A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS THAT IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION AT A TITLE I HIGH SCHOOL IN A SOUTHERN U.S. STATE

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this collective case study was to understand secondary teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influenced teacher retention at a Title I high school in a southern U.S. state. Although researchers have investigated the problem of teacher retention, few have studied factors that have influenced teacher retention in Title I high schools. The theories that guided this study included job demands-resources theory which analyzes employee well-being. This collective case study captured the insights of 10–15 current and former teachers at a Title I high school in a southern U.S. state. Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and administrative documents and records. The researcher completed an analysis by organizing and coding the data in order to identify emerging themes and patterns. Understanding secondary teachers’ perceptions of factors that impact teacher retention may help school leaders to plan and implement initiatives that reduce teacher attrition.

Keywords: teacher retention, educational organizations, secondary teachers, teacher attrition, principal/administrators, Title I school.
Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family and friends, especially my fiancé, who has always been supportive and helpful throughout my journey to complete this study and my degree. My children have also been a blessing in the process of completing this work, which took many endless nights and consumed a lot of family time. Without the love and support of my family, I would not have been able to reach my goal. I thank God for my family; I love them so much! I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my God, with hope that all those that read this work will find some encouragement in your presence and power.
Acknowledgments

I would like first to acknowledge my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is by his will and through his will that all things have been accomplished. I want to acknowledge my finance, Robert, my daughters Tylecia and Ja’Niya and my granddaughter Harmonie. Thanks for your patience, your longsuffering, your grace, and many times over your mercy. I know this has been a lot but I think God for blessing me with such a supportive family!

I want to thank and acknowledge my chair Dr. Rebecca Bowman. I appreciate how you have guided me through this process. Finally, to Dr. David Vacchi, my spiritual advisor and mentor, when I was frustrated or just plain confused, you were always there for me. You always knew exactly what to say and do to produce results. Thanks for all the words of wisdom and extra push.
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Job demands–resources (JD–R)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Teacher turnover has been an increasing problem across the nation, particularly among Title I high schools (Ingersoll et al., 2018). This chapter initiated a brief background on teacher retention and turnover in the United States and the many connections this growing issue had on the educational system. The historical, social, and theoretical perspectives described the earlier phase and evolution of teacher retention and emphasized the influences of attitudes, behaviors, and life changes. The problem statement discussed the issue the nation is experiencing in retaining teachers in Title I high schools, and the purpose proposed an exploration of this issue. The significance of the study described how this research may empirically and theoretically contribute to the existing body of knowledge encompassing teacher retention and job satisfaction. This chapter also contained research questions that formed the foundation of the research and definitions that were pertinent to the study.

Background

Historical Perspective

The problem of teacher retention has a long history. According to Elfers et al. (2006), the enrollment of baby boomers in schools in the 1960s and 1970s created a high demand for teachers. The need for teachers continued to rise as a result of several factors: (1) the senior teacher qualification standards stipulated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; (2) the rise in student enrollment due to high birth and immigration rates; (3) policies regarding class size; (4) a lack of graduates entering the profession; and (5) teacher attrition (Carver-Thomas, 2016; Podolsky et al., 2016). School improvement developments aimed to increase teacher buy-in while developing incentives for teachers to stay at their schools (Nguyen & Hunter, 2018).
Nonetheless, the fluctuation in demand for teachers had influenced teacher attrition in the United States (Baker, 2018). According to Perryman et al. (2019), teacher retention had become one of the biggest issues in education. Teachers had left the teaching profession in large numbers for a variety of reasons, including that of low pay, inadequate administrative support, and burnout (Walker, 2019). In many U.S. school districts, teacher attrition had been a growing problem (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018). Teachers who struggled or experienced burnout out were highly likely to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2017; Xia et al., 2015). Fuller et al. (2016) reported that each year 500,000 U.S. teachers left their schools, with half of those leaving the teaching profession altogether. Many districts and schools across the nation had struggled to replace teachers; for this reason, teacher retention had become an important issue in education (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014).

**Social Perspective**

Frequent turnover of teachers in a school negatively impacts the achievement of all students in the school, not just those in the classrooms of new teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Many teachers working in schools with high proportions of low-performing students, low-income students, and students belonging to ethnic minorities—which have tended to be Title I schools—have chosen to leave when presented with the opportunity to do so. The resulting high teacher attrition rates at Title I schools have perpetuated the disruption of the education of underserved students. Few researchers had investigated the specific factors that contributed to teacher attrition rates at high-poverty schools (Lynch, 2012). If administrators addressed teachers’ needs better while acknowledging their efforts, teachers may be more likely to continue teaching. I proposed to use a case study approach to focus on Title I high school teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention.
There are academic and economic repercussions when teachers leave the profession for reasons other than retirement. In 2009, the new teacher attrition rate was 9% in high poverty areas; as of 2014, that rate had doubled (Balu et al., 2010; Papay & Kraft, 2015). Through a variety of direct and indirect channels, researchers on organizational theory had reported that school context affected student achievement (Kraft et al., 2015). Teachers’ career decisions and interactions with students are the paths through which the organization influences attrition (Fryer, 2014). Simon and Johnson (2015) found consistent teacher turnover in schools that experienced poor context and a lack of support. Researchers have gathered data from teachers, students, and parents to quantify schools’ organizational contexts and examine the relationship between teacher turnover and student achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Marinell & Cocoa, 2013). They found that when schools incorporated organizational contexts, which were both teachers’ working conditions and student’s learning environment, they reduced teacher turnover and increased student achievement (Johnson et al., 2012). Although there was a general acknowledgment that teacher shortages were a concern, these shortages were not equal in all areas. For example, shortages tended to be felt more profoundly in nonmetropolitan areas (Brown, 2012).

**Theoretical Perspective**

I conducted a case study to fill the gap in the literature on the experiences of Title I high school teachers and their perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention (Moustakes, 1994). Using Maslow’s (1970) motivational theory as a theoretical framework to explore the factors that contributed to teacher job satisfaction, assisted in determining specific factors that influenced teachers to leave the profession, and by extension, offer areas in which to focus improve teacher retention. Additionally, this theory assisted administrators in leading their
teachers to self-actualization. An organization’s culture should reflect the importance of the employees’ physiological and security needs, which in turn will result in improved performance of the organization (Maslow, 1970). According to Herzberg (1964), there were notable differences in the impact of both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards on employees’ attitudes toward their jobs. According to the author, extrinsic rewards included salary, health insurance, retirement, and tenure. In contrast, intrinsic rewards included intangible aspects such as having pride in contributions made to the job and opportunities for personal growth (Herzberg, 1964). Herzberg noted that people found intrinsic rewards to be both motivating and satisfying factors.

The Job Demand Resource Theory (JD-R) explained how job demands and resources have unique and many effects on job stress and motivation. It proposed contracting causal effects such as burned-out employees creating more jobs over time, and workers mobilizing their own job resources to stay engaged (Bakker et al., 2014). The JD-R Model was used to predict employee burnout, engagement, and performance within the organization. The model assumed that every occupation had its undertaking of employee well-being, and this could be classified into two categories: (1) job demands; and (2) job resources. The research also provided for two simultaneous processes, the first of which was the health impairment process, when soaring job demands exhausted employees' physical and mental resources, which led to the sapping of energy and health issues. The second process was the motivational process in which job resources promoted employee engagement and extra-role performance. There were several studies that showed job resources lessened the impact of job demand on stress reactions.

The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) postulated that individuals were motivated to protect, procure, and preserve resources; therefore, individuals developed stress from their resources being threatened, depleted, or if investments in new resources were not sufficiently
accrued, especially those resources valued by individuals (Hobofoll, 1991). The theory of COR was a motivational theory that described human behaviors based on the evolutionary need to gain and preserve survival resources, which was fundamental to the biology of human behavior. Both personal and social relations must be acquired and conserved by humans. To ensure their survival, humans have developed complex language to communicate, which supported survival and social bonding.

**Situation to Self**

As an educator, I was interested in student achievement. I believed students could and would learn, given the right resources, and teachers played a vital role in their performance. Teachers must have the tools they need to continue teaching. I had seen several teachers leave their jobs. Some of those teachers left the profession altogether. As a result, I developed a passion for reducing the number of teachers leaving their jobs or their profession. Although I had my perspective, I was interested in the perspectives of other Title I high school teachers regarding factors that impacted teacher retention. I had worked in a Title I school for more than 20 years and therefore had an identifiable connection with the setting that would provide me a better understanding of the role of the participants than someone lacking experience of Title I schools. I used constructionism in this study, seeing that I wanted to answer a question, and construction of meaning was communicated within a social context disseminated in interviews and focus groups. The constructionist view was that there was no true or singularly valid interpretation. The participants had their own views on factors that impacted teacher retention, and I did not believe that they had shared the same experience; therefore, I adopted an ontological assumption throughout this study (Creswell, 2013). Guba and Lincoln (1989) stated that ontological assumptions were those that responded to the questions “what is there that can
be known?” or “what is the nature of reality?” (p. 83). I used the ontological assumption, which was essentially a social word meaning, to assume that the world explored was a world populated by humans that had their own thoughts, meaning, and interpretations. This world was clearly manifested in their use of various research techniques and methods of the qualitative design, such as interviews. Teachers leaving their profession was a communicative experience and meaning could be connected to such experiences. This meaning could be given by the participant or by others, such as other researchers who studied the experience. This particular meaning given to the experience was the epistemological assumption of the study. Epistemology was a way to understand and justify how we understood what we knew. To capture the axiological philosophical assumptions in the study, I ensured that the research was appealing to the readers, formatted in the most suitable composition that scientific structure consist of, and formulated the study on the basis of scientific research methods. I sought to understand the experiences of high school teachers and reported their perceptions and views (Patton, 2015). I attempted to understand the research problem through multiple perspectives of the participants (Patton, 2015). The results helped educators and administrators understand why teachers left the teaching profession and additionally helped administrators implement strategies to retain their teachers. Further, using a case study as my methodology for the study highlighted the teachers’ feelings, experiences, opinions, and inner thoughts.

**Problem Statement**

Every year, school districts around the nation faced a common issue: the retention of teachers. The reality was that within five years, approximately 30% of new teachers will leave the profession, and in high-poverty schools the turnover rate is about 50% higher (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The resulting high teacher retention rates at Title I schools had perpetuated the disruption
of education for underserved students. Few researchers have investigated the specific factors that contributed to teacher retention rates at high-poverty schools (Lynch, 2012). The knowledge available, however, seemed to lump all teachers together, no matter what kind of school they taught in. There appeared to be a lack of research on how to specifically keep teachers in high-poverty schools. Those teachers who taught in high-poverty schools also faced additional difficulties such as persistent tardiness, inappropriate conduct, and lack of motivation from low-income students (Jensen, 2009). Teachers also worked with students in high-poverty schools who acted out, disrespected others, and used profanity (Jensen, 2009). Teachers were not prepared with the right tools to manage those conditions and sometimes ended up disappointed and disheartened as to why they joined the field in the first place. In the southern U.S. state that I studied, the rate of teacher attrition had been high, and teachers had lacked preparation; this had led to low teacher morale (Owens, 2015). Ultimately, teachers either transferred to a new role where the need was not quite as strong once ample frustration had mounted or left the profession entirely. When the opportunity was presented, numerous teachers chose to exit schools that represented higher numbers of students from minority ethnic groups, low-income, or low-performing groups, and there was inadequate research to comprehend which specific characteristics of the working conditions in high-poverty schools that influenced teacher retention and turnover (Lynch, 2012). Factors that impacted teacher retention in Title I schools were topics such as student achievement, student demographics, school finance, student attendance, and teacher experience (Garza, 2011). The problem was Secondary Title I schoolteachers departed their positions, and in some cases the teaching field altogether, in numbers that exceeded averages from non-Title I schoolteacher turnover.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to understand current and former teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influenced attrition of high school teachers in a Title I school in a southern U.S. state. For this study, teacher retention referred to a teacher staying at their current school year after year (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Oke et al., 2016). The theory that guided this study was Maslow’s (1970) theory of motivation; this theory identified the motivational needs that drove individuals to improve their performance.

