

A Qualitative Study on Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Burnout and Job Satisfaction
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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of elementary educators in Schools in Southeastern North Carolina with three or more years of teaching experience during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

This qualitative study described the lived experience of 10 elementary educators who worked in the COVID 19 climate in public school districts. The purpose of this study was to provide advice for policy makers to aspire to improve public education for educators. The literature review outlined the history of educators' burnout and job satisfaction through the process of time. The review also examined how schools are led by a public-school district.

This study was conducted using a Phenomenological Analysis methodology to examine the lived experiences of educators and their job satisfaction as they serve in this position in a public-school district. The sample included a sampling of educators from Africa, Jamaica, and multiple backgrounds who are serving or have served in the education field for at least three years. The participants completed a 45-minute interview that included 10 open-ended questions. NoNotes was used for the data analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

Despite past experiences, circumstances, and adversity, this study explored the lived experiences of educators through the lens of the COVID 19 Pandemic and Job Satisfaction. As a result, it revealed how understanding their stories can help school boards with burn out prevention practices and teacher job satisfaction. Finally, this study informed policy makers on what to expect and how to prepare for the improvement of teachers' job satisfaction.

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I would especially like to thank my mother for never letting me fall through the cracks. She always encouraged me to aim for the stars. I would love to thank my Father for always proofreading my papers and having more red on my paper than black. This guided me to be a great writer. The members of my family have supported me along my journey. The key is to never give up no matter what adversity happens. Out of adversity comes opportunity.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the people I love the most. To my handsome son and beautiful daughter Andrea. These children have been my heart and soul for 18 years. These kids who could not understand why they had to be quiet at times and why their friends could not come over or they could not do anything. I love them with all my heart more than life

This study is also dedicated to all the educators who have been on the list from the administration. This is not a great situation. This situation can affect both mentality and mindfulness. This research is also dedicated to all the students and teachers that have been called “not the sharpest tool in the shed”.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In recent years, teacher burnout has been a concern for many policymakers within the education forum. As the practice of teacher appraisal instruments and teacher support issues have evolved, its weight within the school climate has become more critical. Using teacher working conditions surveys has been a way to ensure the educational system's accountability to the public and society. Additionally, these teacher appraisal instruments often look at curricular facets, not the growth of social-emotional needs within students. Unfortunately, there has been an increase in adverse outcomes due to educators' lack of support mechanisms. As a result, teacher burnout has risen, resulting in a teacher shortage and producing side effects relative to teacher performance. Furthermore, some of the causes around teacher burnout was that job demands are getting more rigorous. There is very little turn around for reports and assessment data to be submitted. Also, data was analyzed for detail. Many educators are not given respect as an important member of society like they once were. Educators are often second guessed by administrators and parents and not seen as professionals (Cawelti, 2014).

Policymakers have found it beneficial to consider other options besides traditional teacher appraisals for educational accountability purposes. The stress associated with teaching causes many exceptional teachers to leave the field. The problem is that a teacher's career is held accountable based upon the results of one day of teaching and other socially centered and environmental aspects that are beyond their control (Leiter, 2019). This career uncertainty makes teaching a very high-stakes position. According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), education focuses on using reading and mathematics scores to determine whether schools and teachers are making adequate yearly progress (Cawelti, 2014). The NCLB act also stated that students perform better with highly qualified teachers (Herman, 2016). To be considered a highly qualified teacher, the educator must appropriately meet the teacher appraisals' goals, which can be challenging with little support to meet these goals. According to the educator's appraisal system an educator must have their EVAAS appraisal in the green or blue levels according to the Bell Curve Statistical Score to be proficient on their Summative Assessment at the end of the Contract Year (EVAAS, www.sas.com)

Teachers feel the weight and pressure from the constant push of summative appraisals that they are forced to focus on administrative support shortfalls. These shortfalls include giving feedback and direct examples of teachers' improvement goals. These feedback efforts would make educators accountability more direct, and educators would see what was expected of them. These support shortfalls contribute to the students because of the continuous push of focusing on the curricular needs instead of emotional development without offering the material needed for support. These negative impacts in focusing upon the curricular needs instead of feeding emotional well-being can manifest themselves in exhaustion, depersonalization, and depression in both teachers and students (Dworkin, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were already reporting dissatisfaction with all the duties and responsibilities of teaching. Many teachers reported that job dissatisfaction impacted their mental and physical health impacting their self-efficacy and performance in the classroom. During the COVID-19 Pandemic veteran teachers who were knowledgeable about instructional delivery and learning styles found themselves questioning their role in the classroom. Almost immediately, teachers were required to change their lesson plans and teaching strategies to virtual delivery. This caused stress and added to their dissatisfaction, as they were left to develop lessons to accommodate virtual learning, and many were not technologically literate and felt unvalued. Teachers were forced to learn WebEx and Zoom platforms without

adequate professional training. School and district leaders are challenged to develop policies and strategies to ensure that if the teaching environment experiences another pandemic, it will not impact or add to the teacher shortage and job dissatisfaction (Plenum, 2020).

Timeline of the Pandemic

The pandemic was a very challenging experience for all people. Many people were out of employment, and this was a real concern for many people in the workforce. Many professionals were deemed as nonessential employees. In education teachers were deemed very essential to the wellbeing of the society needs during the COVID 19 Pandemic. Educators played a vital role in the assessment of students' needs and the support of social growth of the society. The timeline for the Pandemic ranged from March 2020 to just recently March 2022. This timeline stretched for over two years, and it took support from all of society to open the social normality just a little.

Even with the lifting of a lot of the COVID 19 restrictions there is a "new normal" that has not changed due to this Pandemic. The social interaction and the social norms of society have forever been changed. There is a shift for the use of more technological devices and social media forums (Kennedy, 2021).

The problem is that teacher support is an issue that is not emphasized in the educational forum. Teachers need support is the supply of resources and training to be successful. It is a component that hinders the advancement of students and the advancement of educators. Facilitating the administrative use of teacher appraisal instruments for evaluating teacher performance has many adverse outcomes on teachers. These adverse outcomes include focusing on a curriculum more than the student's emotional needs. Many educators are limited on the administrative support to reach some of the goals on the instruments used for job performance judgments (Mills & Gay, 2016).

The teacher shortage is a topic of concern for many educational officials, and this shortage will align with social Contagion Theory. This suggests that when the administration and the community do not support teachers, these factors contribute to one teacher's burnout. Furthermore, it can also spill into the workplace, fostering teachers to suffer from burnout. This study examined teacher support and appraisal evaluation systems of educators as a crucial key in combating teacher burnout and assisting school districts in identifying strategies to cope with this growing problem in the southeastern region of North Carolina (Delamater, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' experiences of stress and burnout during COVID-19 and the impact on their job satisfaction.

Importance and Significance of the Study

More teachers and educational staff come to school with emotional distress and other adverse burnout symptoms because of the pressures placed on them due to the lack of an administrative support system that fosters emotional balance. These emotional support issues have been more prevalent since the COVID 19 Pandemic timeline has emerged. Teachers' emotional exhaustion and feelings of depersonalization are plausible in the context of stress Contagion Theory (Wethington, 2016). This theory discusses how stressful experiences can spill over from one stressed individual to another within a shared social setting (McLeod, 2011). When

educators are experiencing stress due to COVID 19 it is very possible for their feelings and communication about their job dissatisfaction to be passed on to other educators within the school or institution.

This study benefits administrative consultants and educational institution policymakers to develop professional development strategies to help alleviate stress and increase job satisfaction among veteran teachers. This study helps teachers because they achieve better self-efficacy and enjoy their job, leading to higher result levels within schools. District and school leaders could benefit from this study's results since improving teachers' working conditions addresses the teacher shortage.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to elementary teachers from the Southeastern region of North Carolina. This study was also limited to veteran teachers with 3 years or more of teaching experience in public schools in the Southeastern region of North Carolina.

This study also had a limitation that teachers may have not been satisfied with their position before the COVID 19 Pandemic. This would be that educators from this study experienced burnout symptoms before the Pandemic such as depersonalization and fatigue before this study was administered.

Theoretical Lens and Framework

The Theoretical Lens and Framework of this study is a very notable research that was developed within a workplace setting. This lens is one that researchers have studied in multiple locations. This phenomenon is referred to as the Contagion Theory. The Contagion Theory suggests that if the administration and community do not support teachers, these factors contribute to teacher burnout. This burnout can be passed on to other educators and contribute to the burnout of other staff members. These factors can foster other teachers also to suffer from burnout (Blumer, 1985). The Contagion Theory is a theory of collective behavior that explains that the crowd can cause a hypnotic impact on individuals. Gustave Le Bon first developed the theory in his book titled *The Crowd: A Study of Popular Mind in France* in 1885. His works reflected more political and social opinions as a historian and philosopher. His theory was further expounded upon by sociologist Robert Park and later by Herbert Blumer. He explained how the crowd influenced the individuals dynamically within a group in a socio-psychological aspect. These entire theories share a basic idea of how an individual can act briefly unreasonable or inconsistent within a group and become normal when they are not in it. In short, Contagion Theory argues that collective behavior is irrational and results from the contagious influence of the crowds in which individuals find themselves (Blumert, 2016).

Contagion Theory assumes that people in a crowd act emotionally and irrationally because the crowd's impulses influence them. In contagion literature, the focus lies on one person's influence over another and how this influence spreads in their friendship and social networks. A social network is often described as individuals connected to another as a friend. Specifically, a contagion effect is observed over time and is characterized by a similarity driven by influence and transmitted through a friendship (Rankin, 2016). Notably, a mere similarity between connected individuals does not always mean that contagion has occurred. Instead, two explanations could be similarity due to contagion or similarity due to social distribution. Social contagion suggests that the tie between individuals is the driving force for any convergence in behavior, attitudes, or personality dissimilar interests (Makikangus, 2017).

Contagion Theory states that teacher retention and mental well-being is a goal that needs to be addressed. Wethington further researched Contagion Theory in 2016 to include the educational system and teacher burnout. According to the findings, an administrative support system that is not in place impacts teachers' overall classroom experience, such as stress and burnout, which causes unfavorable standardized test results due to situational and environmental factors. The findings also noted that job satisfaction and job performance are affected when teachers work in these environments. Burnout causes numerous teachers to leave the teaching profession. Teacher burnout has been referred to as a syndrome. According to Makikangus (2017), burnout syndrome has two distinct but loosely coupled dimensions. These dimensions are emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of teaching style (Leither, 2019). This contributes to teachers leaving the profession as they feel powerless over some of their scenarios (Costa, 2019). Wethington (2016) described Contagion Theory and focused on how burnout within the workplace is contagious. Burnout symptoms can move from one staff member to another. This theory also is referred to as the spillover effect. Case studies and interviews were used to demonstrate how contagion can spread throughout the workplace. Researchers reviewed Contagion Theory in several work settings, including school, business, food service, and other work establishments. Researchers have also looked at the job satisfaction of individuals during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

RQ1. What do elementary teachers perceive as the factors influencing their job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Researcher's Perspective

As a researcher, I chose this study to bring attention to my experiences as an educator dealing with curriculum guides and educational leadership stressors. I have been an educator for over 20 years, and I have witnessed numerous factors that have caused my burnout and other fellow teachers. I have looked at my educational situation, and I know that I have experienced burnout syndrome in action. This burnout has caused me to reexamine how important it is for teachers to support the administration and other teachers. Even though the many different education reforms throughout my career as a teacher all had great intentions of giving an equal education to all students, leadership shortfalls need to be addressed. The NCLB mandate helped address students' needs, but on the contrary, the people who got left behind were the teachers because the leadership system axiology is often subjective (Dorman, 2019). This is especially a factor during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Definition of Terms

Administrative Support—Support to meet the teaching profession's goals by administrative teams and the guidance to give additional resources needed (Chang, 1991).

Depersonalization—refers to an unfeeling and callous response towards people who are usually the recipients of one's service. Reduction in personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence and achievement in work (Leiter, 2019)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act—included Title 1 provisions applying to disadvantaged students. The act required states to develop assessments in necessary skills. States had to give these assessments to all students at selected grade levels to receive federal school funding (Britt, 2016).

Education Value-Added Assessment System for K-12 (EVAAS)—a customized software system available to all North Carolina School districts. EVAAS provides North Carolina

educators tools to improve student learning by looking at trends in data throughout a three-year process (<http://ncdpi.edu>).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)—a United States act of Congress that reauthorized the educational system to mandate that every child would be reading on grade level by a specific time.

