboration of the various implications of the present study findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the discussions.

Interpretation of the Results

The research questions that served as guide for the present study were intended to explore the lived experiences of DAEP teachers, their coping strategies for stressful situations, as well as their behaviors and attitudes toward students with disruptive behavior. The primary research question focused on the role of primary and secondary appraisals on the job performance of DAEP teachers. The secondary research questions highlighted the role of emotion-focused and problem focused coping on the teachers' job performance.

Coping Strategies of DAEP Teachers

Drawing from previous literature on the importance of primary and secondary appraisal of stressful situations (Bellou & Chatzinikou, 2015; Li et al, 2014), I concluded that DAEP teachers experience various occupational stressors, and consequently, adopt coping strategies that can help them manage the situations. To address these workplace

stressors, the participants reported using emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies. Interestingly, it is apparent that the outcomes for these coping strategies are different from one another—that is, teachers use specific methods based on the situation at hand. This reflects how stress management is an important aspect of job satisfaction especially among teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Teachers need to continuously learn and adapt to the demands of their job, and this entails looking for ways to respond to student disruptive behavior appropriately.

Emotion-focused coping strategies of DAEP teachers. It is interesting to note the difference between emotion-focused coping strategies and problem-focused coping methods. The findings of the present study revealed that emotion-focused coping emphasizes psychological well-being. The participants expressed desire for a healthy, balanced life while dealing with occupational stressors. This includes positive health behaviors such as exercising, meditation, and staying active. The job satisfaction of DAEP teachers may result from the knowledge that they are able to perform well by adjusting to their students' needs. This result further substantiates the notion that job performance is intimately linked to altruistic behaviors, commitment, emotional stability, empathy, integrity, managing relations, self-awareness, self-development, self-motivation, and value orientation (Akomolafe & Ogunmakin, 2014).

Emotion-focused coping strategies for DAEP teachers means taking care of the self to improve one's performance on the job. This lends support to the importance of mindfulness-based interventions and strategies to help reduce stress among teachers (Beshai et al., 2016; Frank et al., 2015). Teachers develop the need to cultivate

mindfulness because of occupational stress (Beshai et al., 2016). In the case of DAEP teachers, it is important to employ mindfulness methods to appropriately cope with their situation. This can be by removing themselves from the situation or separating the student with disruptive behavior from the class. Emotion-based coping strategies highlight the role of occupational stressors in understanding the experiences of teachers in the classroom (Jennings et al., 2017).

Job performance is not static; rather, it is dynamic, and physical and emotional influences can create fluctuations in teachers' performance, attitudes, and accomplishments (Dalal, Bhave, & Fiset, 2014). Teachers are the supporters that enhance social and emotional learning and practices in schools and classrooms, and their individual social-emotional competence and welfare intensely affect their pupils (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Children's social competence is an essential area of skill development in relation to their school readiness and educational achievement (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Student-teacher interactions significantly shape students' educational outcomes, as well as their knowledge of what behaviors and expressions of emotional are appropriate for the school setting (Myint & Aung, 2016). The need to practice emotion-based coping is critical to prevent burnout and work fatigue among DAEP teachers. Thus, teachers engage in hobbies and lifestyles for a balanced life to be able to manage disruptive students. This shows that teachers have emotional strategies that mediate their job satisfaction and public service motivation.

The emphasis on emotion-focused coping can also involve a teacher's emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has four dimensions: use of emotion, optimism/

mood regulation, expression/ appraisal of emotion, and emotional resilience (Myint & Aung, 2016). The results lend further support to the necessity of teachers' own development, the combination of personal and group processes, flexibility and self-direction, long-term in-school training, and leadership support. In summary, emotion-focused coping strategies are psychological mechanisms and behaviors geared towards a more balanced life for DAEP teachers. This allows teachers to depersonalize from the stressful situation and manage their emotions and stress. Emotion-based coping motivates DAEP teachers to work harder for their students.