Significance of the Study

The proposed study had important implications for various stakeholders. Although the literature on teacher retention in public schools had been growing, this study added to that literature awareness related to teacher retention in Title I schools derived from the experiences and perceptions of high school teachers in a Title I school. The findings of this study helped school and district administrators develop strategies to retain high school teachers. Although researchers have conducted many studies on teacher retention in high schools (Bryk et al., 2015; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2016; Lambert & Lashley, 2012), few researchers have investigated Title I high schools. This study helped fill that gap. Teachers provided students with the opportunity to learn, and teacher attrition negatively affected teacher and student morale and inhibited student achievement (Sawchuk, 2015x).

I aimed to give Title I high school teachers a voice in the research literature, which could inspire the creation of programs to retain such teachers—not just in the studied school, but throughout the educational profession by contributing to theory, practice, and knowledge. By advancing the understanding of the factors that impacted teacher retention, this study helped increase teacher retention (Rosen & DeMaria, 2016).
This study also had theoretical significance in terms of Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs. Examining the factors that impacted teacher retention could help teachers remain motivated and satisfied within their profession. According to Maslow, individuals who met their needs were more determined to complete their goals.

**Research Questions**

One central research question and three sub-questions guided this study.

**Central Research Question**

What factors do high school teachers perceive as influencing teacher retention in a selected high school in a southern U.S. state? This entire study is grounded by the central research question. The answer to the question permitted us to directly hear the voices of the participants while strengthening knowledge to enhance practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Understanding those factors suggested solutions to leaders of school districts to improve their retention. The central phenomenon is broad therefore, sub-questions were asked to better understand the factors that impacted teacher retention rates.

**Sub-question 1**

Sub-question 1 was as follows: What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to stay in the teaching profession?

The first sub-question added to the central question by enabling teachers to describe only the factors that influenced retention within the teaching profession. This sub-question allowed teachers to discuss motivating factors that helped them succeed and contributed to their desire to continue teaching, such as salaries, working conditions, preparation, mentoring, and support (Darling-Hammond, 2010).
Sub-question 2

Sub question 2 was as follows: What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels?

The second sub-question added to the central question by establishing factors that influenced teachers to leave their positions or the teaching profession. The sub-question allowed teachers to discuss characteristics that appeared to influence teachers’ decision to stay in their schools, move to other schools, or leave the teaching profession, which included experience, gender, race, age, education level, and certification (Dagli, 2012).

Sub-question 3

Sub question 3 was as follows: From a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention?

The third sub-question built on the central question by encouraging the discovery of ways to increase teacher retention. Research on relational demography suggested that teacher–principal race and gender matching and teacher-student race matching also influenced teacher retention (Malin et al., 2017; Stearns et al., 2014).

Definitions

1. Retention rate—The percentage of a school’s teachers who continued at that school the next year (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

2. Certified teacher—A teacher who had completed all requirements needed to obtain a certification in a given state (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Redding & Smith, 2016).

3. Full-time teacher—A teacher who worked a statutory number of hours for a school (Sawchuk, 2015a).

4. High-poverty school—A school with a demographic of 50% or more of the students received free or reduced-price lunch (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2009).
5. **High school**—A secondary school attended by students in Grades 9–12 (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

6. **Principal/administrator**—A principal or leader at the school level. The principal worked within the school to ensure the highest level of educational accomplishment (Ebell et al., 2017).

7. **High school teacher**—A certified schoolteacher who taught at least one regularly scheduled class to students in grades 9–12 (McCray, 2018).

8. **Support**—Assistance received by a teacher from all leaders within the teacher’s school, such as principal, assistant principal, and mentors (Roy et al., 2012).

9. **Teacher attrition**—Number of teachers who left the teaching profession (Ainsworth, 2013; Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Sutcher et al., 2016).

10. **Teacher retention**—A field of educational research that focused on how factors such as school climate and demographics affected teachers’ decisions to stay in their schools, move to different schools, or leave the profession before retirement (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Oke et al., 2016).

11. **Title I school**—A school at which more than 40% of students received free or reduced-price lunch (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

12. **Teacher turnover**—The yearly rate of departure of teachers (Sorensen et al., 2019).

13. **Organizational contexts**—Organizational contexts in schools included both teachers’ working conditions and students’ learning environments (Johnson et al., 2012).

**Summary**

Failure to retain teachers negatively affects school climate, student achievement, and employee motivation, and teacher retention had become an issue of growing importance in the United States (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Elevated teacher retention impacted society, particularly in areas of low socioeconomic status. Researchers have found that a high attrition rate resulted in low achievement by all students in a school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The purpose of the proposed study was to understand the perceptions of high school teachers.
regarding factors that influenced a teacher’s decision to remain in a position, seek another position, or leave the teaching profession. The job demands-resources (JD–R) theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) and conservation of resources theory (Alarcon, 2011; Halbesleben et al., 2014) guided this study. The findings helped school leaders to improve teacher retention in Title I schools.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter presented the review of literature relating to the subject matter, teacher retention. Teacher retention was a field of education that should have been of interest to all. Approximately 50% of all teachers quit the teaching profession within the first five years (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). There was a steady rise in the rate of teachers leaving the profession before retirement, therefore it was important to learn more about those teachers who had left the profession. In this section, I explored the theoretical framework that was used to guide the study. I presented the related literature which included unstable teacher rosters, teacher responsibilities, support of teachers from school and district administrators, working condition of teachers, the influence of working condition on teacher attrition, teacher preparation, teacher salaries, personal factors and strategies that enhanced teacher retention in order to understand more about the phenomenon being studied. Also, I then explored factors that influenced retention/attrition followed by practical measures to manipulate those factors. Within the United States, teacher retention had become a significant issue in kindergarten through 12th grade. This literature review provided a national and statewide snapshot of the problem and explored characteristics affecting teacher retention in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow (1954) stated that a person’s need to meet a range of goals is perpetually changing. Maslow believed that rewards and desires are not what motivate people; instead, it is the connection of these rewards and desires to the achievement of personal needs (McLeod, 2007). Maslow developed a hierarchy of five levels of needs: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. He identified self-actualization as the highest
level of need, and before a person could satisfy their highest level of need, they must fulfill their lower-level (McLeod, 2007). The various levels of motivational needs may motivate teachers to stay or leave specific educational environments (Maslow, 1970). According to Maslow’s (1970) theory of motivation, there are five sets of goals called basic needs: physiological needs, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow argued that individuals are motivated by the desire to achieve various conditions that those basic needs satisfy (Maslow, 1970). Concerning employment, motivators are factors that create job satisfaction because they fulfill an individual need for psychological growth; these are also known as intrinsic factors and include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement, or personal growth. Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs is relevant to this study, as I examined whether teachers’ needs were being met in their selected school and investigated the effects of teachers’ demands on attrition.

Herzberg’s (1959) motivation theory outlined two factors that affected motivation in the workplace: hygiene factors and motivating factors. Hygiene factors could cause an employee to work less when not present, whereas motivating factors could encourage an employee to work harder if present (Herzberg, 1959). Motivating factors included recognition, achievement, the possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself. Hygiene factors included salary, interpersonal relations at work, supervision, company policies and administration, working conditions, factors in personal life, status, and job security (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory outlined factors that could foster increased motivation and satisfaction to reduce teacher attrition (Derby-Davis, 2014; Ghazi, Shahzada, & Khan, 2013).

Similarly, in 1963, Adams published the equity theory of motivation, known as Adams’s equity theory. This theory centered on the idea that individuals were motivated by fairness. The
theory argued that if an individual identified an inequity between themselves and a co-worker, they would adopt the division of work to make it fair in their eyes. In the study on motivation to work conducted by Herzberg et al. (1959), the authors determined 13 factors that predict job satisfaction in society; these included: (1) supervision; (2) working conditions; (3) interpersonal relations; (4) status; (5) the work itself; (6) achievement; (7) policy and administration; (8) recognition; (9) responsibility; (10) personal life; (11) advancement; (12) job security; and (13) salary. Any of these 13 factors could influence an employee to stay in or leave their job.

Furthermore, Blumer’s (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism argued that human interaction came from the meaning a person placed on their interaction with others. The meaning an individual assigned to their experiences determined their actions and reactions. Teachers’ perceptions of their realities and how they responded to experiences in the workplace depended on their social interactions. Theories such as these allowed us to understand observed phenomena. Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s (1959) theory of motivation assisted us in identifying why teachers were leaving the teaching profession. Researchers could gain a more in-depth understanding of how teachers developed their perceptions of the factors that influenced teacher retention by examining symbolic interactionism, which relied on the symbolic meaning that people designed and built upon the process of social interaction.

Furthermore, theories of motivation could have helped explain the behaviors and attitudes of employees (Rowley, 1996; Weaver, 1998); theorists such as Maslow (1954), McClelland (1961), Herzberg (1966), and Alderfer (1969) were renowned for their work in this field. These theories suggested reasons why teachers became dissatisfied with different situations and conditions and described how this affected their needs and behaviors. Individuals have responded differently to various situations, and this could be why some teachers left the school
system while others remained. The paradigm chosen for this study, constructivism, was a learning theory founded in psychology that explained how people may have acquired knowledge and learn. Piaget’s theory of constructivism suggested that humans constructed knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Bada, 2015). This approach permitted the researcher to determine the specific actions and situations that have occurred to inform perspectives on teacher retention at the selected high school. The theoretical framework that underpinned this study comprised of Maslow’s (1970) motivational theory and Herzberg’s (1959) motivational theory. I aimed to identify what motivated teachers to stay or leave the selected high school through interactions and dialogue with the participants.

The JD–R theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the conservation of resources theory (Alarcon, 2011; Halbesleben et al., 2014) formed the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed study. The JD–R theory was a framework that supervising authorities could use to analyze employee well-being and predict employee engagement and employee burnout. Bakker and Demerouti (2014) explained that employees could become highly stressed and experience burnout when they faced high job demands with limited resources.

The conservation of resources theory (COR) described human motivation to maintain existing resources and seek new resources. The conservation of resources theory posited that losing types of resources stressed individuals. This theory explained the connections between teacher satisfaction, school setting, and teacher retention. Teachers expected certain essentials to carry out instructional goals. Although teaching and student learning frequently posed challenges, teachers felt motivated to complete their instructional duties when these challenges were balanced by sufficient resources. If the resources diminished while the challenges remained, teachers lost motivation and considered leaving either their positions or the teaching
profession altogether. In COR theory, it was a key tenet that individual evaluation was secondary to what was centrally valued and universal among citizens. Health, well-being, family, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose and meaning in life were among those widely valued tools. The way these assessments were expressed varied culturally but still represented the same main elements. On this basis, COR theory suggested that stress arose when: (a) central or key resources were threatened with loss, (b) central or key resources were lost, or (c) despite considerable effort, there was a failure to obtain central or key resources.