Standardized Testing—Testing that uses normed data to assess stakeholders' knowledge (Dorman, 2019).

Teacher Burnout—a loss of idealism and enthusiasm for work manifested by exhaustion, depersonalization, depression, low morale, and emotional withdrawal (Dworkin, 2015).

Teacher Burnout Syndrome—Burnout is a loss of idealism and enthusiasm for work manifested by exhaustion, depersonalization, depression, low morale, and emotional withdrawal (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Teacher Working Conditions Survey—A survey conducted in North Carolina rating educators' overall job satisfaction within a school environment.

Veteran Educator or Tenured Educator—An educator with at least 3 years of teaching experience in a classroom setting. In North Carolina, an educator who has less than three years of teaching experience is put on a Comprehensive Evaluation Plan. This means that the educator must be evaluated three times by an administrator and one time by a peer or instructional coach throughout the school year. After the three-year window has passed the educator is put on an Abbreviated Evaluation Plan. This is where the educator is only evaluated two times a year by an administrator and these evaluations are only ten to fifteen minutes long. That is the formulated evaluation plan for an educator having three years of experience who are more seasoned within the profession (NCDPI, 2021).

Organization of the Study

Four more chapters follow. Chapter I reported the introduction, problem statement, research questions, theoretical lens, and purpose of the study. Chapter II summarizes the literature and will cite the current research on topics, such as the historical background on teacher support and burnout and topics on the theoretical literature relevant to this study's research questions and relevant current empirical literature. Chapter III discusses the research design and details regarding the data collection and data analysis. Finally, Chapter IV reports the narrative data from the participants and Chapter V summarizes the findings, gives the implications for change, and presents recommendations for future research.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

This research examined the impacts of teacher support and teacher burnout and explored teacher support and burnout syndrome. The researcher explored topics on teacher support systems as a contributing factor to teacher burnout. This research also included teacher burnout and its relationship to the teacher career cycle, as Fessler (1992) postulated. This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research topic area. This chapter is organized into the following sections: Literature describing the historical background of teacher support and burnout and the topic area, theoretical literature relevant to this study's research questions and hypotheses, and current empirical literature.

Historical Background on Teacher Stress and Burnout

Several research articles describe historical perspectives and factors relative to standardized testing as an effective stress mechanism of teacher burnout. This is the concept of teacher burnout. Amrein (1998) discusses the pressures placed upon teachers through standardized testing. The historical background is provided, beginning with the influence of

Horace Mann, referred to as the father of public education, who started standardized testing. Horace Mann offered summative assessments to assess students' learning. Mann discussed that this was a form of knowing if the students could perform the task throughout an academic period, such as an academic quarter.

This researcher also reviewed the impacts of standardized testing on students and teachers. Students being evaluated many times exhausted students and teachers. Scores create adverse outcomes on student performance because of teacher burnout due to teachers teaching to the test. Educators have lost their creativity to teach and reach students on their level because of catering to testing standards. Administrative support is shown not to support time for individuality. The support systems cater to reaching standards. Standard-based testing is often not a true reflection of student performance. These standard-based tests often are a way to depersonalize teaching and are also extremely stressful for all stakeholders. There is also bias within the testing system (Alson, 2010).

Historical Background on Teacher Job Satisfaction

This research identified a trend between teacher job satisfaction and administrative support. These factors hold adverse outcomes on both students and teachers. This is pertinent to the current research statement of the problem as the researcher attempts to make the case that teacher support programs can have adverse or positive outcomes for teachers and students.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) review the impact of the interpersonal environment on teacher burnout. This article reviews several school environments and how interpersonal relationships affect staff and students within that environment. The researchers used qualitative methods to prove that interpersonal relations contribute to teacher burnout. This research was useful as it looked at the working environment as a contributing factor to teacher burnout. It also demonstrated that burnout could spread throughout the school staff.

Research by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was necessary to measure burnout on experienced teachers was reviewed and how standardized testing contributed to this impact. This study demonstrated how teachers sometimes experience burnout from different types of work-related and personal-social situations. This can cause job problems and impact morale. These authors also provided a historical review of burnout syndrome. They described how burnout in teachers became a more pronounced theme in the 21st century. Teachers have many pressures placed upon them that teachers in the past did not experience. This article was useful to demonstrate the progression of burnout rates among teachers over the years and is growing significantly.

Cawelti (2014) provides a detailed review defining the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The article states that even though the NCLB was designed to bridge the gap between achievement subgroups, it has shortcomings that produce side effects, including burnout among students and staff members within the school setting. This qualitative study reviewed several teachers and student case studies. The researcher stated that students experience anxiety before standardized testing, affecting test performance. This study strengthens the theory that standardized testing, as implemented through the NCLB, causes adverse side effects among students and staff within the school environment. These side effects can burn out school staff and create an overwhelming environment.

Historical Background of Teacher Working Conditions

Rankin (2016) presents the historical significance of teacher working conditions. This article describes how teacher burnout has become an international epidemic. This study was a qualitative study that reviewed several case studies describing teachers dealing with the stresses of their job settings.

It has been stated that teacher burnout is an international epidemic that has affected teachers worldwide. This research indicates that about half a million U.S. teachers (15%) leave the profession every year. More than 41% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years of starting their teaching career. Teacher attrition has risen significantly over the last two decades. It is also reported that almost 66% of the nation's best teachers continue to leave the profession for careers elsewhere. The working conditions are more favorable in other settings than in the high-impact high school institutions' high-stakes environment. The North Carolina Working Conditions Survey is a tool that has been used to look for trends for improvement of the working condition within the school realm (NC Working Conditions, 2020).

Theory Relevant to Research Questions

Research reviewed in this section relates theoretical constructs applicable to this study's research questions. Blasé (2010) presents a social-psychological model of teacher stress and burnout, emphasizing teacher performance variables and cycles of teacher-student interactions that develop over time. The theoretical statements that serve as the basis for the framework proposed in this literature have been extracted and refined from the Teacher Performance-Motivation Theory (TP-M theory), a data-based, grounded theory developed directly from a study of public-school teachers. The main teaching phases and associated behavior were described in this article. Impacts upon students during these phases are also described. This research is essential as it sheds light on the phases of the teaching cycle. The article also reviews points in which the teacher may experience burnout within these phases (Symington, 2020). During the COVID-19 Pandemic, many educators experienced some of these burnout factors that weighed on teachers' job performance.

Costa (2019) discusses the individual employee's role in developing job burnout. These researchers reviewed the antecedents and consequences of burnout and proposed a model with chronic burnout as a moderator of daily functioning in the workplace. Specifically, the researcher argued that chronic burnout strengthens the loss cycle of daily job demands, daily exhaustion, and daily self-undermining. Additionally, the researcher argued that chronic burnout weakens the gain cycle of daily job resources, daily work engagement, and daily job crafting. The researcher also concluded that employees with high burnout levels need help structurally to change their working conditions and health status. Burnout is viewed as a chronic condition.

Dorman (2019) discusses the validity of testing, how it is used to assess students, and testing effects on teachers feeling burned out. This study was a quantitative study attempting to support a testing model and its impact on teacher burnout. The researcher stated that testing was not an accurate reflection on how well the teacher taught the subject matter. This researcher did not view the testing model as an effective way of assessing student knowledge. The testing model was found to be biased and lowered student self-esteem.

McLeod in 2011 conducted a correlational study between social structure, personality, and burnout syndrome, and found that personality plays an extensive role in how one reacts to stressors. Individuals respond to stressors in varied ways. This study identified four personality

traits measured through the True Colors Personality Inventory. These personality traits were found to relate to how people react to stressful situations. A combination of many stressors is related to burnout syndrome. Being aware of personality traits is very important when thinking about handling job situations. Standardized testing is a factor serving as a stressor and causes other problems within teachers' relationships with students.

Current Empirical Literature Relevant to Research Question and Hypotheses

Several research articles discuss empirical findings regarding teacher burnout and associated constructs. Maslach and Jackson (1986) view burnout as a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic job-related interpersonal stressors. This three-dimensional model's significance is that it places the individual stress experience within a social context and involves the person's conception of oneself and others.

This researcher viewed the initial research on burnout as exploratory that relied primarily on qualitative techniques to collect data. As the earliest researchers came from social and clinical psychology, they gravitated toward relevant ideas from these fields. The social perspective utilized concepts involving interpersonal relations and how people perceive and respond to others. This perspective also brought in concepts of motivation and emotion. The clinical perspective also dealt with motivation and emotion but framed these more in psychological disorders, such as depression. Subsequent researchers came from industrial and organizational psychology with this perspective emphasizing work attitudes and behaviors. At this point, burnouts were also conceptualized as a form of job stress. However, the primary focus was on the organizational context and less on the experienced stress's physical characteristics. This research was vital because it described the causes of burnout and job stress and described three dimensions of the burnout experience, exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficiency.

Britt (2016) described a study of burnout conducted throughout Colorado. Burnout was found to be related to settings where praise or rewards were limited within the workplace. Workgroups that were provided verbal praise seemed to experience better work performance and work ethic. Those workgroups that were not offered verbal praise frequently struggled with morale. The study's premise was that even the smallest amount of praise gave employees perseverance to combat burnout and experience a more productive work environment. This study was useful in showing that positive reinforcement goes a long way when combating career burnout and fatigue. Standardized testing does not have positive outcomes and may cause negative emotions towards the workplace.

Leither (2021) conducted similar research to provide insight into recognizing recognition as a tool in improving job situations. Recognition improves workplace cohesiveness and engagement. The researcher explored workplace visions or mottos and how these improved the work environment and staff engagement. The researcher developed a matrix for measuring how these mottos influenced employee outlook and morale. These strategies were found to improve engagement and focus on work assignments.

Brouwers (2014) examined the direction and period of relationships between perceived self-efficacy in classroom management and the three dimensions of burnout among 243 secondary school teachers. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses indicated that perceived self-efficacy had a longitudinal effect on depersonalization and a synchronous effect on personal accomplishment. However, the direction was reversed for the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion. Three levels of burnout were identified. The author concluded that perceived self-efficacy in classroom management must be considered when

devising interventions to prevent and treat burnout among secondary school teachers. Burnout among secondary school teachers was higher than among elementary education teachers. Burnout was a little less prevalent at the middle school level than for secondary education teachers.

Chang (1991) provides an empirical informational article that reviewed teachers' emotional state within the classroom. This article used qualitative appraisals and interviews to look for emotional coping trends among teachers in very stressful situations. This article describes different ways and strategies teachers can use to manage job stressors. Teaching is a fast-paced and stressful work setting with many factors outside the teacher's control. Therefore, teachers must develop different ways of dealing with emotional management in the educational setting.

Understanding how teacher stress, burnout, coping, and self-efficacy are interrelated is described by Herman et al. (2016). These concepts can develop preventive and intervention efforts to support teachers. These researchers related these constructs to student outcomes, including disruptive behaviors and academic achievement. In a large-scale research study in an urban Midwestern school district, latent profile analysis was used to determine teacher adjustment patterns about stress, coping, efficacy, and burnout.

The profiles linked to student behavioral and academic outcomes found teachers with high stress, high burnout, and low coping profiles had the most unsatisfactory student outcomes. These researchers discuss implications for supporting teachers to maximize student outcomes. This article is vital to the current research as it examines support efforts for teachers and the impact of stress and burnout levels on students.

Makikangus (2017) reviews the identification of burnout. Burnout symptoms impact employee work engagement and energy level, affecting work performance. Reviewing health, energy level, and engagement factors, this researcher found that burned-out staff completed less work within an allotted time than staff not suffering from burnout symptoms. This article provides a useful perspective on burnout's effects on health and energy level factors.

Rue-Foster (2010) describes teaching as high-stress employment with work deadlines and standardized testing stress. This high-stress experience can give educators a sense of loss of control over one's life and contributes to a stress syndrome known as burnout. Burnout symptoms include emotional and physical exhaustion, insomnia, gastrointestinal problems, sadness and depression, negativity, increased cynicism, and the tendency to blame others who experienced a loss of satisfaction or sense of accomplishment. Burnout can cause emotional and physical symptoms that can have long-term effects. This research lays out the emotional impacts of burnout and the impact on teachers.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature describing the historical perspectives of burnout and the psychological and social constructs of burnout (Britt, 2016). This empirical literature described the personal, social, and societal impacts of burnout. The research has also looked at the administrative support details, burnout symptoms, and how the Pandemic has changed the support one needs to cope. Those within the education profession stated that the lack of administrative support appeared to be the primary variable associated with teacher burnout syndrome. The researcher provided empirical insight into how teacher burnout can negatively impact educational institutions.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' experiences of stress and burnout during COVID-19 and the impact on their job satisfaction. The goal of this chapter is to review the researcher's purpose for the study and research questions. The researcher described the research methodology and collected and analyzed the interviews' responses. Reviewing the data allowed the researcher to answer the research questions on teacher stress and burnout during COVID-19.