Problem-focused coping strategies of DAEP teachers. While emotion-based coping strategies emphasize mindfulness practices and personal well-being of DAEP teachers, problem-focused coping underscores the teachers' ability to analyze the stressful situation and look for ways to address the problem. This involves looking at situations objectively and altering actions to achieve successful learning outcomes for the students. For DAEP teachers, problem-focused coping strategies highlight the importance of establishing oneself as a figure of authority, while still fostering positive relationships with their students. Knowing more about the students would help DAEP teachers identify and use strategies to approach disruptive behavior. Teachers must realize that each student is different, and must be flexible enough to adjust and deal with disruptive student behaviors.

Previous scholars who have focused on teacher-student relationship have reflected that not only can the relationship and interaction of students be a source of stress for teachers (Collins et al., 2016), it can also drive teachers to perform better in their job.

Building rapport with students allows teachers to develop student-centered approaches to provide the children with opportunities to speak and be heard. Teachers play an important role in predicting students' emotional and behavioral difficulties, especially in the case of students who lack social skills (Myint & Aung, 2016). It is important to note, however, that differentiating emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping strategies does not mean that these two methods cannot be combined. The results of this study suggest that teachers who can deal with their emotions better are more likely to be able to perform their job well and foster positive relationships with their students.

Teachers set the emotional attitude for their classrooms and are responsible for the reactions in their classrooms. While emotion-based coping strategies can increase openness to change, enhance self-control, encourage greater mental and physical self-awareness (Sakiz, 2017), increasing sharing between DAEP teachers and their students encourages personal growth and acceptance of personal situations. Thus, it is important for teachers to have high self-efficacy, especially in dealing with disruptive behaviors. A teacher's self-efficacy is determined to be related to perceptions on job demands (Sakiz, 2017). My findings provide further support to the importance of teacher's affective support, mastery of goal orientation, academic emotions, self-efficacy, and behavioral engagement on student's academic achievement. A nuanced understanding of DAEP teachers' experiences would promote further self-reflection on the ways through which teachers can improve their job performance while also development their flexibility and adaptability in responding to stressful situations caused by student disruptive behavior.

To summarize, problem-focused coping strategies are more concentrated on the interactions between students and DAEP teachers. It is imperative for DAEP teachers to understand the nuances of each student's personality so that he or she can respond to their behaviors appropriately. Building rapport is believed to be key to a successful problem-focused strategy. Teachers must be both objective and consistent with how they interact with their students.

Stress from administration experienced by DAEP teachers. Throughout the interviews, the participants expressed concern over the disconnect between the policies and what is happening when it comes to student discipline. They believe that because teachers are the ones who personally deal with students on a daily basis, they should be the ones to handle disciplinary actions involving students with disruptive behaviors. The current system, however, holds administrators accountable for disciplining the students, which creates an inconsistent environment that is counterproductive to the students' learning. The existing solutions are short-term fixes that do not address the root of the problem. More than the stress caused by disruptive behavior, DAEP teachers are concerned with the systemic-level solutions and policies for disciplinary actions with long-term outcomes.

The fact that DAEP teachers experience stress from administration and policies demonstrates that supportive networks are critical to their job performance. Similar with how support can help students, school management also plays a supporting and guiding role for the teachers, and by extension, to the students' social-emotional learning. These participant accounts reflect the instrumental role of organizational support in the

teachers' ability to cope with workplace stressors (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Indeed, perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between occupational stress and the well-being of teachers (Beshai et al., 2016). Stress can lead to various administrative and policy-based issues that leaders need to address such as diminished work performance, ineffective communication, problems with job satisfaction, and teacher retention and turnover (Beshai et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Understanding how support from management can improve teacher job performance can help educational leaders to formulate policies that prioritize the well-being of both the students and the teachers.

Employees sense organizational support when they feel their organization cares about their well-being; and actively supports them (Monteiro, Pereira, Daniel, da Silva, & Matos, 2017). Employees need to perceive that their organizations value their efforts and their existence in the organization. The current results showed that the level of perceived organizational support can produce negative or positive reactions from teachers. The results also illustrate how teachers' perception of a supportive organizational culture can be linked to positive work-life reconciliation among DAEP teachers.