Few researchers investigating teacher retention have relied on strong theoretical foundations (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). For example, Conley and You (2017) suggested that strong administrative and collegial support were highly relevant to a teacher’s intent to stay in their work setting. Jackson and Makarin (2016) described the confusion new teachers faced when planning instructional delivery with meager resources and vague directions. Joyner and Leake (2018) explained that resources were categorized as objects, conditions, personalities, energies, or talents. Billingsley and Bettini (2017) explained the benefits of experiences and special certifications for managing instructional demands. More experienced teachers with special certifications were better able to manage instructional demands with limited resources (Billingsley & Bettini, 2017).

**Related Literature**

This section provided some background on factors known that contributed to teacher retention. Many factors influenced teacher retention (Ingersoll et al., 2016, 2017; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017), such as support from the district and school administrators, school climate, teacher demographics or characteristics, working conditions, salary, teacher preparation, and
personal factors (Chetty et al., 2015; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Grissom et al., 2016; Mihaly et al., 2015; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2007; Roe et al., 2013; Whitford et al., 2017). In Chapter 1, I provided the background information needed to investigate the factors that impacted teacher retention, which posed a growing problem for schools in the state of Georgia. According to Amos (2014), more than half a million teachers have left their jobs in the United States every year; this teacher attrition was very costly and had a significant impact on student achievement. Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners realized that student success depended on the quality of instruction that students received (Hirsh et al., 2010). Strong et al. (2008) asserted that teacher attrition impacted a teacher’s career and increased costs to the school district, which in turn negatively affected student learning. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2018), teaching was the largest profession in the United States, as the country has employed close to three million teachers. In the late ’90s, there were nearly five times as many teachers as lawyers and twice as many K–12 teachers as nurses (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The national labor market staffed American classrooms sufficiently, and the issue was not a lack of graduating teachers, but, rather, that teachers were leaving their positions in the schools (Cohen et al., 2016). The focus of this study on teacher retention was to investigate the factors that caused teachers to continue at a school, move to another school, or leave the teaching profession. Research has indicated that there were several reasons that teachers decided to leave the profession, including lack of parent support, lack of administrative support, and teacher burnout (Papay et al., 2017; Partee, 2014). Research had found that teachers’ perceptions of their schools’ working conditions influenced their decisions to leave (Burkhauser, 2017). High teacher attrition rates were a problem among all schools; however, low-socioeconomic-status schools and inner-city district schools experienced roughly 50% more
attrition than private and suburban schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers were experiencing high levels of stress due to being overworked, experiencing a lack of administrative support, the presence of behavior problems in the classroom, low salaries, high-stakes testing, and lack of classroom management (Guha et al., 2016). According to Balbacci and Johnson (2006), some teachers reported that the culture of the students and the climate of the school were not what they had expected, causing them to be less motivated. High-stakes standardized testing and increased accountability to improve academic growth caused teachers stress and exhaustion (Glover, 2013). School systems struggled yearly to retain teachers, and teacher retention was a significant issue in public high schools. Thus, identifying the factors that contributed to teacher retention in a Title I high school was critical.

Several trends have emerged in the teaching profession over the past 30 years from 1987 to 2016, such as increases in needs for teachers, aging teachers, increasingly more women entering the field, and reduced diversity of teachers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2018). The growth in the number of students and teachers had grown throughout the 20th century. According to the Census Bureau, PreK-12 teachers were the largest occupational group in the nation, and this teaching force has continued to grow (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). In the late 1940s, both groups' rates began to rise with the emergence of comprehensive high schools and the post-World War II baby boom. The teaching force was defined here, as the number of teachers ballooned from 48% in 2008 to 65% in 2016. The average age of teachers increased from 40 years in the 1980s to 45 years in 2017. Many researchers noticed and offered explanations for the dramatic trend; however, the reason for and implications of the growth was still unclear. Teachers were getting older, and many reports had warned of upcoming teacher shortages in elementary and secondary schools (National Research Council, 2002; National
Academy of Sciences, 2007). The teaching force aging trend also affected both school budgets and state pension systems, which had received much awareness in the last few years. School budgets must pay veteran teachers a higher salary, which could cause problems for some schools or districts. Alternatively, state pension plans increased when more teachers retired. From 1988 to 2008, the number of teachers aged 50 years or older increased from 470,000 to 1,300,000. The aging of teachers during this time resulted in many teachers not retiring. Between 2008 and 2013, the number of teachers retiring increased annually from 35,000 to 99,000. This trend of teacher retirement yielded a much younger and inexperienced teacher population. Ingersoll et al. (2017) noted that although the teacher population had become more racially and ethnically diverse during this period of 1980 to 2013, the lack of minority teachers had become a problem. For many years there had been a shortage in minority teachers, which had caused issues for several U.S. schools such as lack of minority adult role models, lack of teachers’ connections with students’ racial and cultural background, and frequently a lack of teachers with a qualified background; due to a low percentage of minorities, White teachers overlooked these schools (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Villegas et al., 2012; Lewis & Toldson, 2013). The nation’s population of students had become more homogenous and diverse, which was opposite for the teacher population, especially the race and ethnicity of teachers. Many researchers viewed the minority teacher shortage as the reason minority students experienced achievement gaps, lower-paying jobs, and different life outcomes (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). As a result of these, government and non-government organizations set in motion and funded several minority teacher recruitment programs and initiatives. The trends mentioned above did directly affect the rate of teacher turnover, which had been highest at schools in impoverished rural and urban areas with high proportions of students belonging to racial and ethnic minorities (Ingersoll et al.,
Teacher turnover had threatened the stability of increasingly diverse public schools since principals relied on new teachers that had to be hired, trained, and supported on a yearly basis. The results of his study helped public school leaders determine how to effectively reduce the rate of teacher turnover.

**Unstable Teacher Rosters**

Recent publicity had underscored the importance of the retention of teachers and other employees in primary and secondary schools. Several scholars and other authors have recently explored the issue (Phillips & Connell, 2003). Boyd et al. (2006) indicated that employees played an important role as a strategic resource of an organization. They contributed immensely to the success and performance of any organization as the most valuable resource that the organization depended on. Therefore, the problem for leaders of many organizations—in both developed and developing countries—involved the strategies they could use to retain their workforces for long periods (Long et al., 2012). Researchers examining retention and attrition have relied on different definitions of these terms. Billingsley et al. (1993) offered a four-phase model of teachers’ retention, attrition, and transfers. In the first phase, retention corresponded to teachers who remained in the same teaching assignment and school from one year to the next. Transfer corresponded to teachers who stayed in the teaching profession but moved to another position in the same or different district. According to Billingsley (2004), attrition corresponded to teachers who left the teaching profession altogether due to retirement or resignation.

**Teacher Retention**

Retention was measured as the percentage of teachers who remained within a school or district. High retention rates were most desired, but high turnover rates negatively impacted education. According to Oke et al. (2016), retention reflected the ability to reduce teacher
mobility and provided the most stable learning conditions in a school. Hirsch and Emerick (2006) perceived retention as a process for encouraging workers to remain within an organization as long as possible or until the completion of their assigned projects. The factors that impacted or influenced teacher retention also had important implications for the development of collective social resources, which involved bringing resources and people together in an organized way to achieve social change; this process formulated trust, shared norms, and support among school professionals (Hanselman et al., 2016).

Teacher retention had also impacted schools because administrators must hire new teachers to replace those who left. Hiring new teachers occupies time and energy that administrators could use to enhance retention, boost educational quality, or maintain school infrastructure (Bland et al., 2016). Poor retention of teachers has resulted in high turnover rates and attrition. The Institute for Education Sciences (2015) found that 17% of teachers in the U.S. quit the teaching profession five years after becoming teachers. The percentage of teachers saying they were very likely to leave the profession increased from 17% to 29% between 2014 and 2016, and the percentage of teachers saying they did not feel safe at school increased from 8% to 34% over that same period (Nordanger, 2016). According to MacDonald (1999), the teacher retention rate was directly proportional to the characteristics of the student population and the school community within which teachers’ practice. Schools that performed poorly and had high proportions of low-income students and students belonging to racial or ethnic minorities had the highest rates of teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2016). Furthermore, teacher retention impacted society, especially through schools attended by many students of low socioeconomic status. According to Shen et al. (2012), teacher job satisfaction decreased as the proportion of students of low socioeconomic status increased.
**Teacher Attrition**

Attrition and high turnover have led to forbidding challenges, whether in education or in other areas. Henke et al. (2001) revealed that approximately 50% of teachers who engaged actively in classroom instruction quit within five years, and the best teachers were the first to leave. According to Henke et al., the high turnover rate of teachers in America cost approximately $7 billion USD annually. The recruitment, hiring, and initial professional training of teachers, placed pressure on already-tight budgets in schools, particularly schools from low-income neighborhoods. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) claimed that the financial effects of attrition for public school teachers amounted to $2,200,000,000 USD annually. The cumulative cost of replacing public school teachers who transferred school to school was $4,900,000,000 USD annually. The annual cost varied from $8,500,000 USD for a small state, such as North Dakota, to $500,000,000 USD for a larger state, such as Texas (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). High teacher attrition rates created enormous financial costs for schools, which in turn reduced student achievement by undercutting efforts to build instructional capacity among teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

The financial cost was not the only negative ramification of high attrition. Educational scholars have agreed that teacher quality was one of the most crucial elements of enhancing student performance and achievement (Beaugez, 2012; Hill & Barth, 2004). When an experienced or exceptionally skilled teacher left the teaching profession, a great deal of talent departed with that teacher. Inexperienced teachers have less effect on learners than experienced teachers. High attrition means schools have more teachers with little experience who needed to learn the curriculum, familiarize themselves with school policies, and understand their students (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). According to Goswami and Jha (2012), attrition was the steady
departure of teachers in a school due to resignation, death, or retirement. Harrison (2006) indicated that teaching was one of the professions with the highest rate of turnover, which was surprising because approximately 4% of workers in the United States were teachers. Ingersoll (2003) reported that approximately 15.7% of U.S. teachers quit their jobs annually. Ingersoll (2003) also indicated that the national rate of turnover of teachers stood at 16.8%, and 40% of those teachers were likely to quit the teaching profession altogether.

Newly hired teachers joining a school in the process of reforming were likely to face major challenges. Novel initiatives have been popular in schools, but new teachers have not always understood when they joined a school in which programs were in progress or which stage of progress the school was at (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). Committed teachers who stayed longer in a school could work together meaningfully to enhance plans and develop working relationships more productively than teachers who constantly moved from one school to another. McCreight (2000) opined that 150,000 new teachers were hired annually in order to replace those lost to retirement and attrition.