The following research question guided this study:

What do elementary teachers perceive as the factors influencing their job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Research Design

This research study utilized a qualitative methodology and the phenomenological approach. According to Mills and Gay (2016), the design plan describes how the research is to be conducted. The researcher's design collected detailed information from the participants through interviews, from which the researcher evaluated common themes and differences among the participants' experiences. The participants' interview inquiry included factors such as teacher burnout, job satisfaction, and working conditions.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended interview questions and included demographic questions such as years of teaching and degree areas. The researcher screened participants who held over 3 years of teaching experience. The researcher designed the interview protocol to align with the research questions. An expert in the field validated the interview protocol, and any questions deemed to give closed-ended responses were revised or deleted based on the recommendations.

Setting

The researcher defined the setting to include educators and the administrative team's support system as participants in public schools in the Southeastern region of North Carolina. The participants were recruited from the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE). The NCAE offered a database that held educators that had over three years of teaching experience and the database offered information on what region of North Carolina that the participant was from. The LinkedIn social media forum was also used to recruit participants because this forum offered additional information on the participants such as what school they were a graduate from and what education level that the participant held. The two sources of information worked together to recruit the ideal candidates for this study. The elementary teachers were interviewed via telephone interviews and answered the open-ended questions about their stress and burnout as educators during COVID-19 and their support at their current or previous institution. Additionally, data from the institution's Teacher's Working Conditions Survey were reviewed. This triangulated the data from the participants' responses and the Teacher's Working Conditions Survey results from their perspective.

Selection Criteria of Participants

The study participants included educators in elementary school settings in Southeastern North Carolina. Individuals were classified as educators based on their membership in the educator organization NCAE. The participants were also invited using the professional social network LinkedIn. Using the contacts from LinkedIn, the researcher invited selected educator members to participate in the study.

The researcher selected the following parameters to purposefully recruit the participants: ensuring that each had the experience of working at institutions of education; the participants were in the role of educator for at least 3 years; their willingness to participate in a 45-minute interview tape-recorded telephone interview; and the participants' agreement to use audio recording and transcription program NoNotes for the interview. The research was conducted on participants that worked in a classroom with more than ten children that they meet with on a regular basis. The participants were also selected based on their subjects that they taught. These participants needed to have experience working with children in elementary school on English Language Arts, Math instruction, and the analysis of data of these students' needs.

Recruitment and Access

Participant recruitment began after receiving Fayetteville State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Obtaining approval from the University's Institutional Review Board was necessary to ensure the study's conformity. Creswell (2013) believes it is essential to recruit people accessible for a research study and provide insight into their experiences on a specific phenomenon.

In this study 40 potential participants were contacted that meet the criteria of working in a classroom setting with more than ten children. These candidates also had experience working with the facilitation of Language Arts, Math, and analysis of data. Ten participants agreed to participate in the study and express their insight on the satisfaction of their position.

Description of Participants

The participants were educators in the elementary education setting. These participants were invited through LinkedIn and had experience working with the Teacher's Working Conditions Survey. The researcher identified participants who were members of the professional organization, the North Carolinas Association of Educators (NCAE).

Data Collection Procedures

1. This study utilized a qualitative research design and the phenomenological approach.
2. The researcher obtained permission from Fayetteville State University's IRB.
3. The researcher emailed approximately 40 educators with 3 years of teaching experience. These participants had experience in education, and members of the NCAE or LinkedIn were invited to participate in the study.
4. After receiving the invitation acceptance from participants in the study, the researcher emailed the consent letter, which explained the study's purpose.

5. The researcher contacted each participant to schedule a convenient time for the telephone interview. Once the interview was scheduled, the researcher emailed the interview questions for the participant's convenience.
6. Participants were asked to email their demographic information before the scheduled interview.
7. Each telephone interview took approximately 45 minutes and was tape-recorded using a computer digital transcription program.
8. Participants were also asked to respond to open-ended questions. Before the interview, the researcher communicated to each participant that at any time during the interview, they could refuse to answer any question that made them uncomfortable, or they could withdraw from the interview session without any threat to their relationship with Fayetteville State University.
9. Each telephone interview was confidential, and the researcher was the only individual present in the room when the interviews were conducted.
10. The participants' narrative responses were transcribed into textual data using the digital computer transcription service, NoNotes, coded, and analyzed for recurring patterns and themes. The Teacher's Working Conditions Survey data results from each school district were also reviewed and aligned to the qualitative data.
11. After completing the textual data, the researcher emailed the participants their responses to check for interpretation accuracy. This process is called member checking and is utilized to increase accuracy, credibility, and validity.
12. Submitted a Survey Monkey Likert scale tool to identify participants' level of job satisfaction before and during COVID-19 pandemic on a scale of 1-10. One being the lowest and ten being the highest of the participants' job satisfaction before the COVID 19 Pandemic and then during the COVID 19 Pandemic. This identified the level of job satisfaction of the participants before and after the timeline of this study. This tool also identified any age components of responses to the Likert scale.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The narrative data were transcribed into textual data using the transcription program NoNotes. The textual data of the participants' responses were organized and coded into recurring patterns and themes. The researcher conducted an initial analysis that included a contextual overview of the participants' responses coded to align with the research questions.

Handwritten notes were also taken to assist with accuracy. The researcher identified the following steps when analyzing the data. The researcher followed specific steps to interpret the study's data.

- Step 1 The researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, including using the NoNotes transcribed responses to sort the data.
- Step 2 The researcher read and reviewed all the data to formulate general ideas.
- Step 3 The researcher coded the data. The researcher organized the data by bracketing chunks and writing categories in the margins during the coding process.
- Step 4 The researcher generated categories or themes for analysis.
- Step 5 The researcher created a narrative to describe the themes.
- Step 6 The researcher also identified the themes and interpreted the data to answer the research questions.

According to Creswell (2013), during the coding process to generate recurring patterns and themes based on participants' responses, the researcher describes how the themes were characterized in the narrative to interpret the data (Creswell, 2013).

The textual data were maintained to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher proposed that the data analysis would reveal common themes or variables among the participants. Such common themes included barriers or challenges on the participants' journey in education, depersonalization of teaching style, mentorship and support, and the duties the educator holds (or held). These themes enable us to better understand the participants' perceptions of their standing in education institutions. The data analysis also included reviewing the interview transcripts while listening to the recordings. In addition, the Teacher's Working Conditions Survey information was reviewed for the institution of the participant's employment.

Data Storage

Creswell (2013) also provided principles about data storage and the handling of textual data from qualitative research that included the following:

- Always develop backup copies of computer files.
- Use high-quality tapes for audio-recording information during interviews.
- Develop a master list of types of information gathered.
- Protect the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data.
- Develop a data collection matrix as a visual means of location and identifying information for a study (Creswell, 2013).
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Trustworthiness

While understanding educators' experiences in education, the researcher must present credible work. When conducting qualitative research analysis, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide a detailed account of the participants' responses and data. Shenton (2004) addressed internal validity, in which the researcher must seek to ensure that their study measures or tests what is intended. Having this trustworthiness is the most authentic way of providing credibility to any research. Shenton (2004) encouraged researchers to ensure that their data are dependable and that their work is trustworthy. The researcher must provide a template that shows the work if someone wants to replicate the study.

Conclusion

Educators have overcome many challenges. These challenges have led many to leave the educational profession due to burnout syndrome. Educators can overcome adversity to fulfill their job responsibilities but often in an atmosphere where they must always prove themselves (Dworkin, 2015). Despite the challenge's educators face at their education institution, they can still overcome burnout during these challenging educational times. The COVID-19 Pandemic has made educators' jobs even more challenging today. Educators need support to maintain the quality of life the future deserves. Suggestions to support educators and administrators need to consider future studies and implications for change for this targeted population.

The breakdown of teacher support contributes to teacher burnout, causing many great teachers to leave the profession. This is a problem, as schools need great teachers to be role models for students and provide students with interactions that shape their life choices. The stresses of the job responsibilities and lack of teacher support have contributed to teacher burnout

due to the lack of administrative support that affects the Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Further aspects of this study can include educators' administrative support during the Pandemic and COVID-19 issues contributing to these working conditions in education.

Chapter IV: Findings

This study used a qualitative research design to gather data on educators' burnout and job satisfaction during the COVID-19 global pandemic. This study has a very important purpose in education to make the educational realm a more productive place for students and teachers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' experiences of stress and burnout during COVID-19 and the impact on their job satisfaction.

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

RQ1. What do elementary teachers perceive as the factors influencing their job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

The participants were elementary educators with 3 or more years of educational experience. These educators were based in the Southeastern region of North Carolina and have experience working in the COVID-19 Pandemic period.

The findings found that many of the educators interviewed suffered from efficacy size delays during the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to the research of Kathy Haycock, Kennedy teachers have a continuum of their efficacy level (Kennedy, 2021). These efficacy levels affect the effect measure that they have on their students. These efficacy levels are affected by teacher burnout. According to Dr. Kathy Kennedy, the efficacy level is something the administration considers when making investments in their educators. These investments in their professional staff could be a founding point for burnout and boost a teacher's efforts. The research of John Hattie discussed the effect size of certain practices that educators perform (Kennedy, 2021).

Teacher burnout and lack of job satisfaction are factors that can affect educators' desire or motivation to perform these best practices. These effect sizes have a tremendous impact on student performance, and when teachers are not motivated and burned out, it affects not only the educator but the students. The COVID-19 Pandemic caused education to change indefinitely. This factor caused changes in teaching styles in many functions, changing education delivery in many ways, and impacting job satisfaction.

Description of Study Participants

The study participants included 10 educators in elementary school settings in Southeastern North Carolina institutions. Individuals were classified as educators based on their membership in the educator forum on LinkedIn. The participants were invited using the professional social network LinkedIn. Using the contacts from LinkedIn and NCAE, the researcher invited selected educator members to participate in the study.

The parameters selected by the researcher for recruitment were to purposefully choose the participants by ensuring that each had the experience of working at institutions of education. The participants had been in the educator role for at least 3 years; their willingness to participate in a 45-minute interview, tape-recorded telephone interview, and the participants' agreement to use audio recording and transcription programs such as NoNotes for the interview. These participants are described below in detail.

Demographics

Participant 1. Helen (age 54) is an African American veteran teacher at a public school in the southeastern region of the United States. She was involved and certified with the National Boards of Education program while obtaining tenure in New York. She worked in New York for 29 years until she obtained the years for retirement; at that time, she moved to North Carolina to be near her family. She said, “I took on an interim position in second grade and felt the spark reunite for education. . . . When I received a second offering for the position, I gladly took on the position.” This led to a feeling of efficacy, but the format for teacher-student relations changed significantly when the pandemic came. She discussed standardized testing concerns because the students were not performing at an appropriate rate.

Participant 2. Wendy (age 29) is a multi-racial elementary educator who holds a degree in sociology and is under the lateral entry program. This educator is in the process of learning basic educational terminology. This educator struggles with Bloom’s Taxonomy and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge; she often finds it difficult to reach students remotely because there is no true connection. When the students were assessed, she found that benchmark skills they should have been familiar with were not on point. This led to a feeling of low efficacy, and when the pandemic hit, she was only in her fourth year as a full-time educator; therefore, she felt that her effect size was not as great as it could have been.

Participant 3. Francis (age 32) is a Jamaican American Teach for America Educator. She teaches young children and finds that the technology platforms used changed often. Her county started using Google Meets; then, the technology platform changed to WebEx. She had to learn and navigate these technology platforms with no training. Then she had to show the parents how to navigate the platforms. These tasks were done with no assistance. Her bachelor’s program did not train her for such technology platforms, and the use of these platforms did not foster relationships between the students and the teacher. The human connection was not a facet of online education. These items affected her efficacy, and she had to change her teaching style to meet the platform. Students’ learning suffered, and the teacher-student relationship was impacted.

Participant 4. Jan (age 46) is a Caucasian veteran educator. She has a very professional attitude about making plans and organizational skills. She holds 10 years of teaching experience, and she said, “I had some situations with some job satisfaction problems, but I worked through them. These problems have been due to administrative issues.” During the Pandemic, she found it very difficult because she is a veteran educator who found her technology skills were not as advanced as some of her colleagues. She struggled with keeping up with the pacing of the technology and the operation of some of the equipment.