To summarize, DAEP teachers encounter stress towards organizational policies, which are perceived as lacking and inconsistent. Thus, it is important for educational leaders to be aware of the realities of disciplining children to be able to develop policies for positive results. It is also significant for teachers to feel the support from the management. DAEP teachers have feedback and input that could be invaluable for administrators especially for policy making. In the next subsection, I discuss the

emerging themes focused on the influence of emotion-based and problem-based coping strategies.

How Coping Strategies Help DAEP Teachers

A deeper understanding of teachers' psychological functioning at work could provide relevant information on their contextual and basic needs satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, Perry, & Martin, 2016). The second and third research questions of the current study focused on how emotion-based and problem-based coping methods provide support on the job performance of DAEP teachers. It is important to note that in this section, I discuss emerging themes from the analysis by considering how these coping strategies help teachers perform their jobs well. The findings showed that emotion-based coping (a) drives the teachers to work hard to help students and (b) leaves lasting change in their behaviors. On the other hand, problem-focused coping (a) encourages teachers to push through despite being stressed or burnt out and (b) made DAEP teachers to be more reasonable, yet consistent with interacting with disruptive students.

Well-being and motivation are key mediator variables for the relationship between need satisfaction and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2016). The fact that DAEP teachers perceive stress in a positive light by employing emotion-based coping illustrates that the teachers' agency is important in understanding their experiences. Self-efficacy and job satisfaction are so intimately linked that even in the context of DAEP teachers, learning new ways to manage their students' disruptive behavior still serves as a motivation to perform better in their jobs. In fact, there is general agreement in the scholarly literature that self-efficacy is positively associated with job satisfaction; that is,

an individual with a high level of self-efficacy is likely to have a high level of job satisfaction as well (Akomolafe & Ogunmakin, 2014). According to Li, Wang, Gao, and You (2015), the association between proactive personality and teachers' job satisfaction can be partially meditated by self-efficacy. Along with self-efficacy comes the many stressors associated with work burnout as an important marker of employee mental well-being.

Based on interviewees' accounts, emotion-based coping helps them improve their job performance by recognizing that children making bad choices do not make them bad people, and that policies should allow students to learn and grown from the past mistakes. Emotional socialization influences children's everyday interaction with parents, teachers, siblings, caregivers, and peers. Children feed off of the expressions of those in their environment and model the emotions that they have learned (Morris, Denham, Bassett, & Curby, 2013). The development of children's emotional competence is a complex, multifaceted process in which many interaction partners play a role. Scholars have posited that DAEP teachers are emotion socialization agents for children by modeling emotions, and that fostering a positive learning environment allows children to be more susceptive to positive psychosocial development. This is extremely important because teachers are also influential on how children process their emotions and express their thoughts (Morris et al., 2013).

The findings also revealed basic psychological needs to play different roles in predicting each of the work-related perceptions (Collie et al., 2016). Emotional intelligence abilities have a role to play in burnout, often with effects that are incremental

over the basic dimensions of generalized self-efficacy and personality traits. The present study findings revealed nuanced understanding of teacher perceptions, psychological well-being, and need satisfaction in the context of work demands. This can help in contributing more knowledge on promoting healthy and effective teaching practices and standards. For instance, the current findings revealed that problem-focused coping strategies make teachers realize their passion and love for what they do, and thus they are not discouraged by stress or burn out. In this theme, it always goes back to the teacher's motivation in helping students. This theme is incongruent to the findings from the study by Pourtoussi, Ghanizadeh, and Mousavi (2018), in which the researchers posited that (a) job-related factors and (b) immediate environment are antecedents to teachers' demotivation. By adopting problem-focused strategies, DAEP teachers are able to enhance both physical and professional aspects of sustaining teacher motivation. This can essentially contribute in sustaining and increasing student motivation in learning.