In response to the escalating demand for teachers, it was believed that the number of newly hired teachers in America would grow by 220,000 each year (Hammer & Williams, 2005). However, teachers have begun to leave the profession in greater numbers than those entering it, which had started to overwhelm the system. Hammer and Williams (2005) indicated that leavers surpassed new entrants by 23%. Teachers also faced challenges keeping up with ongoing curriculum changes and directives handed down by school and district officials; this drives them to leave the teaching profession altogether (Newberry & Allsop, 2017).
Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers have historically reported higher levels of psychological distress and burnout than other professionals (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Kovess-Masféty et al., 2007; Quellette et al., 2017). A high proportion of teachers have reported work-related stress, which impacted both their relationships and their physical health (Shernoff et al., 2011). Overcrowding, constant disruptive student behavior, and combative accountability policies were some of the factors that have caused stress among teachers (Atkins et al., 2003; Cappella et al., 2008; Shernoff et al., 2011). Along with being educators, teachers have also provided mental health services (Green et al., 2013; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000). Sanchez (2007) conducted a study of what influenced teachers to stay in the teaching profession in urban and poorly resourced schools. The researcher found that teachers were most likely to stay if there were an adequate number of teachers in their school, if parent and community engagement was strong, and teachers had time to complete tasks.

Sanchez (2007) also found that the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) harmed teachers’ job satisfaction and mostly contributed to teacher burnout and dissatisfaction because of the increased accountability, testing, and recordkeeping required. Williams (2005) studied the characteristics of teacher retention in a small Midwestern suburban school district and surveyed teachers who had decided to leave the school district. The teachers filled out surveys on their experiences in the school district. The data revealed two main factors that contributed to teachers leaving: (1) increased paperwork requiring teachers to document instructional efforts, which could be time-consuming; and (2) increased accountability generated by high-stakes testing.

Mandates and educational reforms have changed the responsibilities of teachers over the years. Johnson, Author, et al. (2005) reported that a lack of time for teacher preparation and
planning, combined with an emphasis placed by administrators on assessments, created a stressful environment that was not conducive to learning. Naylor (2001) conducted an international study of teacher workload and found that workload was causing high levels of stress for teachers through lack of professional autonomy, low pay, limited resources, constant media criticism, changes in leadership, and forced and centralized accountability. Researchers observed these problems in Israel and several European nations, where they contributed to increased absenteeism and attrition among teachers (Carlsson et al., 2019; Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2018; Yinon & Orland-Barak, 2017). The aspects of teaching that influenced attrition included the stress of tests, multiple preparations for teaching, job responsibilities, and subjects and grade levels taught. Singer and Willet (1991) stated that job assignment influenced job satisfaction, which in turn affected teacher retention.

**Support from School and District Administrators**

School and district administrators needed excellent interpersonal skills to ensure that they worked with various types and groups of people. Grissom et al. (2016) examined the effects of principal effectiveness on teacher turnover, teacher evaluation, and teacher merit pay. More effective principals were associated with higher retention rates based on the multiple measures used by the researchers to assess teacher and principal effectiveness; attrition rates of low-performing teachers, as measured by classroom observation scores, increased substantially under higher-rated principals (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

School and district characteristics that impacted teacher retention included lack of support from key stakeholders, such as parents, administrators, and staff members. Novice teachers who underwent induction and mentoring were less likely to leave teaching than those without such support (Mihaly et al., 2015). The responsibilities of schools continued to increase
and had come to include many responsibilities once considered parental in nature, such as establishing and encouraging positive behaviors and extending these behaviors within the school context (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2016; Stevens & Patel, 2015; Wilder, 2014). If parents established rules and regulations at home so that students were aware of the consequences of their behavior, schools would be better.

Some principles have lacked opportunities to contribute to policy and decision-making and develop professionally. Tehseen and Hadi (2015) argued that school leaders who did not offer support and opportunities that teachers required for professional growth stand a higher risk of losing teachers than leaders who offered such support and opportunities. The impact of administrative and district-implemented programs on teacher retention has remained unclear, and researchers have not detected a consistent pattern of effects across cohorts or states. However, in some states and cohorts, proteges in districts that implemented programs were significantly more likely to remain within their school or the teaching profession (Mihaly et al., 2015).

Effective leaders developed relationships with their employees and understood the importance of creating a bond with those employees. The most effective leaders have developed environments of professionalism, respect, care, trusting collaboration, compassion, advice, and nurturing (Connors, 2000; West et al., 2017). Venkatesh (2008) argued that to protect the interests of an organization, leaders needed to form and maintain relationships with staff members. Principals must believe in long-term relationships with their staff members and try to understand their staff members as people, not just employees. The behavior and interactions of a school principal affect the entire school and, consequently, teacher job satisfaction (Jones, 2004; Peck, 2002).
One common but important complaint teachers have related is a lack of support from principals. Effective principals put considerable effort into professional learning for themselves and their teachers, both inside and outside the school environment (Dinham, 2007). Dinham (2007) argued that principals needed to recognize that all teachers could be leaders and that there were various ways to build relationships among school faculty. One way that principals could build relationships with their faculties was to occasionally lend a hand (Kellison, 2007). Principals must remember that teachers are human beings, therefore they need them to always provide moral support.

Working Conditions of Teachers

Working conditions have also influenced teacher retention. Schools have offered educators both a working environment and a professional setting. School leaders needed to ensure that teachers could access students, information, technology, and teaching materials and have enough time to teach their students (Ye, 2016). There were various ways to conceptualize the working conditions of teachers. Perie and Baker (1997) indicated that working conditions entailed administrative support coupled with leadership, working atmosphere, student behavior, and teacher control over the setting. Leithwood (2006) developed a framework that subdivided working conditions into school-level and classroom-level aspects. The classroom-level aspects included teaching workload, classroom composition, classroom size; school-based aspects included organizational culture, community relations, and physical school structure. Futernick (2007) described working conditions as an opportunity for school leaders to work with a team of qualified teachers that shared a similar vision to jolt the school into equilibrium and raise its performance. Therefore, Futernick perceived working conditions as the provision of an effective
team, a physical environment, external support, parental and community involvement, autonomy, shared government, effective leadership, time, a well-rounded curriculum, and small classes.

Ingersoll (2001) conducted a national survey of working conditions that affected teachers and how those conditions impacted teacher turnover and attrition. The researcher found four aspects of the school environment to be significant determinants of teacher retention: (1) level of administrative support; (2) extent of teacher input into school policies; (3) compensation of workers; and (4) strife and conflict within the school. Johnson et al. (2012) synthesized existing literature explained working conditions in schools and found that they included: (a) organizational structures that influenced teacher workload; (b) physical facilities and features, such as equipment and buildings; (c) political attributes that defined the power and authority of teachers; (d) social components that influenced teachers’ status, responsibility, and encounters with peers and students; (e) cultural dimensions that defined values, norms, and traditions; (f) educational policies associated with accountability, education, and curriculum that enhanced or limited what teachers could teach; and (g) psychological concerns that diminished or enhanced teachers.

Working in collegial conditions and an environment with strong instructional emphases and the right materials available improved teacher retention. Teachers treasure a friendly school environment in which they were not isolated but worked together with their leaders to ensure outstanding performance (Working, 2003). Hirsch and Emerick (2007) argued that teachers’ working conditions were vital to the enhancement of teacher retention and learning processes. Five factors appeared critical to triggering teachers to leave the teaching profession: (1) inadequate resources, recognition, and support from the administration; (2) inability to influence and control classroom and school decision-making; (3) student discipline; (4) intrusions on
teaching time; and (5) insufficient time to prepare for class (Ingersoll, 2001). Furthermore, teachers reporting on individual states have indicated that teachers’ working conditions affected their retention, learning, empowerment, and access to resources and facilities.

The Influence of Working Conditions on Teacher Attrition

According to Arinette (2018), a teacher’s perception of their school strongly impacted their plan to continue at the school. Jackson (2012) also found a positive relationship between teacher working environment and teacher attrition. Jackson’s data revealed that a lack of teaching and learning materials led teachers to be unprepared, which created poor working conditions. Djonko-Moore (2016) found that teachers were more likely to leave schools with higher student disciplinary problems than other schools and were less likely to leave schools with stronger work environments than other schools, as characterized by the quality of facilities and number of school problems. MacDonald (1999) reported that teachers who left the profession cited concerns regarding space, supplies, educational politics, and school governance or decision-making.

When working conditions were not conducive to teaching, teachers could not carry out their job responsibilities efficiently. Buckley et al. (2005) reported that among teachers working at schools with inadequate facilities in communities with low socioeconomic status, large class size was the most significant reason teachers left their jobs. Teachers depended on working in reliable and well-furnished schools to complete their work (Johnson, Author, et al., 2005).

Researchers in other countries have also discussed the effects of insufficient teaching facilities and supplies, including textbooks, maps, globes, laboratory equipment, and other tools required for students to achieve (Ayeni, 2005). Bamisaye (1998) reported that teachers did not complete their duties when conditions were unsatisfactory; this had the potential to demotivate
teachers and reduce their self-esteem. Many schools in developing countries have lacked the necessary infrastructure, such as electricity in staff rooms, running water, or toilets. These environmental factors led to distress at work (Oke & Dawson, 2012). Tambo (2003) reported that teachers in Cameroon were dissatisfied with their working environments, which were inferior to those available to their counterparts in other occupations. The situation in Cameroon was consistent with Herzberg’s theory of motivation, which predicted that employees must be motivated and satisfied in order to perform well.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) reported that working conditions in schools had led to a shortage of teachers, while Boyd (2009) found that working conditions made up the most important factor that influenced teachers to stay or leave their profession. An understanding of the conditions and contexts that impacted teacher retention was vital to developing effective learning environments in which students performed well (Stairs & Donnell, 2010). It was also essential to determine what educators experienced working under various conditions.

**Teacher Preparation**

Researchers have reported that variation in teacher effectiveness was significant and that more effective teachers could dramatically improve students’ short- and long-term life outcomes (Chetty et al., 2014; Whitford et al., 2017). According to Hughes (2012), teacher attrition stemmed from the training and development programs required to boost reforms within a school; these programs reduced the funds available to the school. As a result, schools struggled to achieve common school reform objectives and implement teacher preparation programs. Schneider and Duran (2010) reported that teacher turnover significantly affected the creation and development of teacher preparation programs that ensured teachers were ready for the classroom and thus had an impact on teacher retention, teacher development, and student academic
achievement. Teacher preparation programs have helped teachers to improve their effectiveness as a means of reducing educational and economic inequality (Goldhaber, 2015).

Institutional factors have had an indirect influence on the rate of teacher retention, which in turn affected teacher preparation. These factors included regulatory changes at the federal and state levels, which could cause the collapse of preservice preparatory programs. According to Rice (2010), the purpose of programs such as NC TEACH and Teach for America had been to meet the demand for teachers. However, these nontraditional routes of teacher recruitment increased the likelihood of teachers abandoning traditional preparation programs. The hiring of teachers through these programs was a short-term solution that indirectly increased teacher attrition because it discouraged the development of a long-term solution (Goodpaster et al., 2012). In summary, teachers who felt unprepared due to a lack of preparation— such as classroom preparation, ongoing professional development, and teacher training programs—were more likely to become dissatisfied and leave their jobs than teachers who felt prepared.

According to Roe et al. (2013), No Child Left Behind required that all teachers displayed competency in the subjects that administrators hired them to teach. This requirement affected teacher retention when teachers sought additional certification. If schools implemented on-site teacher preparation and certification programs, teachers were more motivated to complete ongoing requirements. Teachers who had regular or standard certifications were much less likely to leave the teaching profession than those who did not (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; Luke, 2014).