Participant 5. Brenda (age 31) is a fifth-year educator who was teaching second-grade students. This educator has had some issues delivering her lessons and showing students ways to use technology to create a product. She has also had some problems with other educators bullying her. The participant stated that other teachers have stated things that should not be said in front of students about their educator. One example is that one of the students who continuously took off their mask came out onto the bus line. The educator was in a hurry and stressed because she was slightly late getting the students ready. She did not notice that the student was without a face mask. In front of everyone in the hall, the other teacher stated, “He cannot come out here with no mask on every day, figure it out.” The educator’s words were very brutal and said in a loud tone such that all students and staff could hear the comment. It made the educator look bad in front of

all the staff and students in the hall. This educator was already struggling to deliver lessons, but she was also struggling with teachers bullying teachers.

Participant 6. Sue (age 43) is an 8-year educator who is a transient teacher from West Africa. This educator has worked in many school settings, from the inner city to rural settings. This educator stated, “using standardized testing during COVID-19 was a big issue with my job satisfaction. The fact that my livelihood was going to be judged on a teaching situation that was unlike any that could be imagined before.”

Participant 7. Ann (age 47) is a veteran teacher who has worked with underprivileged students for the past 25 years. She has seen programs come and go and how the phases of education have evolved through the years. She has observed during COVID-19 that the students have changed and have become less receptive to content that is being covered because they are constantly used to being stimulated by some technological facet. This is a real concern for educators because students are not absorbing information online. It is like another video game or another YouTube video they are viewing. This is a concern for the future of America because it is a learning situation that is producing individuals who are unresponsive to human contact or so accustomed to constant gratification from some technological device. This is very discerning for educators because students are not responding to human contact. Some artificial intelligence only stimulates them. This participant is very concerned with the state of the world.

Participant 8. Nathan (age 45) is a 20-year veteran in education. He has a master’s degree and has been selected for the “Distributed Leadership Team” at his school. During COVID, he led his team with passion and support. When the children returned, there was a staff shortage within the building. There was not enough staff to escort the children to bus and car areas for dismissal. He discussed that the staffing shortage was so great that children were misplaced when they returned to a hybrid or face-to-face format. He brought this concern to the administrative staff on four different occasions. He stated,

The following incident happened because of staffing shortages during COVID-19. Because of the severity of the incident, my entire grade level team did not support me. My team placed the blame on me to avoid reprimand. I was written up, yelled at, and reprimanded in front of the entire office staff. (Nathan)

Even after the incident arose, his colleagues would make comments toward him, such as “We are working on holding adults accountable for their actions.” This was referring to the occurrences of shortfalls during COVID-19. A statement was made toward the participant by another staff member aimed to target the participant that “it wasn’t in her job description to be nice to adults.” The lack of staffing because of one situation caused his entire team to turn on him and from being a credible educator due to the lack of staffing and support during COVID-19.

Participant 9. Olivia (age 35) is a veteran of the profession and has worked in many profession settings. She stated that she enjoyed working with the children, but the paperwork had become a difficult task to maintain. Having to carry less-seasoned professionals is also a difficult obstacle in education. This educator has 10 years of teaching experience from service on the Diversified Leadership team and the study and implementation of the LetterLand Curriculum within her school. When COVID-19 began, this educator was the most seasoned participant on her team. Because of her great work ethic and great mannerisms, when one of the other educators developed cancer and had to go out on medical leave, this educator was given two choices: she could take the educator’s entire class, or the class would rotate between all classes. This would mean because of the virtual format of the Pandemic education plan, she would be responsible for

47 students, and kindergartners at that. She took on this endeavor because she did not want the confusion of having to log on to a different code for virtual learning every day. This would be a very confusing process for the students. A permanent substitute was found, but the students never came off the educator's EVAAS roster. That educator had a total of 47 students the entire year.

This occurrence violated that worker's student-teacher ratio, meaning that this was an occurrence that the participant felt was not lawful. When the educator tried to contact a lawyer about having her student-teacher workman's ratio tampered with, no lawyer would take her case; this was a sign of no support or backing for educator's rights in North Carolina.

Participant 10. Allison (age 27) is an African American educator who works at a very military-based school. This educator discussed student attendance; several students are absent every day. This is a frustrating encounter because students must be present to obtain the information needed for the End of Grade testing. She loves to teach students and understand something clearly at last in their minds, but for students to obtain information to be successful, they must be present.

Interview Question 1

The participants discussed their experiences of teaching during the pandemic. Based on their responses, overwhelming instructional delivery emerged as the recurring theme. Several stated that they experienced technological issues and they felt overwhelmed in teaching students and parents how to use technology effectively in instruction and submitting their assignments. Most stated that they worried about testing and assessment.

According to some demographics of the participants, the candidates that were over the age of thirty-five had more difficulty with the instructional delivery of the virtual format of teaching during the Pandemic than the educators that were younger than the age of thirty-five. This was a significant finding in the study because of the age difference of the participants and their understanding of the technological mechanisms associated with online instruction.

Overwhelming Instructional Delivery

Helen described this experience during the Pandemic as overwhelming because the technology was pushed on teachers so quickly with little to no training. The teachers really had to teach themselves to perform the task of the technology. This is a major obstacle for some users unfamiliar with technology, like younger people. Then the idea of working with younger children and getting them ready to take standardized tests is a major concern for many educators.

Wendy discussed that she was familiar with the technology programs being presented, but these programs were used in the college element of her tenure. This participant stated that the hardest thing was being able to explain the technology to the parents. Many students had grandparents helping them, and they were not as familiar with the technology as younger users.

Francis stated, "I found the greatest change during the pandemic was teaching younger children to use the computer." This formula was new from what was discussed in traditional school settings. This shift in education has changed the format for education for the future.

Jan stated that her experience consisted of the change from traditional teaching to the use of slide shows to facilitate learning:

These slide shows gave a much rigid schedule to get everything in a timely manner. This was very stressful due to having limited time to get learning in. Teachers had concerns about the information being covered so quickly that the students would not grasp the skills needed to perform on benchmark assessments. (Jan)

Brenda stated that she really struggled with the information presented during the Pandemic. Students were often not present, and often they were not focused. One could not tell their engagement due to the lack of interaction. This gave educators many concerns about standardized test scores.

Sue stated that she “did not feel like an effective educator during the pandemic. Students were often absent, and their cameras were often off. There was concern with the introduction of lessons and the use of all the new technology.”

Ann stated,

The constant change in technology kept overwhelming the teachers and the students. Students would master a skill, and then a new skill was added. Keep pushing, keep going. A lot of students needed support during this time. If they do not have that support system from their family, there are other resources out there, but you will not know about them unless you inquire about them. I am saying that my great grandma used to say, “Practice makes perfect.” If you do not practice, support is going to be an issue. (Ann)

Nathan was very concerned with the overwhelming issue of providing staffing and support during the Pandemic. It made many educators very lonely. They felt that they did not have a support system—a very concerning facet when collaborating with humans because teaching efficacy is very important.

Olivia stated that the love of trying to get through to students even virtually was a goal. She had concerns about efficacy, but that was something that she kept working on. “That is why you show up at the end of whatever the time is, whatever it is that you plan, that you hope and dream for, because you are worth it, your child is worth it” (Olivia).

Allison was very angry about the setup of the pandemic; she felt as if the setup for virtual learning technology could have been smoother. This was something to which parents and teachers were not accustomed. “I had to train myself to operate the computers; then, I had to show parents how to operate the technology.” This made this time very stressful and affected students’ performance on benchmark testing.

Interview Question 2

The participants discussed how they transitioned from face-to-face to virtual learning within a short time based on their responses, and the district support system emerged as the recurring theme. Several mentioned that without the support from the district in teaching about technology and the use of instructional tools, they would have been overwhelmed. Several stated that they had issues with students having access to sufficient broadband and internet reception. Although the district did provide access to Broadband, many students and parents found it was not adequate for teaching and learning. Many stated that team teaching and the assistance from other teachers was a lifesaver that eased the frustration of teaching during the Pandemic. Having to switch from face-to-face to virtual overnight caused stress on teachers, students, and parents. A few mentioned that the oversized classroom was difficult, as many teachers were ill, and others had to fill in to teach those classes.

The participants discussed that they had to maintain resiliency during the COVID 19 Pandemic because they needed to maintain order and fluency during the school day even with all the changes that were occurring. The district support system had to maintain more systems of protocol during the Pandemic; this gave extra support and efforts to support school district staff. The central office support systems worked out organization plans to fill in the gaps that were occurring due to the Pandemic.

District Support System

Helen stated that she had a difficult time with the transition. “The grade-level chair and instructional coach had to help me with setting up her Google Meets and WebEx. This was a very difficult transition because we had only a brief grade level training to prepare” (Helen). There was not much support with the issues at hand.

Since Wendy had experience working with technology and skills, she stated, “I had an easier transition than someone newer to technology. I already knew how to use WebEx and Google Meets. I knew how to explain the transition to the parents.” She said that her only hiccup with the transition was distributing the materials and computers to the students.

Francis stated that the transition was difficult. She had training through the school system, but it was brief and overbooked. She said her colleagues had to show her how to use innovative technology such as Jam Board and Go Noodle. She needed a lot of support from her team. She said she felt like she was asking too many questions about technology. There were planning times set aside to collaborate over the computer.

Jan stated that the transition to virtual learning was like no other experience she had ever encountered. She had the students log on, but sometimes they did not have enough bandwidth in their system and were often kicked off the Internet or missed part of the lesson. This was quite a concern because that meant that students were missing important information.

Brenda stated that during the Pandemic she collaborated with another teacher and team-taught; this gave her the support she needed because she and her partner could figure out the situation together and support each other. The team-teaching really worked for her because she was not getting much support from the county.

Sue stated that she had some experience working with Google Docs and Google Meet. This experience with this forum gave her the tools needed to navigate the online system. She said, “it was difficult to train parents on the technology and get the students acclimated to using a computer for independent synchronous learning.”

Ann stated that teaching during the Pandemic “was like learning to swim while you are in the water. There was no training on computer setup or assisting parents with technology questions. This was concerning because the teachers had to teach themselves.”

Nathan stated that staffing was a concern during the Pandemic. He had to take on two classes of students because one of the other educators had gotten ill, and there was a hiring freeze, and students were struggling because the class sizes were very large. Nathan said, “I learned how to manipulate the computer by having other teachers show me.”

Olivia stated that learning the computer “was a skill I had to teach myself. I had to play with the technology and maneuver the keys to get to the meat of what I would accomplish.”

Allison said, “Like Nike, just do it, take your time, one day at a time, one class at a time, one semester at a time. ... You need to take a break and allow yourself the freedom to do the project.”

Interview Question 3

The participants in this study discussed their concern with student attendance due to broadband Internet services and using county-mandated resources for learning. The support for teachers and students was a concern that many participants had, and social emotional learning was a major topic during the COVID-19 practices for teaching. This led many educators to feel overwhelmed with the task placed upon them.

The Process of Learning New Technological Resources

Helen discussed making anchor charts and using YouTube videos to engage her students. She said it was a struggle to gather their attention.

The anchor charts are a great tool to use, but it is a very hard tool to use in the virtual setting because of the difficulty in seeing the anchor charts. Students paying attention to the resource is difficult to observe because many students had their cameras off. This gave an inconsistent formation of how the students were performing. (Helen)

Wendy stated that she used a lot of movement in her PowerPoint slides to ensure engagement. Using Jam Board and other fun game sites online was also a very productive way to get the students’ attention. This tool is often used during online teaching. Although the students sometimes seem engaged, it is difficult to know if they are truly engaged because they are sometimes not very receptive. Also, the chance to collaborate and learn social emotional skills is a factor of learning missed during online learning.

Francis discussed the use of PowerPoints for engagement. The PowerPoints used had brightly colored tools and movement. This is something that was effective and kept teaching organized. The engagement seemed effective, but sometimes it was a problem with attendance, and the educators did not know if the students were engaged.

Jan discussed the use of Google Classroom:

This tool was used to turn in assignments and post agendas for the day. This tool was very helpful when organizing data. The students had a due date, and you saw work samples. This was very useful for engagement, and the teacher got to see if the students were mastering the skills needed. (Jan)

Brenda stated that she used the Canvas tool for shared learning:

The teacher can also post videos of lessons that the students can refer to. This tool-maintained engagement. It was very difficult to see if the students were viewing the videos or just going straight to the assignments. This was concerning because the students needed to see the video to understand benchmark skills. (Brenda)

Sue stated that she used Class Dojo during the Pandemic to engage her students and communicate with parents; this was very useful because the students could produce portfolios and earn points to win prizes.