The participants emphasized consistency in guidelines and expectations when dealing with student disruptive behaviors. It is critical to establish and enforce rules in order to ensure that the students' disruptive behavior is appropriately addressed. A bigger issue, however, is that there is a disconnect between the policies and the actual experiences of DAEP teachers. More than having positive perception on organizational support, it is important for policy makers to include DAEP teachers in formulating guidelines for a positive social and systemic change. The present findings indicate that the teachers are aware of these discrepancies, and that they could be active agents for better policies for student disruptive behaviors. The participants understand the

administrative role of policies however believe a more holistic approach would bridge the disconnect gap. This disconnect can be conduit by allowing the participants to have a voice in the development of future policies. In this way, the discipline side of student's disruptive behavior as well as the emotional side of student's disruptive behavior can be more sufficiently addressed.

To summarize, the findings demonstrated how the transactional theory of coping and stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987) can be used to understand the experiences of DAEP teachers with regards to stress, coping, and job performance. It is important to note that teachers build their meaning-making on the interactions with their students, as well as shaping meanings through their perceptions of the system. What is most apparent is the DAEP teachers' emphasis on student-centered approaches while also being aware of their own skills and development. DAEP teachers focus on their psychological well-being to navigate the stress due to student disruptive behavior and policy discrepancies. In the next section, the limitations of the study are discussed in light of the results.

Limitations of the Study

The present findings must still be interpreted based on the limitations of the study. Throughout the course of the study, I encountered several limitations that could have influenced how the results are contextualized within the literature. First, it was difficult to delve further into the relationships of each emerging theme due to the nature of the study. Using a phenomenological research design provides in-depth knowledge into the experiences of DAEP teachers, how they perceive their environment, and how they create meanings through their interactions with students. It is futile, however, to look into

explicit relationships based on the current findings. It is important to understand how each variable or theme relates to one another if the goal is to create a model of coping mechanisms for DAEP teachers. As such, future investigators should employ quantitative methods to shed further light into this topic area. Another limitation that I encountered was the dearth of literature focusing on how policies relating to student disruptive behavior are detached from the realities of DAEP teachers. It was challenging to contextualize these accounts due to the lack of research on this area.

Perhaps the key limitation of the study is that phenomenological nature of this study limits its implications, as far as the development of new policy is concerned. Nevertheless, the study does open the door for a more robust and candid conversation around the issue, for public administrators and decision makers in the field of education. In particular, the richness and depth of evidence gained from the lived experiences of the 20 participants in this study, offer sufficient knowledge, to help scholars and practitioners, better understand the variables associated with this problem. In this way, the insight from the present study can be used by future researchers in expanding and broadening the scope of the DAEP educator's experiences dealing with disruptive behavior.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations for future research focusing on teachers' experiences with stress and how they cope with disruptive behaviors, as well as how they navigate organizational limitations due to inconsistent policies. First, further studies must be done to substantiate the influence of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping

strategies on the job performance of teachers. This can be done by applying quantitative research methods to understand the explicit relationships among different variables. In addition, other qualitative studies can also be employed to explore the underlying psychological processes that affect these relationships. In terms of reliability and validity, future studies must be aimed at developing instrumentation tools that can be used to evaluate the success of coping interventions for teachers. This would help in developing a unified and comprehensive instrumentation or model to measure and understand the role of coping strategies on job performance, on students' learning outcomes, and on the institutions overall policies.

Another recommendation is to consider other environmental factors that could possibly impact the disruptive behaviors of students, and how these mediate the levels of stress experienced by DAEP teachers. Doing so would further provide evidence on the role of teachers in the students' psychosocial development. I was not able to conclusively identify these links; therefore, future researchers must seek explanations regarding the lived experiences of the teachers and how environmental factors influence their coping strategies.

The findings revealed that self-efficacy is an important aspect of maintaining teacher job satisfaction. Investigating the facets of teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction would lead to more applicable professional development, higher rates of student achievement, and higher levels of teacher satisfaction, thus persistence in the field. It would be interesting to learn more about the personal experiences of teachers and how they process occupational stressors in relation to the current education system of

DAEP. This can help educational leaders identify the weaknesses of the current system, and appropriately adjust to the needs of both the teachers and the students.