Researchers have presented limited evidence that teachers trained in some alternative training programs, such as professional development schools, were more likely to stay in the teaching arena than traditionally trained teachers (Latham et al., 2015). Schneider and Duran (2010) found that 8.9% of teachers left because they lacked preparation for implementing reforms such as
high-stakes testing and No Child Left Behind, and others disagreed with the changes. Day and Gu (2009) reported that 75% of elementary and secondary teachers felt that the requirement that teachers be “highly qualified” would profoundly impact retention. Hiring teachers without proper qualifications negatively impacted student achievement and thus cost the nation (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Inexperienced teachers were incompetent and cost students the educational experience to which they were entitled (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Boe et al. (2008) conducted a national study to determine whether teacher preparation influenced attrition among teachers in their first five years of teaching. They reported that more of the teachers hired with some, or no, teacher training left the profession than teachers who participated in significant teacher preparation.

**Teacher Salary**

Economic trends related to the labor market and recession have also affected teacher retention (Fraser & Lefty, 2018). School budgets fluctuated considerably in response to the fiscal conditions prevalent in the country. Economic conditions influenced teachers’ salaries, professional development programs, and financial incentives (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). These factors, in turn, influenced the labor market in terms of the available opportunities for gainful employment. Arnup and Bowles (2016) reported a direct relationship between teacher retention rates and the labor market. When the labor market supported lucrative teaching jobs, teachers found those jobs more appealing, and higher rates of retention resulted. Several researchers have also found that teacher salaries were related to teacher retention (Flowers, 2003; Imazeki, 2005; Onrich et al., 2008; Stinebricker, 2002). Onrich et al. (2008) investigated teacher retention in poor urban schools in five metropolitan areas in New York and found that salaries affected teachers’ decisions to stay or leave. They reported an association between higher pay
and a lower probability of leaving. Flowers (2003) explored the variables that contributed to teacher attrition and found that money was the most significant variable. Other factors included excessive paperwork, an overwhelming focus on student performance or standardized tests, overcrowded classes, lack of parental support, few opportunities for higher salaries, insufficient planning time, stress, student discipline problems, and lack of respect from students. Flowers concluded that salary helped determine which teachers remained in teaching and which chose to leave, and that teachers’ salaries had not reflected the value supposedly placed on education by society. The author called for action to rectify inadequate salaries and address the other issues that influenced teachers’ decisions to leave the teaching profession.

Work rewards, in general, have influenced the rate of teacher attrition. Work rewards were either intrinsic or extrinsic. Among the teachers’ work rewards, salaries had received the most attention. According to Elfers et al. (2006), teachers with high salaries or decreased opportunity costs remained in the classroom longer than other teachers. Although some authors have emphasized salary as a motivating factor in teacher attrition, researchers found that its influence declined. Researchers working in London found that teachers looked not only at their salary to determine whether they wanted a job but also at the nature of the workload, which linked the notions of performativity and accountability (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). Gardner (2010) said that teachers reported that their pay was inadequate. However, Gardner did not address the intrinsic rewards that affected teacher attrition. Intrinsic rewards included recognition, appreciation, and positive experiences with students. The personal nature of intrinsic rewards made their impact on teacher retention hard to evaluate.
Personal Factors

Personal factors have also impacted teacher retention. These factors, often referred to as “turnover beyond control,” included family and teacher dynamics, each of which had its own influence on teacher retention. Several researchers have reported teachers giving personal reasons not associated with work conditions for leaving the teaching profession. For instance, Billingsley (2004) noted that some teachers left because of childrearing, health, location of family, or pregnancy. Roe et al. (2013) identified 12 significant reasons teachers gave for leaving their positions, 11 of which were personal and included pregnancy, childrearing, and being there for family, which required moving. Factors related to teacher dynamics included dissatisfaction with career, need to pursue a different job, and the need to pursue education to acquire higher professional competency (Singer & Willet, 1991). Personal finances and perceived opportunities were likely to influence teachers’ decisions to leave or stay. Westling and Whitten (1999) reported that teachers who were primary breadwinners were more likely to stay than those who were not. However, Billingsley and Cross (1992) found no such relationship. Also, Grissmer and Kirby proposed that teachers with higher educational levels, with less experience, or who belonged to racial or ethnic minority groups were more prone to leave the teaching profession than other teachers (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987). Billingsley has also explored associations between teacher retention and characteristics of teachers, such as age, gender, and race (Billingsley, 2004; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987).

Age

Researchers have consistently associated age with teacher attrition, finding that younger teachers were more prone to express their intention to leave than older teachers. Billingsley (2004) indicated that younger teachers left the teaching profession at twice the rate of older
teachers. Grissmer and Kirby (1987) demonstrated that attrition patterns for teachers followed a U-shaped curve in which attrition was higher among the youngest teachers, lower for midcareer teachers, and higher again among the oldest (and retiring) teachers. However, Boe et al. reported that age functioned differently for teachers who left the teaching profession and those who moved from one position to another (Boe et al., 1997). Although the number of leavers followed the U-shaped curve described by Grissmer and Kirby, the number of movers decreased steadily with age. Miller et al. (1999) also found that younger teachers were much more inclined to move than older teachers.

A teacher’s age was also a determinant of their experience, and Billingsley (2004) found that less experienced teachers were more likely to leave or show intent to leave than more experienced teachers. However, some teachers began teaching as a second career, so age was controlled when investigating experience. Because teacher attrition rates were associated with teachers’ characteristics, the career persistence of teachers may change as the composition of the teaching workforce changes. Billingsley (2004) predicted that teacher attrition would drop as the proportion of older educators increased.

Several researchers have sought an explanation for high attrition rates among young teachers. Although some educators have found teaching satisfying, others have faced frustrations that likely discouraged them from continuing to teach. Billingsley (2004) noted that younger teachers tended to have less debt and less investment in the teaching profession or a particular location than older teachers. On the other hand, older and more experienced teachers who left the teaching profession faced retraining costs, loss of tenure, and loss of the high salary offered to experienced teachers. Younger teachers also needed to quit their jobs due to family responsibilities, such as staying at home with their young children. Marston (2014) found that
younger teachers were inclined to leave because they could easily change their careers by completing another degree thanks to having fewer financial obligations and a willingness to relocate.

**Gender**

Various researchers have examined the link between gender and teacher attrition, and their conclusions did not always agree. Moses et al. (2016) argued that gender was one of the factors that impacted teacher retention and felt that more men were needed in the profession. Ingersoll et al. (1997) found that women were more committed to teaching than men and had a more positive attitude about teaching. Moreover, Rots et al. (2014) found that more female students than male students were willing to enter the teaching profession after finishing university or college. In most nations, women have dominated the teaching profession, particularly in early childhood education and primary education (Kelleher et al., 2011). This female domination had become well-established in many developed nations—such as the United Kingdom, Brazil, Canada, and Australia—and had also become established in many developing nations (Kelleher et al., 2011). Globally, there were two explanations for this female domination. The first explanation was that socioeconomic development had created many better paid or more interesting employment opportunities that had attracted men away from the teaching profession. Where men have been the breadwinners in their families, they also have had to avoid the teaching profession because teachers generally earned low salaries (Kelleher et al., 2011). The second explanation was that people have linked teaching as a profession with female gender roles associated with the caring for and nurturing of children (Drudy, 2008).

Guarino et al. (2006) found that the teacher attrition rate was higher among women than men. Moses et al. (2016) reported that women were also less likely than men to take up teaching
jobs in remote areas. Morvant and Gersten (1995) demonstrated that men were more inclined than women to show an intention to leave the teaching profession. Singer (1992) reported that young female teachers left their schools at a higher rate than young male teachers. Other researchers found no association between gender and an intention to leave the teaching profession. For instance, Boe et al. (1997) identified no association between gender and attrition in a national sample of teachers. Miller et al. (1999) also found no correlation between teacher turnover and gender. Inconsistency of findings regarding gender and teacher retention derives from variation in samples, methods, geographical differences, and changes to the teaching workforce over time (de Brey et al., 2019). For instance, Singer (1992) collected data from a database covering 1972 to 1983 and found that young women were more likely than young men to leave teaching during that period. More recent data indicated that the retention of women and men in the teaching profession had become roughly equivalent (Moses et al., 2016).

**Race**

Billingsley (2004) reported that researchers had discovered no racial difference in relation to attrition or retention of teachers. Boe et al. (1997) conducted a national study and found no racial differences in attrition. Miller et al. (1999) and Singer (1992) reported the same finding in Florida and Michigan, respectively. However, other researchers have claimed that race affected teacher attrition. Cross and Billingsley (1994) found that White teachers were more likely than Black teachers to stay, but the authors focused on intent to leave rather than actual departure. In North Carolina, Sun (2018) found that the annual retention of Black teachers was 4% less than that of White teachers in both secondary and elementary schools between 2004 and 2015. Sun attributed this gap to Black teachers’ experiences, education, and challenging
community and school environments: The author claimed that Black teachers were more attracted to schools whose student populations were majority Black.

Kaput (2019) noted that 19% of non-White teachers left the U.S. teaching profession annually, but the corresponding rate for White teachers was only 15%. The rate at which teachers moved from one position to another was also higher among non-White teachers than among White teachers. This was a challenge because the movement of teachers to different schools could negatively affect the performance of their students (Kaput, 2019). Kaput also discussed the findings of a Minnesota survey of reasons why non-White teachers moved more than White teachers: racial isolation, dissatisfaction with administration, lack of support, lack of autonomy, and dissatisfaction with accountability systems used in schools.

Carver-Thomas (2018) discussed the findings of an equity and diversity impact assessment of Minneapolis Public Schools that showed non-White teachers, and Black teachers in particular, experienced persistent challenges based on their race, such as assignment to discipline tough students. Within the school district, administrators assigned non-White teachers more duties than their White colleagues and frequently told non-White teachers that they were not meeting expectations (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Non-White teachers also frequently experienced racial isolation because they had few non-White colleagues in their schools to support them and were more likely to leave due to job insecurity (Carver-Thomas, 2018). These biases and inequalities permeating schools in Minneapolis Public Schools led non-White teachers to feel more targeted than their White colleagues.

From a national perspective, Griffin and Tackie (2016) presented findings of a 2013 federal survey of education that indicated that intentions to leave were stronger among non-White teachers than White teachers due to the lack of support from administrators, desire to
pursue different careers, concerns regarding compensation based on performance, poor teaching conditions, and lack of autonomy in the classroom (Kaput, 2019). Black teachers throughout the U.S. who answered a survey in 2015 reported racial stereotyping and discrimination in their schools (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). These Black teachers also said that they never felt as respected as White teachers for their experience and knowledge of teaching. Instead, other teachers forced these Black teachers to become disciplinarians who handled students’ behavioral issues (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). These extra duties disrupted their delivery and professional development.

Griffin (2018) reported similar findings from a qualitative exploration of Latinx teachers, who said that they felt others perceived them as inferior to White teachers and that others criticized them when they spoke languages other than English. Drake et al. (2019) reported similar findings in Michigan regarding racial discrimination and bias as causing non-White teachers to depart. The authors studied teachers’ evaluations between 2011 and 2016 and found that approximately 19% of Black teachers received poor evaluations, compared to 7% of White teachers. Drake et al. found that 50% of White teachers received lower evaluations than White teachers in similar schools. Most administrators in these schools were White, and this was the main reason Black teachers were disrespected and perceived as inferior. Billingsley et al. (1995) studied urban schools and found that the rate of teacher attrition was higher among White teachers than Black teachers.