Ann stated that she used games such as Kahoot and Jam Board during the Pandemic to keep the students engaged in their learning. This was a great way to assess the students' knowledge and get their attention. The participant stated that being upbeat and keeping learning fun was very important during virtual learning.

Nathan stated that he used the Class Dojo system to keep students and parents engaged in learning. This kept the entire family informed. This is a tool to keep a family member and the entire family involved with the student's learning. It was crucial to keep the family informed and involved in learning during the Pandemic. The family members were the second educators in the students' lives.

Olivia discussed that she used the Canvas platform during the pandemic. She said she could post slideshows and post assignments on this platform. It kept the materials in the class organized, and the materials were reusable for future use. This tool gave accountability to the students for their own learning.

Allison discussed that Zoom was a great forum for class time, but sometimes security was not the best. The student's engagement was questionable because many students would not turn on their cameras, and their microphones were muted. Allison asked students to respond to questions and turn on their cameras and microphones. Sometimes she got a response on this, but sometimes she did not.

Interview Question 4

The participants discussed how they kept parents involved in their student's educational experience during the Pandemic and based on their responses, technology creativity emerged as a recurring theme. Educators found it a struggle to get parents involved in their children's learning and to get communication from the school. Teachers used a variety of platforms to communicate to get parents involved. Some of these tools were Class Dojo, Teachable, Google Classroom, and Canvas. Other educators used Zoom and phone calls. Some educators used portfolio systems for parents to see progress.

Parents had to be very diligent in using these tools because they were now the facilitators on the home front of education. Teachers and parents had to use their creativity to reach children. Some parents gave great support to their students during the Pandemic.

Technology Creativity

Helen stated that she gave assignments on Class Dojo and through the Canvas Platform. Performance-Based Grading was used to show accountability of a student's benchmark skills. This allowed parents to see what benchmark skills their students needed to work on.

Wendy used the Class Dojo program to give parents daily feedback on their student's skills and make sure that parents were aware of benchmark expectations. Also, I-station reports were sent out to parents about their children's benchmark goals. This educator also used parent-teacher conferences to communicate students' benchmark goals to the family.

Francis used the Teachable app, which kept parents aware of all classroom occurrences. Also, the app can upload work samples of students so parents can see students' progress over time. These communication tools were a significant change for many educators during the Pandemic because these tools were sometimes the only way to contact the parents.

Jan used parent-teacher conferences on an online forum. These conferences used electronic portfolios, and they also showed students the appropriate way to perform tasks by offering examples. Jan was able to show parents and students what was expected of them and how work samples needed to be set up.

Brenda used the Class Dojo School-Wide Communication Forum. This allowed the students to see feedback on their work uploaded into the portfolio enhancement feature. This gave students and parents ways to use data to improve benchmark skills. Brenda stated that she would also mail students rewards for mastering goals on benchmark assessments.

Sue used the Canvas app email feature. This is offered through a Home Base in North Carolina. It allows parents to view feedback from educators and see areas of improvement for their students. This application also allows parents to view their students' grades in real-time. This tool is an excellent tool for families to utilize.

Ann stated that she used the Class Dojo features, which offered online work mats and online communication text features. The text features are even connected to the user's cell phone; therefore, the parents and students get instant feedback. Many educators use Class Dojo, but educators can easily personalize the application.

Nathan stated that he used the "Zoom chat box feature to send personal messages to parents about benchmark skills that need to be improved upon. The parents could attend the session and see where their students may be struggling. The Zoom application has many features, such as emojis and the ability to raise hands for questions." Also, educators can use the waterfall effect for chat box responses to questions.

Olivia discussed using Class Dojo to have the student talk about their Zones of Regulation, a Social Emotional Learning Project. The students would text their color into the messenger portion of the Dojo platform. They could be red, which means angry or anxious; blue, which means sleepy; yellow, which means overwhelmed; or green, which means happy when the students typed their zone into the messenger. The teacher would communicate with the student and parents about SEL and explain their feelings.

Allison discussed that during virtual learning she used the Google Classroom features. She would set the classes up into modules, and the students would work at their own pace and complete the module by the end of the class time. Parents could view the module format and check for completeness and feedback. This worked well because the coursework was very organized, and the parents and students knew exactly what was expected of them.

Interview Question 5

During the Pandemic, many educators discussed their anxiety of returning to a face-to-face format because of the worries of health concerns for the educators and the students. It was also very concerning that many of the students struggle with mental health challenges due to the Pandemic and all the factors that played into this challenging time.

Educators were concerned with the benchmark scores and how these scores would be affected with very little data collected on progress due to the online nature of the period of online learning. Benchmark scores have had an impact on anxiety for many educators because their livelihood relies on those test scores. Teaching was also harder because everything was done

virtually. There was very little collaboration with student groups, which left a concern that there was no interaction with other students

Restructuring Teaching and Learning

Helen stated that her anxiety level was high because she had some preexisting conditions that caused some health concerns. She needed more time to prepare and ensure she had her vaccine before returning to the school setting. Masks were necessary to maintain social distancing. Even with all these measures returning to face-to-face learning was very concerning.

Wendy stated that she was concerned about the return to face-to-face learning, but the item that concerned her most was that students would not be able to work in rotating centers and get that student-on-student interaction that is very important. Especially for fostering social emotional learning, this can impact students' performance and learning how to work collaboratively.

Francis had concerns with making the transition to face-to-face learning because the class sizes were very large, and the social emotional needs of the students were an issue when you have so many students. These students are far away from each other but still trying to interact socially because they have not had a chance to speak to other children in a while. Meeting their needs for SEL and social distancing is an anxiety-seeking task.

Jan discussed having some concerns with the students coming back face to face, but she was happy that she would see the engagement with the lessons and the interaction with benchmark skills. Students often had their cameras off and muted when they were online, and interaction was slim to none. This face-to-face format helped educators see how the students were performing on benchmarks. When they returned, it was found that the students were performing lower than expected on benchmark goals.

Brenda discussed her concern with bringing the virus back to her family. She had young children at her home, which often brought on anxiety for her because of the contagious nature of the virus. She stated that mainlining social distancing and mask-wearing was helpful and brought peace of mind. Even with these precautions, the concerns were positive cases of the virus and students that had to be quarantined.

Sue discussed that her anxiety stemmed from it being more difficult to teach benchmark skills When holding small groups in an organized way is difficult. The students cannot get together and work collaboratively. This made it harder for educators because they had to constantly work to ensure the students were on task because of the strict points on social distancing. (Sue)

Ann stated that having students' social distance made the class sizes and furniture needs more of a demand. Students had to be further apart, which called for more space in the classroom. Teachers had to be creative with the positioning of furniture due to social distancing concerns. This made reaching the students a very challenging task. (Ann)

Nathan discussed how social distancing made it difficult to organize supplies because every child had to have their own basket with their name on it. This was a concern because sharing items was out the window. Sharing is an important social emotional skill put to the wayside during the pandemic.

Olivia had a lot of anxiety about returning to face-to-face learning because she was concerned about not being vaccinated and getting the virus. She was also concerned about bringing the virus home to her elderly mother. These factors gave a lot of concern with being on the front lines of education.

Allison stated that the change in instruction was an anxiety filler for her. She had to learn how to incorporate the online learning format into the face-to-face learning format, like forming a hybrid course for second graders. This was something that could enhance benchmark scores or have them falter.

Interview Question 6

The participants in this study discussed that the administrative team had a large task ahead of them. During the Pandemic, the administration had a challenging and often win-lose effort to support their staff. Many schools received funding to meet the technology challenges of the COVID Pandemic. The administrative team had to use the funding provided to them to meet the individual needs of their population. This led to many educators feeling overwhelmed and as if the paperwork load had gained momentum. Other educators were faced with administrative input to determine if students were to be promoted to the next grade level even if they were not prepared or retained to gain skills. All these themes were of great urgency during this period.

Several participants also mentioned that retaining or promoting students became a crucial endeavor during the Pandemic, especially at the end of the academic year. It was stated that the administrative team worked collaboratively with teachers to ensure that each person had an input in the decision impacting the future of their students.

Extra Funding for Technology and Inclusive Decision-Making

Helen stated that the administrative support was different for different people. This was due to extra funding for technological resources provided by managing the principal's budget plan for the school. This was building-based because some schools received extra funding for resources. This gave an unfair advantage to schools that did not get as much funding as other schools. This was due to overseeing the resources at the principal's discretion.

Wendy admitted this person stated that administrative support at her school was great and that the online educators at her school were given a mentor or assistant to assist with any technology issues that would arrive. This was a crucial step for the school, and the administration was a major contributor to the funding and organization of this process.

Francis discussed the major role the administration played in the transition of face-to-face learning to automated and computer-based learning. "This transition has impacted the students' learning processes and the entire format for learning. This transition has made it a very interesting turn in the last year" (Francis). The administration now offers more home-based learning through the computer. This supports the educators and the students they serve.

Jan spoke of the administrative support as a hindrance to the transition point into the process of COVID-sensitive teaching. This administration gave many guidelines on the number of videos one showed during class. This dictation of how many resources could be used in a certain period was a very stressful experience because of the number of guidelines to follow in a

lesson planning period. This was a major time consumption for educators to work. The administration needs to lessen teachers' workload, which the administrative support must respect.

Brenda stated how the administrative focus was very supportive during the COVID process; this was a situation that the participant found blessed to have.

During my time as an educator, the process was supportive. The administration made adequate support needed to transition to this new way of educating students in this century. I knew that this new teaching format was coming, but it was thrown upon us at a very different rate from any other previous time. The COVID-19 pandemic really did give the world a bungee jump into the future. (Brenda)

Sue stated that the administrative support was simply not there. This support, which was very rare, was only given to certain staff groups. The administrative team had their favorites and did not treat the professionals who were on their docket or "the in-crowd" were not treated as well. In one of the situations, the educator's husband, who was also a school employee, had a confrontation with the central office staff. Due to this confrontation, the educator's husband was demoted and fired; then, a few months later, the man's wife, who had received excellent evaluation results in the last 7 years, got some disturbing news from the administration. The educator was going to be put on an action plan and then moved to another grade level. This was very disturbing when the administration treated their employee like that just because of who their husband was. This was a terrible example of the format of treatment of some educators, especially in a time of a worldwide Pandemic.

Ann stated that the administrative support was supportive if the person did not make them look bad. One educator got the coals across them, in a figure of speech, because they recommended retaining a kindergartener, and this student was in the EC program at the school. The parent wanted to meet with that educator and the EC educator. This parent initially agreed with the retention but then changed their mind about retaining the child. Then the EC educator, who sat in on the meeting, agreed with the parent, and they agreed not to retain that student. The EC educator took over the meeting at that point. A few days later, the administrator came to the educator and stated that the child was to be retained. The educator then explained to the administrator that the recommendation was made for retention, but the parent came back and refused retention. The principal was angered by this and said that this should have been a conversation that the principal had with her. The educator never had a chance to explain that the EC teacher had taken over the meeting and conceded with the parent. The administrator stormed out and did not listen to the educator's point of view. Many consequences occurred when evaluation time came, and the educator received several marks on her end-of-year evaluation. This was such a situation that caused the process of the Pandemic to be especially hard on this educator and many other educators. Finding evidence to decide retention or promotion was a very difficult task. (Ann)

Nathan stated that the administration at his job was very supportive and gave many avenues for growth and support during the ever-changing time of COVID-19. This time was a significant change for many educators. This was a time for growing and changing, and the administration at the school Nathan worked at embraced the change and went full force into supporting their employees during COVID-19.

Olivia stated that the use of the county-created workshops was an aim in the correct direction, but this format of administrative support could reach the educators who were new to the craft for which they had more experience with computer software and facilitation on an online

spectrum. This gave an unfair advantage to educators who were not as familiar with the new-fangled way of viewing education and navigating the ever-changing software on a global basis.

Allison stated that the administrative support at her school did the best they could with the limited resources given to the school for the transition from traditional learning to the transition of COVID-19 virtual learning. Operable forms of administering a lesson were discussed in detail. The resources put to the wayside had been used during this time to ensure receipt of this education. The mail, telephone, and good old-fashioned door-to-door drop-off became things that were common when these items of communication had seen a decline in the years before COVID-19. Administrators had to get creative to support their staff and pull from the available resources.