For practitioners and public administrators working in the field of public education, the findings and new knowledge gained from this study can be used as preliminary evidence for scholars and public administrators alike, to expand their scope of analysis regarding the role that job-related-stress and coping, play on job performance of DAEP educators. This is an important factor, given the vital role that educators play in the field of public administration. In the next section, the implications of the findings are further discussed.

Implications

The findings of this study offer substantial empirical data on the relationships of primary and secondary appraisals on stress and DAEP teachers' job satisfaction. Stress among teachers is both serious and endemic within the education profession. Thus, teacher education programs should offer the tools necessary for improving the emotional skills of potential teachers. The findings from this study can be used to develop different interventions and treatment programs to minimize or fully prevent adverse effects of occupational stressors towards teachers, as well as its indirect influence on the students' learning.

For researchers and practitioners, these findings may contribute to the development and improvement of programs designed to alleviate the stresses experienced by teachers. In this way, mental health practitioners may gain empirical knowledge on the different factors that could adversely affect the well-being of DAEP teachers. This allows

them to come up with coping strategies and methods to help reduce stress levels among teachers. Social workers and organizations must be able to recognize and consider the increased impact of policies and other environmental factors on the overall well-being of DAEP teachers.

In terms of policy, these results provide an initial point of direction, towards evaluating current policy and government programs that focus on the health and well-being of teachers and their students. Evidence from research showed that inconsistent policies and practices, are themselves, a cause of stress on the teachers. Consequently, it may be fruitful for policymakers to revisit current policy and legislation-particularly that which applies to alternative educational programs, to ensure that it is promoting the appropriate results. In particular, consider the potential impact of stress among DAEP teachers and students.

For individuals, especially teachers in settings similar to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs, these findings may help them understand their own context vis-à-vis the disconnect of policies and practice, as well as navigating these occupational stressors toward positive learning outcomes for the students. Being able to recognize these disparities might help them better navigate the system to seek additional support as needed for the prevention of adverse health effects of stress and, possibly, to mitigate teacher burnout and turnover.

To summarize, these are helpful for organizations and social workers especially in providing comprehensive intervention and treatment programs for teachers experiences severe stress due to student disruptive behaviors. Policymakers may use these insights to

create regulations and change policies to highlight the immediate and long-term needs of DAEP teachers and students alike. These results contribute to the literature on the experiences of teachers with regards to stress, coping, and its overall effect on their job performance and other aspects of the teachers' life. These findings can be used to further the body of theoretical and practical knowledge and to facilitate the development of intervention programs for teachers who experience severe emotional and physical stress because of their occupation.

Conclusion

Understanding the lived experiences of DAEP teachers is critical when exploring how occupational demands can aggravate their stress. Thus, I developed the current study to explore the role of job-related stress and coping on job performance of DAEP teachers from a transactional theory of stress and coping approach. Findings suggest that teachers navigate occupational stresses by adopting emotion-based and problem-based coping strategies. These coping methods allow them to focus on their mental and psychological well-being while being equipped with appropriate skills to address stressful situations. The results provide in-depth knowledge on how DAEP teachers process their relationships with their students, as well as how they perceive the DAEP system and its inconsistencies. Further research is required to gain deeper insights on the explicit relationships of these emerging themes to build a model focused on alleviating teacher stress to minimize burnout and turnover.

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Appendix A: CITI Certificate

CERTIFICATE

OF COMPLETION

PHRP Online Training, LLC certifies that

Anthony Murray

has successfully completed the web-based course
"Protecting Human Research Participants Online Training".

Date Completed: **11/06/2018**
Certification Number: **2794992**

PHRP
Protecting Human
Research Participants
Online Training

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Research participants needed!

For a research study entitled:

Stress on Educators at a Discipline Alternative Education Program: A Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping Approach

The purpose of this study is to understand how DAEP teachers cope with the stress of having disruptive students in their class and the effect on teacher performance.