**Strategies to Enhance Teacher Retention**

One strategy proposed to enhance teacher retention focused on providing competitive and equitable remuneration to teachers to motivate them and minimize the likelihood of attrition and turnover (Scott, 2019). Competitive and equitable remuneration coupled with incentives such as housing, health insurance, childcare, loan forgiveness, and scholarships attracted talented
teachers and improved retention in fields with insufficient teachers, special education, science, math, engineering, and technology (Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016). In Florida, the Critical Teacher Shortage Program facilitated the forgiveness of teachers’ student loans, particularly for teachers of subjects that experienced shortages of teachers, and paid tuition and bonuses for teachers seeking certification in subjects with shortages of teachers. Feng and Sass (2015) found that loan forgiveness programs and bonuses minimized attrition among teachers of science, technology, engineering, math, English for speakers of other languages, foreign languages, and special education. Tuition reimbursement also enhanced teachers’ likelihood of staying in the teaching profession. These findings were consistent with those of other researchers who found bonuses to increase retention of teachers, especially in teachers at low-achieving schools and schools with many students of low socioeconomic status (Clotfelter et al., 2008; Springer et al., 2016; Swain et al., 2019).

Kraft et al. (2016) reported that enhancing the working conditions of teachers improved retention. Ensuring good discipline among students, offering administrative support, and providing professional development opportunities increased the probability that teachers would stay (Nguyen, 2018). Improving administrative leadership also improved teacher retention significantly, especially in schools with high needs (Grissom, 2011). Burkhauser (2017) proposed that school districts struggling with high turnover and attrition needed principals with the proven ability to enhance working conditions for teachers. Principals have a duty to shape the vision of a school, develop teachers’ leadership capabilities, promote a hospitable and safe working environment, and manage processes and people (Edition, 2013). Administrators and principals could also identify the best teachers to help with both the refinement and reinforcement of retention efforts (Jacob & Lefgren, 2008).
Teacher retention was likely to be higher at schools with adequate instructional resources, clean facilities, and reasonable and manageable class compositions and sizes (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Administrators could assess the quality of a school’s working conditions and use these data to target improvements that improved teacher retention (Burkhauser, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). For instance, surveys of teachers in North Carolina using the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning data collection tool fostered state-wide support for the implementation of education initiatives, such as funding of professional development and increasing time for planning, that enhanced the working conditions of teachers (Burkhauser, 2017).

Schools should also enhance recruitment, hiring, induction, and early-career support to attract and retain highly professional teachers. Schools and districts with strong, clear strategies for hiring and managing their teachers retained teachers better than other schools and districts (Feng & Sass, 2015). Common aspects of teacher recruitment and preparation involved internships, support systems, and extended support of teachers early in their careers (Ticknor et al., 2017). Strong preparation of teachers increased their efficacy and made them more likely to continue teaching. Supportive peer networks also improved the retention of teachers.

Ticknor et al. (2017) argued that a teacher who received opportunities for career progression was more likely to stay at their school. When asked about their career paths, some teachers said that they intended to become instructional coaches, assistant principals, principals, or even district education officials. However, unclear career paths led some teachers to leave the teaching profession or move to another school in search of promotion (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Therefore, improved teacher retention depended on school leaders offering teachers clear
career pathways for growth, promotion, and leadership via which teachers could apply their professional knowledge and expertise.

Praising and acknowledging the achievements and efforts of teachers enhanced their morale and made them feel valued. The teaching profession had been more demanding, and teachers had been called on to meet the escalating needs of schools, students, districts, standards and curricula, novel trends, and best practices (Borman & Dowling, 2008). In big schools, teachers often interacted rarely with leaders unless dealing with problems. Motivation and engagement of teachers depended on school leaders developing strategies for praising teachers and recognizing their efforts. Small efforts of praise and recognition, such as thanking a teacher privately for the outstanding performance of their class or sending a personalized email, could make teachers feel treasured (Ticknor et al., 2017). Other ways a leader could praise teachers included writing a personal note thanking teachers for assisting struggling students and thanking all staff members for working hard to offer students a good learning environment.

**Summary**

Demand for teachers increased as baby boomers entered school, declined, and then increased again in the 2000s. Teacher retention had become a problem throughout the U.S., but its effects varied from place to place. The lowest rates of teacher retention occurred in areas with high poverty, limited resources, and harsh working conditions. Teacher attrition had a significant effect on school budgets, student achievement, school conditions, school reforms, school districts, and the professional community of educators. Teacher retention was the product of various contributing factors. Students with less-educated parents who come from disadvantaged backgrounds faced amazing chances to be successful in the classroom (Kaushal, 2014). With income inequality rising, the standard of education for disadvantaged students was of great
concern (Cox, 2016). Every student should have access to quality education, but the current system cheated low-income/disadvantaged students of this opportunity (Cati et al., 2015). It was important for students, families, educators, and policymakers to understand why there was a disconnect between Title I schools and the retention of teachers and, more importantly, what could be done to fix it (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). This research design assisted me in understanding teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teachers’ retention in Title I high schools as outlined with the research questions presented in this study. Previous research fixated on many of the structural and cultural barriers; however, more research was needed to understand how these issues compound when intersected with low-income /Title I high schools.

Supplemental research was needed to understand what influenced teacher retention in Title I high schools. Additionally, more research needed to be completed in order to understand why this unique demographic (Title I high schools) was disproportionately unprepared structurally, culturally, and academically for teachers (Patton, 2016). There seemed to be a disconnect between Title I schools and teacher retention, which led to a lack of quality teachers. By utilizing a qualitative approach, this study allowed the research participants’ voices to contribute to the research surrounding this educational phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The significance of this study was theoretical, practical, and empirical. Highlighting barriers that influenced teachers’ perceptions benefited all stakeholders experiencing this phenomenon (Gonzalez, 2015). Moreover, this study propelled teacher retention access research forward by targeting a specific population whom the literature seemingly overlooked.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of the proposed case study was to examine current and former high school teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention. In this chapter, I described the qualitative methods that I used to answer the research questions in this study. I provided detailed description of the setting, how I recruited participants, and my role as the researcher. I then discussed the instruments, the validity and reliability of the instruments, and the procedures I used to collect and analyze data. I also discussed trustworthiness and ethical considerations. The primary goal of this study was to provide district leaders and administrators with information to help implement strategies and programs to raise the retention of teachers in schools.

Design

Researchers use qualitative research methods to explore and understand the social or human problems of an individual or group (Creswell, 2018). The proposed qualitative study described current and former teachers’ perceptions of factors that influenced teacher retention. This study depended on the belief that direct observation was an appropriate way to measure teachers’ perceptions of factors that influenced teacher retention based on teachers’ own experiences (Surovell, 2017). I focused on the factors that impacted teacher retention at a Title I high school in a southern U.S. state. I conducted a case study than any other type of qualitative research method to ensure I provided an in-depth analysis of the problem (Yin, 2009). The findings from this study regarding factors that influenced teachers at the school to change professions could help with the creation of programs to retain effective teachers (Grissom et al., 2016). I collected and examined the perceptions of high school teachers because their perceptions reflected their decisions to remain teachers. I could have studied the principals and
instructional leaders, which might have been both informative and exciting. However, to ensure the authenticity of the research, I captured the experiences and perceptions of this unique group of teachers. Capturing the experiences and perceptions of this unique group was vital to understanding the issues that impacted teacher retention. A collective case study was applied to understand the diverse perceptions of the participants. These perceptions were correlated with the study and investigated to find factors that impacted teacher retention. The high school and unique group of teachers provided a bounded system for this study. The case study was also bounded by the research questions, which guided the phenomenon of teacher retention, which was the focus of exploration (Lapan et al., 2012). The type of research questions, which asked teachers’ perceptions of what influenced them to stay or leave, was typical of a case study design (Yin, 2018). High school teachers were exceptional because they dealt with persistent problems such as working conditions and lack of administrative support, and these persistent problems they experienced have often led them to leave the teaching profession after only a short period of employment (Sanchez, 2007). According to Sutcher et al. (2016), a high proportion of high school teachers, approximately 13.8%, left the teaching profession within the first five years of teaching during the years of 2011–2012.

According to Yin (2018), case study research was a useful approach to adopt when the overall aim was to develop a rounded picture of an investigated phenomenon. Qualitative case studies focus on how and why questions (Yin, 2018). According to Blanson (2019), using questionnaires and interviews to collect data in a case study helped with an examination of the underlying issue. A case study design offered an ideal way to focus on the perceptions formed by teachers based on their individual experiences and daily activities. Therefore, I selected a qualitative case study design for this investigation. I collected rich, descriptive data from
interviews, a focus group, and documents. When using a case study design, a researcher operates as the primary collector of data and is responsible for analyzing data (Yin, 2013). Yin (2009) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in-depth and within its real-world context” (p. 16). Yin (2009) linked theory and practice by demonstrating the broad scope of case study research and its historical significance at a practical level. A case study was the best way to approach the topic of this study because it allowed me to collect perceptions of participants in person and gain in-depth information on factors that influenced teacher retention in a Title I high school. Other research methods would have been less effective at answering the research questions. For example, using a grounded theory design was not appropriate since it dealt with the revision of a theory. I also considered conducting an ethnographic study; however, according to Merriam (2009), this type of study dealt with human society and a particular culture, which did not align with my study. Additionally, I considered a narrative design, yet it did not align since there were no chronological events or stories being told.

Stake (2003) identified three distinct types of case studies. In an instrumental case study, a researcher focuses on an issue and selects one bounded case to illustrate the issue. In a collective case study, a researcher focuses on one issue and selects multiple cases to demonstrate that issue. And in an intrinsic case study, a researcher aims to develop a more substantial understanding of a particular case. Stake (2003) described the value of analyzing multiple cases for the purposes of comparison by examining similarities and differences across the cases (Yin, 2013). In this study, I treated each teacher as a case and each case as its own entity; therefore, I used a collective case study approach. This collective case study explored how 10-15 high school teachers perceived factors that influenced teacher retention in their Title I high school. By
utilizing Maslow’s (1970) motivational theory, JD–R theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the conservation of resources theory (Alarcon, 2011; Halbesleben et al., 2014), this study analyzed comprehensive interviews, focus groups, and available documents of the high school teacher regarding their beliefs, obstacles, knowledge, rewards, and factors that influenced teacher retention. By conducting a collective case study, I was able to study multiple cases simultaneously, which facilitated a broader appreciation of teacher retention.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research involves examining data from participants to acquire knowledge about an issue or problem. As Yin (1994) noted, the aim of qualitative research is to provide analytical generalizations rather than statistical generalizations. I purposefully sampled high school teachers with at least five years of teaching experience to develop a deep understanding of factors impacting teacher attrition. I gathered data via multiple methods, including interviews, a focus group, and a review of documents and records such as annual staffing reports, teacher handbooks, and school climate survey reports (Merriam, 2009).