Interview Question 7

The participants discussed that when they were beginning teachers, they were very excited about the possibilities of the position. They discussed how the college forum recommended many strategies to help with their position. When entering the educational forum, although they had a wide spectrum of skills to use, beginning teachers were very unprepared for the position overall. The teaching position has many demands, such as never-ending paperwork and the constant pushing of the curriculum, which gives educators little time for creativity.

As veteran teachers, the participants stated that they felt like their teaching efficacy level was a factor that had decreased across the years of teaching. This could be because of the efforts that have to be made to reach students, or the COVID-19 pandemic has made it very hard to build relationships with students.

Job Demands/Teacher Self-Efficacy

Helen stated that the confidence level that she was going to get through a situation has increased because, as an educator, one has been through the situation before, overcoming the challenges placed upon them. When educators are beginning educators, they simply do not have that confidence level that is so important in the years that follow in education. That is why so many educators leave the field even 5 years into teaching. New teacher educators do not have those veteran teachers come to them and seek them out and say that in a few years.

As an educator you will be able to manage any situation thrown at you. This mindset is one of the key reasons I stay in education because I know that I am prepared and ready for the challenges facing me as an educator. I can do this. That is why I am satisfied with my job overall because I know I am good at it. The paperwork and workloads are getting a little out of hand, but I will keep on course until I cannot oversee it anymore, and by that time, I hope I have enough years to retire. (Helen)

Wendy stated that even with the changes going on in education, she still feels like the results in the classroom would not be any better.

When I started in education, my feeling of ‘I am going to change the world’ was very prevalent. As the years have passed and I am now what they consider a veteran educator, this has not affected my dislike or like for my job satisfaction. I feel indifferent to my position I do not personally enjoy it because I simply have no time for me and this is something that the school is on to their staff about all the time that we push social emotional learning and mindfulness for the students it is not considered an asset for the teachers because the educator is put on a list of forms

that must be completed, we as educators must document everything that occurs pretty much in the classroom. This is something that can be shortened. The amount of paperwork placed on educators is unreal. Why must we post the same documentation in three different locations? One factor is that educators are not seen as professionals, which is why they must document so much. To prove that we did it, we performed the task. If a person were in any other position that required a college degree, would they be questioned and required to document as much? The answer is no. My job satisfaction has changed from being a beginning teacher. I am now looser with my words and speak my mind more than when I was a beginning educator. Being browbeat in education has a factor in one's self-motivation and job satisfaction. The administrative red tape and accountability for students' test scores hold an albatross around an educator's neck. (Wendy)

Francis stated that her visions of her job satisfaction from beginning teacher to veteran teachers have changed due to the reality of the world.

When one is young and fresh from college, one has this idea that you can change the world. When COVID hit, I felt as if I were making some impact and I would change the world, just like when I was a beginning teacher, but the constant restraints of the administrative guidelines set during COVID were very restricting. It sucked the joy out of the love of teaching. Part of an educator's job satisfaction depends on sharing their craft and creativity. When COVID hit, it was mandated that certain programs were to be used. The reasoning for this was the time constraints online. I agree that it is very important to have the curriculum, but it is very important that requiring no fun or excitement in learning is a very warped way to handle things. My job satisfaction as a veteran teacher has decreased because of the demand for the curriculum placed on educators. (Francis)

Jan discussed how it was much more conducive to students when she started teaching: Social Emotional learning we as educators have evolved through the years, and this evolution that is put in the name of progress has changed the mindset of educators. Education is now given scripted lessons with resources prescribed for student needs, like a doctor prescribing medication to a sick patient. As a veteran teacher, I have seen these changes and how people respond to text and learning. As a veteran teacher, I see from experience that it is the important skills, not the pace of a scripted commercial teacher's manual. Experienced educators have the advantage because they know how to cut through the fluff of ineffective curriculum guides. Seeing reality has changed my job satisfaction. (Jan)

Brenda stated that she views her position now differently than she viewed it as a beginning educator:

I view my position as more of a clerical worker who manages the paperwork and lesson plans. My days are filled with giving lectures to which no one will listen. The so-called experts discuss how you should make learning fun. But when you try games and other best practices, note the transition time and the discussion between the students increases. This wastes valuable instruction time. Even with these movements of partners for discussion, the results do not change. I once felt like the students would respect me when I was a beginning teacher. The outlook of my position did change a little during COVID because on the computer, the students logged into the lectures. This was a very effective form of teaching. (Brenda)

Sue discussed the changes that occurred from her beginning teaching experiences and the career status that she is in now. This educator stated that she has grown as an educator during her tenure, but the excitement that once existed when she was a beginning educator is not as vibrant as it once was:

At one time, I felt as if I could be effective. Now, as a tenured teacher, I feel like a pencil-pusher only testing and gathering data. With all the diagnostic testing, when are we as educators expected to reach the student, not just assess them? The paperwork load on educators is an issue that must be addressed. Because of the issues during COVID-19, the pressure and paperwork have really gained ground with trying to reach the children who had so much learning loss. (Sue)

Ann discussed how EVAAS has affected her outlook on her position:

Taking test scores and using them against educators to rate their teaching is not working. Well, we as educators cannot control many things that go on in students' lives, and our livelihood is held to a student's or group of students' test scores. This seems like it is wrong on so many levels. My viewpoint on my position now is I feel very angry about things that happen in education now that I did not see as a beginning teacher. When a doctor's patient dies, does the doctor get fired because he failed? EVAAS is the same concept. (Ann)

Nathan stated that his position has changed as a veteran teacher.

The beginning teachers have so much experience working with computers and technology that their ability to navigate COVID was a breeze, but the more veteran educators got left behind because of the technology gaps in their training. Teacher bullying was occurring because the newer educators were making fun of the veteran educator's inability to operate the more updated forms of technology. This constant change in the use of technology and the gaining of knowledge that is so far out of our generational functioning area makes one feel like I am not an effective educator because of my generational gap. (Nathan)

Olivia discussed how the demands of the position had changed quite a bit from when she first started as a beginning teacher:

Especially during COVID, that changed the teaching profession forever. The technological expectations have changed, and the forms and report paperwork have been a rigorous part of the position. I feel like my focus is more on the paperwork and the pushing curriculum. As a veteran educator, the beginning teacher would not have thought so much about the other parts of the job than just caring and enjoying the time with the students. COVID made the connection to the students even harder. There are students out there that need to be reached. (Olivia)

Allison stated that her enjoyment of teaching has changed during the cycle of becoming a veteran teacher. She feels that she is overworked and that the demands placed on educators are unrealistic.

When I was a beginning teacher, I felt as if I would be respected and appreciated. Those times that someone acknowledges an educator based on their strengths are very rare. During COVID, the job demands started to increase more because now educators had to submit their paperwork online. This was not a problem for the younger educators who knew about the technology used at hand, but the veteran teachers who had limited experience with computers and their functioning struggled. Some veteran educators were made fun of and almost bullied due to the technology questions and lack of support to feel like effective educators. (Allison)

Interview Question 8

The participants discussed their strategies as veteran teachers to combat teacher burnout. Many participants discussed being mindful of your personal well-being and knowing when you need some time for yourself. Some participants discussed putting testing and paperwork aside and focusing on the students' needs as important. Other participants discussed knowing when to exit the situation and move on.

Helen stated that one strategy that she uses not to allow teacher burnout to get the best of her is to remember that you are more than your job; you have a lot to offer people and to keep looking for those small successes in your position. Being mindful is a strategy that really does help your social emotional state and helps combat burnout symptoms.

Wendy discussed that being a lifelong learner is key. To continue to build yourself and master your craft is a wonderful way to combat that “I’m stuck” feeling. You know in your mind that you can do extraordinary things, and this position does not define you. This will make the administration appreciate you more because they truly have an asset in their building.

Francis discussed putting the standardized test and the reports that “so-called” must be completed to the side. Put those items to the side and tell yourself that the little humans in the classroom are the most important thing. If you put things into perspective, it makes a large difference. The situations will work themselves out overall. Just keep your mind on what the most important factors are.

Jan stated that educators are under so much stress because of EVAAS and test scores that it is very hard to separate the students from the test score. Students must not be viewed as a test score. Students are more than test scores. Remembering that the students are important is a great strategy to combat burnout. Put the students first, not the paperwork or the administration’s demands.

Brenda talked about how educators’ rights have been violated since the foundation of the position of educator. This EVAAS system is a way to add more demands on educators, and it is also a tool used by the administration to know who to ride all year. If your EVAAS scores are not good, you know you can count on two things next year. You must know you are on the ride list from administration, or you better find somewhere new to work for the next year. Administrators see that test scores matter more than the person that it reflects. My advice to combat burnout is to know how this system works. In one instance, a child in foster care was added to a classroom of a veteran educator who was very dedicated to her craft. She had a very low-performing class the previous year because her assistant got cancer, and she was responsible for educating all 20 kindergarteners all by herself. This was a time when EVAAS was coming about and being developed. That year, this educator’s test scores reflected a lower functioning kindergarten than the other three classes. It was because the other educators were all friends, and they were told to team up and assess each other’s classes. The educators that assessed the friends’ students padded the test scores. This made their test scores look better than the educator with the low-performing test scores. The child in the foster home was in that educator’s classroom the following year. He would run and jump into the children in the classroom. He would hit the teacher and bite the teacher. The principal brought the educator into the office and told the educator that she needed to bring up her test scores because her students did not perform as well as the other classes and that the educator needed to do something to control the student that was terrorizing the class and the foster care system would not do anything to assist. During the time after this conversation took place, the educator continued to have difficulty with the foster child, and the foster system did not seem to respond to the pleas for help from the educator. She asked for a behavior specialist, and the behaviors were not assisted. The student’s behaviors continued to increase. He jumped off the conference room table when he had to be removed from the classroom. Finally, when the educator had realized that the child’s behavior was not going to improve and the support was not there, this was determined because at a meeting with the Foster System and the principal, the educator suggested only half days for the student the foster parent said we thought that you liked us and laughed. The educator realized that with the student acting as he was and no support, the

blame was surely being put on that educator because her test scores were low and were going to be low for the following year and because the children were traumatized. The educator decided to leave the situation and the profession. COVID is a hard time to change jobs, but this educator did so because the chips were stacked against her. The educator worked remotely with no student contact. She left the teaching profession so COVID-19 consequences and EVAAS could not come and bite her. The advice for beginning educators is to know when your back is against the wall. This is a very hard item and time to teach, but to continue, one must do their best and always have a backup option overall. (Brenda)

Sue stated that seeing the joy in the students' faces at Christmastime and the holiday celebrations is a way she always combats burnout. During COVID, it was very hard to get that same joy and excitement that had always been such a blessing to her before. This COVID period was a time for many to fall into depression because of the lack of joyful occasions.

Ann discussed that the strategy that helps her stay free of burnout is remembering the purpose of being there and why. However, she did say that the workload is sometimes very unbearable and time-consuming. The position has its original goal of reaching students one child at a time.

Olivia discussed that there is much bullying and bragging among the other educators in teaching. Knowing who you are and knowing how you are a good educator is important. Knowing your worth inside will help you overcome the bullying of teachers. This is an important thing to do in any area of your life.

Allison discussed that keeping in mind that you are touching the future is a great strategy for combating burnout. Keeping your own social feelings in check is key to combating burnout and fatigue. When someone asks you to lunch who knows you have been working too hard, take that offer to socialize, not stay home and work on paperwork for the entire day for your job the NCELI will get done in its own good time you do not have to kill yourself with all the paperwork demands. This is very important to remember. (Allison)

Interview Question 9

The participants discussed that during the Pandemic, they encountered many challenges. These challenges included teaching effectiveness and other teachers not helpful to other educators, which caused extreme stress for the participants and their students. Additionally, many educators struggled to obtain work samples from students, and students often did not seem as motivated to perform tasks in a virtual environment as they did in the face-to-face classroom. The main theme of these challenges was teaching effectiveness to students during the Pandemic.

Teaching Effectiveness

Helen discussed how she took on a new position in North Carolina with a new grade level and new forms of teaching. She stated that this led to her feeling very stressed, and she felt as if she had a loss of efficacy as an educator, but when the pandemic came, she had to update her entire teaching strategy. The administration began to expect documentation such as photographs of work samples. These were very difficult to obtain during a Pandemic situation. This documentation collection led to stress and anxiety on the students and the educators. These documents were excessive requests for a time that was a turning point for education.