You may participate if you:

(a) Are a full-time DAEP teacher at Trinity Christian School
(b) Have at least one year of work experience in DAEP
(c) Are willing to participate in face-to-face interviews
(d) Are proficient in English (no translation services available)
(e) Are willing to participate in individual audio taped interviews

Activities include:

Reading and signing the informed consent form (about 20 minutes)
Partake in an audio recorded interview after school hours (about 60-90 minutes) at the DAEP school or a public library near the school
At a later stage check if the researcher captured the information correctly (member checking) lasting about 30 minutes.

Participation is strictly voluntary AND confidential.

Interested? Any Questions?

Please email or phone the researcher at [redacted] or [redacted]
Please use your private email address to protect your privacy.

I am looking forward to hearing from you!
Anthony Murray

Appendix C: Telephone Eligibility Screening Questions

May I ask you some questions to make sure that you fit the criteria to participate in the research?

Before asking the questions, I would like to draw your attention to some information stated in the recruitment flyer (a) your decision to participate is voluntary, you may decide to take part or stop taking part at any time (b) I will under no circumstances make your name known to anybody, a number code will be allocated to participants to protect their confidentiality, and (c) you may stop participation without any jeopardy to any privileges or entitlements you may have.

May I continue asking the questions?

1. Are you appointed as a full time DAEP teacher?
2. How long have you been working at DAEP? Since what date have you been a full-time DAEP teacher?
3. Just for the record, do you speak and understand English with ease?

Appendix D: Interview Questions

RQ 1: What role do the primary and secondary appraisals play in supporting the job performance for DAEP teachers?

1.1 What are your feelings and experiences of the DAEP teaching situation?

- People often talk about workplace stress and burnout—what are your thoughts and experiences about it in the teaching profession?
- Could you talk to me about your workload?

1.2 Please talk about your experiences of student discipline in your classroom

- What are your feelings about disruptive students?
- Please discuss your experiences with your students' behavior

1.3 Did you set goals for yourself this academic year?

- Have you reflected about your goal achievement? Please tell me about it.
- How do you feel about your goal achievement?

1.4 Please talk about your coping with the disruptive students in your class.

- What are your thoughts about your management of the disruptive students?
- In which ways did your thinking and talking about the disruptive students affect your performance as teacher?
- What would or could you do differently to manage the disruptive students more effectively?
- In what ways could the school (or parents) support you in managing disruptive students?

RQ 2: How does emotion-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

2.1 Have you been using any strategies to help you cope emotionally with the classroom demands? Please walk me through your experience and thoughts.

2.2 Thinking about the past two to three months. Please talk about how you maintained a state of emotional calm, across the past two months. If something or someone in your class upset you (e.g. fear, irritated), what did you do to regain a state of emotional calm in a fairly short period of time, say in less than 20 minutes.

2.3 What is your opinion of the DAEP's ability to bring about lasting change in the students' disruptive behavior?

2.4 When feeling upset or distressed in your classroom, do you (sometimes) talk about it? If yes, how often and to whom? How would you say has talking assisted you?

2.5 Please talk about the impact of your coping strategies to manage your emotions and feelings of stress on your performance as teacher.

RQ 3: How does problem-focused coping support the job performance of DAEP teachers?

3.1 Have you been using any strategies to help you cope with the classroom problems you face daily or weekly? Please walk me through your experience and thoughts.

3.2 Thinking about the past two to three months. Please talk about how you managed the problems you faced in your classroom across the past two to three months. If something or someone in your class upset you (e.g. fear, irritated), what actions did you take to manage the situation in a fairly short period of time, say in less than 20 minutes.

3.3 Thinking about the strategies you use to address the problems you face with your student's disruptive behavior—how successful would you say you are and which strategies do you think work best and why?

3.4 In managing the problems faced in your classroom and the ways you use to cope with your own stress and feelings of tiredness or burnout, please talk about your future at DAEP.