Using a case study design allowed me to be creative and flexible in my connections with the participants so that I acquired authentic information. The essence of qualitative research and case study design was acceptable for this research seeing that deeper knowledge was gained through strategic steps of data collection and analysis throughout the research. Document analysis is a social research method and a valuable way to provide triangulation—that is, the combination of methodologies in the study of a single phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). The purpose of triangulation in this study was to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Bowen, 2009). Corroborating findings across data sets reduced the impact of potential bias.
According to Patton (2015), the essence of qualitative research is to discover patterns and interest regarding the research topic and inform others through data collection and analysis.

**Research Questions**

To define the obstacles to teacher retention, I used a qualitative approach. This study aimed to listen to the voices of high school teachers in a southern U.S. state; therefore, a qualitative approach was necessary. A collective case study was the research design for this study since it provided insight and understanding of the universal problem facing multiple cases of high school teachers (Stakes, 1995).

**Central Research Question**

What factors do high school teachers perceive as influencing the teacher retention rate in a selected Title I high school in a U.S. southern state?

**Sub-question 1**

What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to stay in the teaching profession?

**Sub-question 2**

What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels?

**Sub-question 3**

From a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention?

**Setting**

The setting for the proposed study was Manker High School, a high-poverty, Title I school in a suburb of a large city in a southern U.S. state. Most of the students at Manker High School came from families of low socioeconomic status; the median household income was
$25,590 in 2017, well below the state median of $47,210 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In 2017, the population of the suburb was 25,172, 32% of whom lived below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). For the 2018–2019 school year, Manker High School served 951 students from Grades 9 through 12, and regarding race and ethnicity, 99% of the school’s students were Black, 1% were Hispanic, 0.1% were White, and 0.4% were of another race or ethnicity (Tio, 2018). Most students at the school received free or reduced-price lunches. The school had 57 faculty members: 44% had 1–3 years’ experience, 28% had 4–10 years’ experience, 23% had 11–20 years’ experience, and 5% had 21 or more years’ experience (Tio, 2018). At Manker High School, the retention rate for teachers with five or fewer years of experience was 3% lower than the retention rate for all teachers (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). The retention rate for leaders with five or fewer years of experience was 11% lower than the retention rate for all leaders at the school and 9% lower than the retention rate for leaders with five or fewer years of experience in 2016–2017 (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). I chose Manker High School for this study because Manker was a classic example of a Title I school with high teacher attrition rates. Investigation of Manker High School’s teacher attrition problem was the focus of this study, and I had personally seen the impact of teacher attrition on both teachers and students at Title I high schools.

**Participants**

The participants in this study were high school teachers working at Manker High School and former teachers who had departed Manker High School. I used both purposeful and snowball sampling to select participants. Purposeful sampling involved selecting information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). Slavin (1992) stated that “sample size is a critical element of the research design” (p. 98). According to Marshall (1996), “qualitative researchers recognize that some informants
are ‘richer’ than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher” (p. 523). Qualitative researchers have oftentimes used purposeful sampling to identify and select information-rich cases to ensure the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). According to Merriam (1998), “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight; and thus, must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 6). According to Creswell and Clark (2011), purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who possess exceptional knowledge or experience of a phenomenon of interest. Along with knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) noted the importance of availability, willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions articulately, expressively, and reflectively. I used purposeful sampling to ensure that the selected teachers had taught at Manker High School for at least five years, which allowed me to learn about important issues from this carefully chosen group of individuals (Glesne, 2011).

Snowball sampling was another method that has widely been used in qualitative research (Naderifar et al., 2017). This method of sampling allowed me to enrich the sample and to access additional participants, including former teachers at Manker High School. Researchers have often used this sampling method as a specific tool for gathering information on a hidden population (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling was a useful alternative when other means of obtaining information were not feasible, and a convenience sampling method applied when participants with certain targeted characteristics were hard to access (Naderifar et al., 2017). When using this method of sampling, the risk of bias was low when the population was homogeneous regarding the targeted characteristics (Fereshteh et al., 2017). I used snowball
sampling to access former teachers, a unique group of participants who added knowledge to my research.

All participants had received certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Under this certification process, a high school teacher completed a teacher preparation program. The process for selecting the teachers to participate proceeded through contact with the principal of Manker High School. I selected participants by first sending out a principal-approved questionnaire (see Appendix C) to all teachers employed at the school asking for volunteers to participate in the study. The questions determined participant interest and eligibility. The first question on the questionnaire established which individuals were certified teachers, the second question determined the number of years individuals had been teaching at Manker High School, and the third question assessed individuals’ willingness to participate in the study.

As described above, I recruited a purposeful sample of teachers who had worked at Manker High School for at least five years (Creswell, 2013). By collecting data from high school teachers with at least five years of experience, I was able to include perspectives of teachers still relatively new to the profession as well as those of veteran teachers. I aimed to recruit a sample of 12–15 participants from the approximately 57 current teachers at Manker High School, as well as former teachers. This sample size was consistent with recommendations for case studies (Creswell, 2013). I employed pseudonyms during data collection and reporting to ensure participants’ confidentiality.

**Procedures**

Before beginning data collection, I obtained approval from the university’s institutional review board (IRB) (see Appendix A) and the principal of the high school where I conducted the
study. After receiving approval, I sent out a recruitment letter via email (see Appendix B) asking current and former teachers to participate in the study. Emails of potential participants were provided by the principal of Manker High School. Next, I sent consent forms via email (see Appendix C) to all potential participants eligible for the study (Creswell, 2013). All participants were over the age of 18 years and were able to give their own informed consent to participation by signing the informed consent form. I did not gather any information from a participant until I had received their signed informed consent. Once I received the completed consent forms, data collection began. Snowball sampling allowed me to enrich the sample and to access former teachers that worked at Manker High School. Purposeful sampling ensured that selected teachers were certified and had taught at Manker High School for at least five years along with verbal confirmation. The 10 potential participants were identified, contacted about scheduling an interview, and sent confirmation of the interview’s location, date, and time.

I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to obtain participants’ views, thoughts, feelings, experiences, opinions, and intentions regarding teacher attrition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When constructing the interview, I followed the steps specified by Creswell (2008) to establish content validity. Content validity was the extent to which items in an interview or questionnaire represented the phenomenon under study. According to Creswell (2008), a researcher can address content validity by establishing a panel of judges or experts and having the panel examine the plan and procedures used to construct the instrument, including the “objectives of the instrument, the content areas, and the level of difficulty of the questions” (p. 172). I had the interview questions peer reviewed before applying for IRB approval (see Appendix D) and I piloted my interviews questions. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes was recorded for future analysis. Following the interviews, I conducted a focus group
with the same participants who were notified via email with the location, date, and time. The participants shared their experiences in an appropriate and comfortable setting answering the focus group questions (see Appendix E) and this was also recorded for future analysis. I also collected documents such as annual staffing reports, teacher handbooks, and school climate survey reports (Creswell, 2013). I transcribed all audio and locked all data in a safe for protection. I coded all data and synthesized themes or patterns from the codes (O’Leary, 2014). Finally, I reported my findings based on the data.

The Researcher’s Role

As a researcher, I upheld ethical standards while conducting the study. My role as the researcher was to collect various forms of data, examine the data, effectively conceptualize the information in the data, and then disseminate the information in a helpful way (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My goal was to use qualitative methods to understand the experiences of individuals via an interpretive paradigm based on interviews and focus groups (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). I reported the findings using a verisimilar style, which involved providing a realistic picture to help the reader experience the feelings and attitudes of the participants (Creswell, 2013). As an educator at a Title I high school with a high attrition rate, I may have been biased in my relationships with the participants because we may have had similar experiences. Therefore, I used open-ended questions to allow participants to express their own experiences rich in participant reality but without researcher bias (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

I guarded against bias while developing questions, selecting participants, analyzing data, and reporting findings. Research bias could have affected this study in many ways; therefore, I used reflexivity, which was the process of creating data-gathering tools, when collecting, analyzing, and reporting data (Berger, 2015). According to Mruck and Breuer (2003),
researchers should discuss themselves and their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and activities during the research process. Reflective practices such as this aim to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of the research outcome, a construction that “originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching” (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3). According to Lincoln and Guba (1989), a reflexive journal is a type of diary in which a researcher makes entries during the research process recording their methodological decisions and reasons for those decisions. A researcher can examine a study’s logistics and reflect upon events in terms of the researcher’s values and interests by keeping a self-reflective journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Researchers use such journals reflectively to examine “personal assumptions and goals” and clarify “individual belief systems and subjectivities” (Russell & Kelly, 2002, p. 2). Keeping a reflective journal is common practice in qualitative research (Etherington, 2004). Reflexive journaling allowed me to explore participants’ experiences in detail while avoiding the heavy resource requirements of traditional observations. By making efforts to build trust and respect, I maintained a steady response rate and sustained participation throughout the study. Reflexivity rested on the assumptions that researchers were part of the social world that they studied and that a critical aspect of research was to make relationships between researchers and participants as explicit and transparent as possible (Palaganas et al., 2017). I used reflexivity to increase the trustworthiness and transparency of the study by identifying and reporting my values, beliefs, knowledge, and biases (Råheim et al., 2016). I was able to enhance the quality of the study by reflecting on who I was in association with teacher retention problems (Berger, 2015). How I related helped me obtain new insight into how to retain teachers. Finally, using reflexivity helped me ensure ethical
research practices by addressing concerns regarding the adverse effects of power on my relationship with the research participants (Berger, 2015; Smith, 2015).

Manker High School had a high teacher attrition rate, which differed from the district in which I had currently worked. I attempted to conduct the study as a neutral and unbiased researcher and allowed the participants to offer authentic information that helped retain teachers. My role had little impact on the responses provided by the participants because I had no relationship with the participants, including any relationship in which I supervised or evaluated them. My interest in this research came from many years of seeing some coworkers leave the teaching profession while others stayed for years. I explained to participants that my role as the researcher was to collect data from interviews, a focus group, documents, and records and to identify themes in those data that may address the research problem. I aimed to help leaders of school districts develop strategies to reduce teacher attrition.

**Data Collection**

The proposed case study relied on several rigorous data collection techniques to ensure the collection of rich data. According to Yin (2018), no single data source is better than any other. I proposed to begin by interviewing participating teachers.

**Interviews**

I conducted in-person interviews to gain information about teachers’ experiences and perceptions. Interviews in qualitative research help explain, understand, and explore the meaning of what interviewees say regarding their opinions, behaviors, and experiences (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are useful as a follow-up to a questionnaire when a researcher wants to understand the story behind a participant’s experiences (McNamara, 1999).
Case study participants provide details and ideas about situations rather than just specific answers to questions (Yin, 2013). Conducting individual semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allowed me to obtain rich data that captured participants’ perspectives (Weller et al., 2018). After selecting participants, I set a day and time for each interview based on participant availability. Each interview lasted between 30–60 minutes and took place in a private classroom at the school. I asked participants for permission to electronically record the interviews, and I stored all data from the interviews on a secure, password-protected laptop.

In the study, I asked every participant the same open-ended questions. Using standardized open-ended questions allowed me to complete interviews more quickly and compare them more easily. Researchers commonly use standardized open-ended questions in case studies (Yin, 2013). According to Creswell (2012), researchers who use standardized open-ended questions generally plan to engage in one-on-one interactions with participants. Glesne (2011) stated that when trying to build a trusting relationship with participants, a researcher’s skill in examining and moderating questions is essential.