Wendy stated that as a lateral entry educator, she found it very difficult to understand all the components of education. When she found that there was a lot to the science of teaching with which she was not familiar. Documentation of higher-order learning strategies was required when this documentation was a challenge to obtain. With this and the new delivery of the Pandemic, this educator struggled with test scores and was often called on the carpet due to the testing levels. When the students were assessed, she found that they were not performing on the benchmark skills with which they should have been familiar.

Francis discussed teaching young children the technology platforms used during virtual learning, and that they often changed. This was a very difficult situation during the Pandemic because the younger children did not understand the changes. The technology changes were difficult to maneuver because they did not enhance learning for the students. It only caused unnecessary anxiety and stress for all involved. She stated that her county started one technology platform, and by the time everyone was familiar with that platform, they changed to WEBEX, a much more difficult platform to maneuver, especially for the parents. The teachers had to teach the parents how to manipulate technology platforms.

Jan stated that as a veteran educator who found it difficult to facilitate using the new technology resources with very little training found it difficult to use the technology that was asked of educators to use. This led to her students not performing as well on standardized testing. During the Pandemic, she found it very difficult because she, as a veteran, found that her technology skills were not as advanced as some of her colleagues. She struggled with keeping up with the pacing of the technology and the operation of some of the equipment. With the reports that all had to be done remotely, obtaining these data to complete the documentation was very difficult. The formats were not set up in a format that was usable for data analysis.

Brenda discussed that she always strived to be an innovative educator. The year that COVID-19 came, she was at a new school. Many students were learning face-to-face during the transition, but some were still virtual. She described an incident that caused extreme stress during the Pandemic. This situation occurred because of a lack of staffing in the schools because of personnel shortages. The following incident happened to this educator during COVID-19.

The grade level started to prepare to dismiss the car rider children, and one team member, who normally is one of the teachers with the team, had to go to the buses to give one of the bus drivers an address. The other team members were not in place during this time. The children who do not normally ask to go to the restroom started going to the classroom bathrooms continuously. That was an occurrence that had not happened before. This was a problem due to the lack of staffing. This procedure upset the dismissal plan, and staffing was an issue that made for much teaming up of staff to perform tasks. The educator had only done this procedure for about 2 days, and bathroom allowances had not been allowed before. This mishap in the procedure could have been avoided if there had been enough staffing.

Sue stated that it was very stressful when the students were not taking the content seriously during the pandemic. The students would not log into their classes or do their online assignments; this was very concerning to the participant because standardized testing and showing growth on those measures determined her job stability. This educator stated that using standardized testing during COVID-19 was a big issue because the data would not necessarily reflect the students' growth. This really caused some stress with her job satisfaction. She was worried every day about the students' performance. If the students do not perform, she loses her contract.

Ann found that the loss of empathy occurred during the pandemic. Not only were children bullying students more and becoming less aware of their Social Emotional Learning, but the teachers were not as helpful or eager to be kind to one another. This led to unnecessary stress that could have been avoided during a difficult time. Brenda experienced bullying during the Pandemic by another educator. The participant stated that other teachers have stated things that should not be said or witnessed by students about their educator in front of the students. One example of this is when one of the students who continuously takes off their mask came out into the bus line. The educator, who was in a hurry and stressed because she was a little late, did not notice that the student was without a face mask. The other teacher stated in front of everyone in the hall, "He cannot come out here with no mask on every day, figure it out." The educator's words were very brutal and said in a loud tone where all students and staff could hear the comment. It made the educator look bad in front of all the staff and students in the hall. This educator was already struggling to deliver lessons in a virtual and face-to-face format, but the educator was also struggling with teachers bullying teachers.

Nathan, a veteran educator with over 10 years of teaching experience, stated that the pandemic technology shifts made it very difficult for many educators to make that shift in tech platforms. With the lack of staffing in the school, these shifts also made it difficult because of the lack of classroom coverage. This participant stated that even with ten years of teaching experience from service on the Diversified Leadership team and the study and implementation of the use of the LetterLand Curriculum within his school. When COVID-19 became a pandemic, the participant was the most seasoned participant on his team. Because of his great work ethic and great mannerisms, when one of the other educators developed cancer and had to go on medical leave, this educator was given two choices: he could take the educator's entire class, or the class would rotate between all classes. This would mean because of the virtual format that this educator would be responsible for 47 students and young children at that. He took on this endeavor because he did not want the confusion of having them have to log on to a different code each day. This would be a very confusing process for the students. This process was a little unnecessary for another educator who could have been appointed to the situation.

Olivia described how stressful it was to want students to be present and learning and they have so many absences. Attendance was a great problem during the Pandemic because how can one teach students that are not there. This absenteeism of students was a measure for administration to consider. Students would not log on to the class links and this became a big issue with teaching efficacy and influenced test scores.

Allison discussed the stress of getting students to take learning seriously and to realize that just because they are learning on a computer platform that it is not something that is not important. The participant stated that she was very stressed because of the lack of interest and the standardized testing reflected that. Students did not take online learning seriously. It was like they were on vacation. The fact that testing was looked at was unfair to educators for the students did not take learning seriously.

Interview Question Ten

During the Pandemic, the participants described many components that influenced their stress before and during the Pandemic. The participants stated that the way that people treated each other changed and the way that communication occurs changed as if it was overnights. The participants discussed that changes in technology approaches were a major theme in the stress factors of the participants.

Technology Platform Changes

Helen discussed that her stress level is affected because of the lack of empathy people have for each other. Before COVID people were cordial to each other and respected what, one had to say. Now with the new technology people will usually mute others on the Zoom platform or on one occasion there was a teacher's meeting face to face. We had to be socially distanced and wear face masks, but when I was speaking, one of my colleagues asked me to pull up my mask mid-conversation. I realize that masks are important, but to interrupt someone while speaking and your social distance is just a total lack of empathy. People have changed and so have the students. There is more bullying going on within the school setting, among the children and the adults. These are stressors that are new due to COVID-19.

Wendy discussed a stressor seen in her classroom since students have returned to the hybrid format—part online, and part face-to-face. She stated that the students are needier than they were before. They cannot use basic critical thinking skills that they could perform before. This could be because the parents perform activities for the students at home and not allow them to think for themselves.

Francis stated that a big stressor during COVID-19 was that the students would not complete the task needed to perform accurate grading. This was a big issue due to the detailed documentation that had to be administered for each student. This task work was a key component in assessments and seeing where students were performing in areas of learning. Educators used observation to fill in the gaps when students did not perform important tasks.

Jan stated that the constant change in the technology formats was a stress trigger because the district would not stay on the same technology platform. The platform was continuously changing, which caused much stress for both educators and parents because they had to learn new platforms on an ongoing basis.

Brenda said that stress was ongoing during COVID-19. Students were not cooperative, and the educators had to contact students and parents constantly to keep them on pace. Personal contacts were harder to make because of the online format of the information. This caused stress because parents were sometimes not supportive of the feedback that the students were receiving. Cooperation was a crucial component during COVID, and educators really had to work to get that component.

Sue stated that a big stress component for her was having to teach both online groups of students and students face-to-face at the same time. This was extremely difficult because the students were at different levels and learning styles, which was not conducive to meeting their needs. This teaching format needed to be perfected more cohesively.

Ann stated that the Pandemic violated her personal space because she felt no separation between work and home. Before, she felt as if she had her privacy during the Pandemic; the students were in her home via the computer and could see backgrounds and things that were personal to her. She felt stressed every day because she had to check her surroundings before she logged in and keep her own children quiet and occupied while she was working.

Nathan stated that teaching during the Pandemic was stressful in all ways. Not only did educators have to maneuver a new and uncharted format, but they were constantly being reminded that they would be held to the test scores and results handed to them. Educators are already responsible for so many tasks and test scores that having the extra paperwork handed to

educators during the pandemic was a stress that few educators could endure. Nathan stated that he worked on documentation and reports until 6:00 pm every day. The participant stated that the teaching hours took on new times and days.

Olivia stated that schools moved online to combat the spread of the virus; this was a very crucial thing that had to be done to protect people from the virus. It was very stressful knowing that as an educator, you were responsible for the learning of students that you had never personally met.

Allison stated that the paperwork demands were unreal; answering emails could take up to 2 hours, which was a struggle for educators during the pandemic because much of the information required to be turned in had to be done in virtual folders. It was stressful finding the location for the paperwork drops.

Work samples were a very crucial component in assessing students' learning. Being able to obtain these work samples was a difficult task during COVID. Documenting students' understanding of skills was a challenge during the Pandemic.

Summary

The COVID-19 Pandemic changed the educational platform for the long-term future. Educators interviewed in this study described the stress levels they encountered and the job factors they had to adjust to during the pandemic. The participants also discussed their job satisfaction during the pandemic. Many participants described their experience as stressful, but the profession of education holds many rewards that are not monetary. The participants also gave strategies for beginning educators to survive the many challenges that education holds. The participants shared their experiences and emotions with the researcher. Their responses are recorded with honesty and directness in mind.

Chapter V: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

Overview of Study

Teacher burnout has caused many effective teachers to leave the profession. The teaching profession is one of the most stressful professions on the planet. When teachers do not receive the administrative support and appreciation needed to fare in this high-pressure profession, their career efforts tend to feel hopeless (Dworkin, 2015). Administrative team support is essential to educator's job satisfaction, for this support and understanding shows respect for one's efforts on their job. Therefore, it becomes critical for school and district leaders to support and value teachers' work to close the teacher shortage gap (Cawelti, 2014).

The problem is that teacher support is an issue that does not emphasize the educational forum. It is a component that hinders the advancement of students and the advancement of educators. The facilitation of administrative use of teacher appraisal instruments for teacher performance evaluation has many adverse outcomes on both teachers and students. These adverse outcomes include focusing on a curriculum more than the students' emotional needs.

Many educators teach the test. This method, in turn, is to meet the goals of the teacher appraisals. Many educators are limited on the administrative support to reach some of the goals

on the instruments used for job performance judgments. These support issues are causing the job performance of educators to become unrealistic due to the demands placed upon them (Dworkin, 2015). These accountability factors have caused social justice shortfalls, for many educators and the teaching profession has suffered throughout the years.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine elementary teachers' experiences of stress and burnout during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the impact on their job satisfaction. The researcher described the research methodology and collected and analyzed the interviews' responses. Reviewing the data allowed the researcher to answer the research questions on teachers' stress and burnout during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The following research question guided this study:

1. What do elementary teachers perceive as the factors influencing their job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

The findings of this study found that teachers felt stress from job demands and administrative support were a major concern with their job satisfaction and the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor that contributed to stress and support. The findings used a coding system to analyze the themes that were explored during the interview process. The themes that discuss job demands and administrative support were themes that occurred in all ten interview responses from the participants.

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

This study observed the process of teachers' job satisfaction and support features in progressive development of the use of interviews and coding as a research instrument and concentrated on the process of development in the development of support features to assist teachers in their job performance and stress management.

It was found that, based on the findings of the informal interview process, that educators need supporters and in need of support in the classroom with student engagement and resources. Relevant issues of the finding found that the participants experienced more abundant stress and emotional side effects during the Pandemic than they did before the Pandemic. This was determined because the participants expressed their concern for the delivery of lessons during the Pandemic. The participants stressed that students did not seem as engaged with learning as they did before the Pandemic. Many educators felt depersonalization and burnout before the pandemic but during the Pandemic these issues arose and became more prominent. The major themes that arose from the findings were as follows.

Linking Literature to Findings

Overwhelming Instructional Delivery: This theme came up in the annotations of six of the ten participants of the study. This was a discussion of the hardships that occurred in the pursuit to gather student's engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is a theme that many educators faced during the online instructional delivery format. In the Literature Review of this study Maslach discussed that overwhelming demands on educators was a major side effect of the emotional exhaustion that many educators are faced with (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

District Support System: This theme was mentioned in the annotation of four out of the ten participants. This coded theme was mentioned because the school district did offer support during the COVID-19 Pandemic this led to many educators being able to stay afloat during the difficult time of pushing the information out to the students and the community. According to the

Literature Review Chang discussed that having a strong support system is the key to managing times of difficulty (Chang, 1991).

The Process of Learning New Technological Resources: This theme arose in eight of the ten participants. This theme was mentioned because many educators had to acquire the knowledge to use the new technological platforms that were being utilized during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was a task that came easily for some resource users and not as easy for other technological platform users. Amerin (1998) stated that learning new materials can be a very difficult endeavor and takes time to master.

Technology Creativity: This theme was mentioned in the annotations of six of the ten participants. This was a theme that many educators felt that they could have more choice in the technology resources that were being used to enhance the student's engagement. This topic was one that many educators felt very strongly about having creativity to engage learning. According to Maslach & Jackson depersonalization is a major factor associated with burnout syndrome and causes many educators to feel emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Mindfulness of the Educators: This theme was mentioned in four of the five narratives of the participants. The participants discussed that they needed to remember their "why." The reason that they chose education as their career and remembering to be mindful of their needs and the students' needs was especially important during the Pandemic. Educator social emotional wellbeing is a factor that must be considered when examining one's job satisfaction (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Restructuring Teaching and Learning: This theme was mentioned in all annotations of the interview participants. This theme was expressed as educators are very limited in the tools that are offered to engage students learning. This is a very wide theme that could cover online learning and face to face formats of learning. The educators felt that they could have had more choices in students' learning options both asynchronous and synchronous during the COVID-19 Pandemic (American Education Research Association, 2021).

Extra Funding for Technology Inclusive Decision Making: This theme was annotated four out of ten times in the interview responses. Some educators saw that funding was managed differently at different sites within the school district. This was very concerning for educators because some of the funding was being used for tools and equipment that was not necessarily beneficial for student engagement.

Job Demands and Teacher Self Efficacy: This theme was annotated in all ten of the interview participants' interview responses. This theme was one that educators felt strongly about for their teaching effectiveness was often being impeded upon by non- instructional job demands. In the Literature Review Dworkin discussed that teaching effectiveness is one of the major side effects of educator burnout. This not only affects the educator, but it also affects the students (Dworkin, 2015).

Prioritizing and Focusing on Students' Needs: This theme was annotated in all ten participants' responses to the interview. This was a concern for educators to focus on students' needs and keep the students as the focus of their position. The educators felt that there were so many demands and expectations put upon them that often the student was not focused upon as much as they should be. The students were sometimes not the focus of the position especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Technology Platform Changes: This theme was mentioned in six of the ten participants' interview responses. This was due to the security of the platforms and many educators had to continuously learn and train students on the new technology platforms. This was concerning because it took valuable time out of the educator's instructional time.

Age and the Job Satisfaction during the Pandemic: During this study, an additional research survey was conducted to determine if the educators who participated in this study were experiencing burnout symptoms and job dissatisfaction before the COVID 19 Pandemic. This two-question survey was conducted using Survey Monkey online survey creator (surveymonkey.com, 2022). The findings of this part of the interview determined that the participants who were over the age of 35 experienced a higher level of job dissatisfaction during the pandemic than the participants who were under the age of 35.

This was a significant finding because it found that age, the use of technological resources, and changes in job climate had a different impact on various age groups. The following graphs demonstrate the levels of job dissatisfaction for the participants in the age 35 and above age group.

These findings were very expressive of the culture change that has occurred due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Educators have had to adjust their teaching style and some of these changes were effective, and some are not. The school districts have tried to assist in teacher self-efficacy, but these efforts have often only played an ongoing effect of job demands and teacher stress. Many educators have experienced bullying from other educators. This plays into the climate of our world currently. Education is experiencing misconduct just like other places of work. There has been an increase in misconduct in other areas of society for example the airline industry has had many accounts of misconduct especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. There has been a shift of society changing the norms in their behavior during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This is not only occurring in society but schools as well. In the Literature Review Leiter discussed that many educators feel that training is a major factor in the transfer of knowledge and learning new components for teaching students the materials and social emotional learning concepts are very important (Leiter, 2019).

This is concerning because educators are shaping the future of the society and when they are experiencing stress and burnout due to job demands and support issues there is a concern for more efforts to improve the working environment for educators. With the demands of the COVID-19 Pandemic there has been more teacher and educational turnover rates than in the last twenty years. This is very concerning for the educational institution and shows an obvious need for change in the job demands.

Teacher burnout especially during COVID-19 is a significant problem in education today. While many researchers such as Mashloch have researched the possible reasons behind burnout and job satisfaction issues. The effect it has on students and teachers has been a focal point for research in recent years. This study proposed to investigate the major themes between teacher burnout and job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Surveys were sent to ten participants who taught kindergarten through fifth grade in school districts in the Southeastern region of North Carolina. There was a significant relationship between teaching delivery options both technologically and format of learning that had a role in educators job satisfaction. Two primary models of burnout emerged in the literature: a phase model posited by Leiter (2019) based in part on a description of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment structure of burnout postulated by Maslach and Jackson (1981), the Maslach

Burnout Inventory can explore these components of the burnout syndrome in a more precise method.

These findings showed that many educators experience burnout once or twice in their career cycle and leaders need to find options to combat and consider the workload and job demands placed on educators.

Discussion of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework focused on the Contagion Theory that suggests that if the administration and the community do not support teachers these factors contribute to teacher burnout. This burnout can be passed on to other educators and contribute to burnout of other staff members. These factors can foster other teachers to also suffer from burnout (Blumer, 1985). The Contagion Theory is a theory of collective behavior which explains that the crowd can cause a hypnotic impact on individuals. The Contagion Theory was first developed by Gustave LeBon in his book called "The Crowd: a study of popular mind in France." The theoretical framework also discovered that student misbehavior and engagement in assignments can also lead to the Contagion Theory and the passing of engagement issues to the educators. This causes a lack of job satisfaction and the burnout Contagion Theory.

Student misbehavior and engagement is one of the factors related most strongly to teacher burnout. No single definition exists for student misbehavior, although the term is conceptualized consistently as behaviors that disrupt the teaching learning process or interfere with the orderly operation of the classroom (Kennedy, 2021).

To examine potential sources of variation in study findings, several themes were coded as moderators of the connection between student engagement and teacher burnout. These include instructional delivery engagement and teaching efficacy. Student engagement was reported in the coding of six out of ten interview responses; this showed one of the most coded themes in the study. The second potential source of coded themes in the study findings was the support level from the district that was reported in coding of seven out of the ten interview responses.

Seven separate participants indicated a significant code of emotional exhaustion and demand exhaustion according to Maslach emotional exhaustion is a major component in the burnout syndrome the finding of a significant positive component between emotional exhaustion and burnout is a variable that leads to teacher burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). According to the findings six separate participants indicated that student engagement was a significant negative component leading to teacher burnout. The other four samples of accomplishment and composite of personal accomplishment were components that enhanced their job satisfaction. Educators' job satisfaction is often acquired by the Contagion Theory. This is the transfer of job satisfaction issues from one individual to another. Educators discuss their jobs and job performance between each other. These discussions often lead to burnout and job satisfaction issues due to different viewpoints.

Implications for Teachers, Educational Leaders, and Policymakers

The findings from the study found that educators felt significant stress. According to the findings one item that the educators discussed was the under engagement of the students and under engagement causes test scores to falter leading to performance levels drops that lead to underperforming schools. Many schools are under sanctions of Targeted Support and Improvement Additional Targeted Support. These targeted and support improvements are placed

on Consistently Underperforming schools. These schools have a subgroup that is consistently underperforming over an extended period (American Education Research Association, 2010).

These efforts lead to a development plan to specifically address how the school will improve student achievement. The plan will also include how the school will present a comprehensive plan to address classroom management, standard-aligned instruction, Professional Learning Community, Instructional leadership, and recruitment and Retention of Effective Teachers. All these strategies for improvement are made in good efforts to improve performance but come at a price for educators. These educators are given additional tasks to perform to make improvements which add to the workload of the educators and stress levels. They are forced to make plans and produce data that takes additional time out of their instructional day and runs into their personal time. The educators are often not compensated for their additional efforts and often the true issue is not with the educators or the school performance it is with the student engagement.

According to Dr. Kathy Kennedy there are strategies that can be used to increase educational effect size (Kennedy, 2021). These strategies are very effective, but they come at a price for educators. To implement these strategies, it takes hours of planning even on the weekends. This takes a toll on educators' families and often takes over their personal lives.

Implications for Change

The findings from this study also have implications for practical application. These implications are presented in the form of suggestions for practical application of the literature review, findings, and conclusion of this study. Some of these implications include

1. School administrators should review policies and procedures relative to how teachers' roles are defined. Any ambiguous policies or procedures should be revised for clarity.
2. Principals should receive training on how to provide adequate support to their teaching staff.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in decision making processes regarding issues that affect them. Moreover, this participation should not merely be token; administrators and policy makers should make a concerted effort to listen to and understand educators' viewpoints.
4. Teachers should receive specific training relative to dealing with problem student engagement especially during situations such as COVID-19. Clear policies should be in place for dealing with specific engagement issues.
5. Interventions should be designed for teachers experiencing work overload and heavy demands. Interventions might include re-design of work processes and training in time management skills.
6. Teachers should receive a clear explanation of all expectations placed on them.
7. Administrators of schools and school systems should organize formal support groups for teachers and should provide many opportunities for interaction among teachers.
8. Professional Development for teachers and administrators should be considered based on managing job demands. Also, overcoming burnout symptoms and boosting job satisfaction. Time management and implementing ways to make paperwork demands more effective should be topics for Professional Development.

There are substantive recommendations for finding a solution to some of the stress and burnout caused by the constant push of job demands on educators. These recommendations include training for both administration and educators. These efforts were found in the study to influence job satisfaction for educators.

Recommendations for Future Research

The overall goal of this study was to provide a qualitative review of the major themes that have caused teacher burnout and job satisfaction changes during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The moderate to large examination of student behavior and engagement has led many educators to emotional exhaustion, as this primary element of burnout indicates that a teacher is not having the resources to give themselves the tools needed to capture students' engagement.

Teachers have long played a vital role in the development of children and youth. They have been responsible for helping students to learn and apply concepts in diverse subjects, exposing students to various viewpoints and maintaining classroom discipline. Providing an environment conducive to learning for students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels; planning and evaluating lessons to prepare the future workforce. Moreover, educators have fulfilled their duties in working condition characterization by having a heavy workload. Additional research is suggested to encompass strategies to lighten this workload for educators. Yet, despite the import of their responsibilities, teachers have suffered from a lack of respect because everyone has at one time been at school, most people believe that they themselves have some or even most of a teacher's expertise and capability.

Teachers lack the mystique that normally enhances professional status and power. They are subject to public attempts to control and constrain them from legislation, public opinion, and even, occasionally by media ridicule and prejudice. Future studies are encouraged to study the relevance of the teaching degree and the functions that educators possess that other careers do not encompass.

Limitations of the Study

Although this research was able to explain a portion of the themes in teacher burnout and job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The decision of including only ten participants and the use of a small sample size can be seen as a limitation of this study. This study finding showed a link between burnout and student engagement. This study was limited to elementary teachers from the Southeastern region of North Carolina. This study was also limited to veteran teachers with five years or more years of teaching experience in public schools in the Southeastern region of North Carolina.

Delimitations of the Study

This study has a small sample size, but the interview responses were very robust with information that is very relevant to the educational experience for both students and teachers. These interview responses were centralized in the Southeastern region of North Carolina. This is something that creates a central area of concern for where these issues in education and the educational outlook for stakeholders is centralized.

This study also used a variety of participants both men and women educators were interviewed. This gave the perspective from the lens of different genders. The perspectives on the educational experience were enlightening with the different perspectives. Even with the focus on

elementary educators the study showed the struggles that all educators face with student engagement and the changes in education due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Concluding Thoughts

Burnout has been defined as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do “people” work of some kind. Teachers have been especially prone to burnout during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Teachers with high levels of burnout have suffered such physical symptoms as chronic physical exhaustion, ulcer symptoms marked weight loss or gain, insomnia, and increased blood pressure (Fessler, 1992). Moreover, they have displayed negative, callous attitudes toward students, and they have been associated with an overall decline in performance as well as low morale and increased turnover and absenteeism.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has only made the teacher burnout situation worse and caused many educators to leave the profession. This has led to a staffing shortage within schools and the students and administrators are feeling the effects of the loss of staffing. Many school systems are offering incentives to get staff to come aboard to feel some of the positions that are occurring. The problem is until the working conditions improve and there is more job satisfaction in the position of teaching there will not be a gain in employment and more educators will burnout and leave the profession.

Summary

This chapter served to review the findings and conclusions of this study and to relate them to recommendations for future research and implications for practical application. Some recommendations for future research focused on the search for identification of teachers’ roles in the classroom and the significance as a career. This would demonstrate the ability level of the education realm as a profession and dimensions of their careers. These efforts will lend to many educators having a better job satisfaction outcome and the mechanism to combat the burnout syndrome that plagues the teaching profession. It is through research that a thorough understanding of teacher burnout can be obtained, but research findings must be applied if they are to be of benefit to teachers, students, schools, and society.

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