Qualitative interview questions are generally open-ended and crafted around the topic studied (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2012) stated that open-ended questions provide participants with opportunities to give in-depth answers rather than vague responses. I wrote interview questions that strategically aligned with the research questions to ensure that the data obtained from participants aligned with the purpose of the study. The interview questions allowed participants to express their experiences in detail and discuss their viewpoints concerning factors that impacted teacher attrition. I asked each participant the following questions, generally in this order:

1. Tell me about your journey to become a teacher here at Manker High School.
2. How long do you plan to be in the field of education?

3. How would you describe the culture in your school?

4. What makes Manker High School different from any other local school?

5. Briefly describe the working conditions here at your school.

6. What role do administrators play in your decision to remain at Manker school?

7. What types of supports are in place to help build teacher abilities, skills, and expertise?

8. How do these supports work with the teachers?

9. What do you think leads new teachers to keep teaching?

10. How does your teacher’s salary affect your attitude toward teaching?

11. What activities or events at Manker High School do you believe would affect a teacher’s decision to continue to work at the school?

12. Why do you think teachers enjoy working at Manker High School?

13. What are the expectations of teachers at Manker High School?

14. What causes teachers to quit working at Manker High School?

15. Describe any situations that made you want to leave Manker High School.

16. What do you think leads new teachers to leave teaching?

17. What affect does the workload at Manker High School have on teacher’s decision to leave?

18. What do you think could be done to improve teacher retention at Manker High School?

19. What characteristics or actions would you like administrators to have or demonstrate to help increase teacher retention?

20. Considering all things, what are you plans for next school year?

21. What are some other factors that teachers take into consideration when debating whether to leave their school?
The first question was a grand tour question (Rossman & Rallis, 2016) intended to make interviewees feel comfortable with talking about themselves and their experiences, which broke the ice and prepared participants to make longer detail-rich responses. The second question identified factors that teachers felt may have enhanced their educational opportunities for longevity, especially in vulnerable schools, by understanding why teachers joined and left the profession, and what motivated them to stay or return (Podolsky et. al., 2016). Questions 3-8 addressed teachers’ attitudes toward being unsupported in their jobs in which they tended to leave, and inexperienced teachers were incompetent which jeopardized students their entitled educational opportunity (Zhang, et.al., 2016; Walker, T. 2019b). According to Grissom et al. (2019), more effective principals were associated with higher retention rates based on the multiple measures researchers use to assess teacher and principal effectiveness. Questions 9-13 gave insight on teachers’ perceptions of factors that influenced teachers to remain in their jobs. Studies showed that more teachers were allured to high achieving schools with qualified administrators, committed colleagues, and relatively well-behaved students even if they came from low-income families and had poor skills (Bland et. al., 2016). According to Gu et al. (2014) school’s deprived communities and environment affects teachers and their decision to continue working and teacher-student relationships in disadvantaged communities are important to increasing teachers’ job satisfaction, therefore, questions 14 -17 investigated factors of why teachers left their jobs. Questions 18 and 19 identified strategies school districts used to retain teachers, such as viewing the entire work environment to identify ways of making the teachers’ experiences in school more significant, rewarding, and productive (Bland, 2019). Question 20 allowed teachers to explain reasons they may or may not return to the school next year. Teachers enter and stay in the teaching profession when motivational patterns are highly complex and
when they can identify with intrinsic, altruistic, and perceived professional mastery (Chiong et al., 2017). Finally, question 21 allowed teachers to elaborate their experiences in detail and discuss their viewpoints concerning factors that impacted teacher attrition (Creswell 2012).

**Focus Group**

After analyzing the data from the one-on-one interviews, I collected further data by conducting one focus group with the interview participants. This allowed me to observe the participants engaging in dialogue with their colleagues on the research topic. Focus groups enable participants to interact in the context of the study topic so that a researcher can observe their attitudes and hear their experiences (Morgan & Spanish, 1984; Rothwell et al., 2015). Focus groups took place in an acceptable and approved location with a confidential atmosphere. I collected data by recording audio of the discussion and taking notes. I facilitated the focus groups using a semi-structured group interview process to ensure that participants remained on topic (see Appendix E). I worked hard to establish an atmosphere conducive to trust that allowed participants to share freely. I used the following questions to guide the focus group process:

1. Why did you choose the teaching profession?
2. Discuss the positive aspects of working at your school.
3. Thinking of a positive school climate: What are the key factors that contribute to a positive school climate at your school?
4. Describe the interaction between teachers at your school.
5. Describe the relationship between administrators and teachers.
6. What are some experiences that you believe may lead your colleagues to consider leaving the profession?
7. What are some duties or responsibilities that you feel could be eliminated to help teachers be more productive?
8. In what ways might these duties and responsibilities lead to teacher turnover?
9. Let’s discuss the students at your school. What role does student discipline play when a teacher is deciding whether to leave?

10. What are your feelings about administrator behaviors that could help reduce the turnover rate in your school?

11. What might administrators do to better support high school teachers?

12. High school teachers often benefit from professional development workshops that build their skills. What kind of professional development workshops might help?

13. If you could design a school where teachers would not leave, describe the school for us in full detail.

Questions 1–4 allowed teachers to address factors that influenced teachers to stay in the teaching profession. Teachers prefer to work in schools that have greater autonomy, strong levels of administrative support and clear expectation which leads to a positive working relationship with teachers an improves teacher retention (Skaalvik et al., 2017). According to Glover (2013) teachers’ creativeness were being governed by the schools with market norms and they were pushed to increase test scores which left teachers blamed for students’ lack of achievement and growth which contributed to factors that impacted teachers’ decisions to leave the teaching profession which is covered in questions 5-8. Teachers leave poor schools due to inadequate amount of discipline, lack of collaboration and preparation, poor administrative leadership and working conditions (Donaldson et al. 2011). Finally, questions 9–11 allowed participants to suggest ways to reduce teacher attrition and increase teacher retention. Developing a family friendly environment based on the recognition of teacher professionalism can be more notable in teacher retention and the recognition of their accomplishments and years of services at different stages is a psychological connection that can be used to retain teachers (Jackson, 2012). Focus group data were stored on a password-protected laptop.
Document Analysis

I used four types of documents and records to gain information about the school’s attrition rate: (1) annual staffing reports; (2) professional development plans; (3) the teacher handbook; and (4) school climate surveys. Annual staffing reports provided me with data regarding teachers who had left the school and teachers who remained. These reports also provided data on teachers’ employment, including hiring data and the projected needs of the school and teachers’ demographic data (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). I created graphic representations of the data that were easy to understand.

Professional development plans included reports of professional credentials, implementation of goals, strategies for training, and outcomes of training. These plans emphasized collaboration, responded to expressed needs, and created programs to further competence and expertise. The documents provided professional performance reviews with which to evaluate the improvement of teaching and learning to meet the students’ developmental and educational needs and teachers’ professional needs, such as mentoring programs (Randel et al., 2016; Tooley & Connally, 2016).

A teacher handbook provided information on teacher responsibilities and workload with the aim of improving and sustaining teaching quality. The handbook helped teachers identify areas for performance improvement and focused support on essential and ongoing processes of development. As a teacher grows professionally, their instructional expertise increases, they become more effective at various aspects of teaching, and they gain a greater repertoire of instructional, managerial, and assessment knowledge and skills on which they can draw as they create meaningful student learning experiences. The teacher handbook that I used served as a
resource for all certified staff and described many policies and procedures that govern teachers’ work.

A school climate report evaluated various aspects of a school’s educational environment to assess perceptions and identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the school. Teachers in all schools believe that they lack any voice in shaping curriculum, setting performance standards for students, devising discipline policies, or evaluating teachers. School climate affects teacher retention: According to Walker (2019a), “teachers who quit the profession were more likely to have reported, in the year before they quit, feeling stressed, unsatisfied, unsupported, and not involved in setting school or classroom policies” (p. 21).

These documents provided comprehensive and historical information without disrupting the participants’ daily routines. I stored the documents in a locked cabinet for security purposes. Secure storage of documents helped form an audit trail (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis

Qualitative methods involve complex and challenging dissection of text and other data. According to Creswell (2009), “the process of data analysis involves making sense out of the text and image data” (p. 183). Data analysis included organizing and coding data, finding ways to represent the data, and deciding how to interpret the data (Creswell, 2009). Triangulation allowed me to enrich the research by offering a variety of data sets to explain differing characteristics of the phenomenon and increase the credibility and validity of the research findings (Noble et al., 2019). Using memos allowed me to engage with the participants to a greater degree and develop an intense relationship with the data (Birks et al., 2008). Glaser (1978) advised the researcher to consider memo writing a priority to ensure the retention of ideas that may otherwise be lost. Clearly, the writing of memos was crucial to the process of
examining a phenomenon within this qualitative domain. Bracketing was a strategy that was used to minimize the potentially inimical effects of preconceptions that contaminated the study process and was presented as two forms of researcher engagement, with data and with evolving findings (Tufford et al., 2012). The first form of researcher engagement was identification and ephemeral setting aside of the researcher’s assumptions. The second form consistent of hermeneutic data revision along with one’s evolving comprehension of it considering a revised understanding of any aspects of the issue. This was an ongoing process that included the methodical development of language to reflect outcomes (Fischer, 2009). This process enabled the researcher to be able to “mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project” (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 81).

When conducting qualitative data analysis to answer research questions, a researcher must identify themes and patterns in the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data by identifying, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set such as interviews (Nowell, et al., 2017). Closely examining the data for common themes such as topics, ideas, or patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly will help create/define and name themes (Kiger et al., 2020). To this end, I transcribed the digital recordings of the interviews and focus groups verbatim. I then used open coding to identify themes based on recurring words or phrases by reading and rereading transcripts, highlighted words in transcripts and documents that related to the research questions and identified themes in the data that reflect similarities and differences among the perceptions of the participants (Bowen, 2009; Glaser, 2011). Then, I coded each theme, reviewing it several times. I developed the codes into names that described issues. I transferred all codes into a
separate document where I compared consistent themes. I repeated this process several times, renaming and restructuring the codes after comparing them. As the themes coalesce, the most salient themes became the central themes of the study. Analyzing the data allowed me to focus on identifying themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the data, which provided insight into the research questions. I then shaped developing themes “into a general description” (Creswell, 2009, p. 189) of the phenomenon.

The final step was data interpretation. After analyzing the data, I had to check its validity by checking the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2009). According to O’Leary (2014), this technique allows researchers to identify common occurrences of specific themes and quantify the use of particular words, phrases, and concepts to ensure credibility. A researcher determines what to search for, then computes the frequency of occurrence of the search target within documents. A researcher thus organizes information into what is “related to the central questions of the research” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). Bowen (2009) summed up the overall concept of document analysis as a process of “evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding developed” (p. 33).

To ensure the validity of interviews, I transcribed my own raw data, organized and prepared data for analysis, read all data thoroughly, coded data, described data, completed detailed descriptions in the form of a case study, and interpreted the meanings of the descriptions by hand (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure the reliability of the interviews, I used member checking and provided a final report to each participant to validate the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By examining the information collected from different sources, I was able to corroborate findings across datasets and thus reduced the impact of potential biases. During data analysis, I examined, categorized, tabulated, and summarized the data (Yin, 2018). I
backed up all electronic files on an external memory drive and locked the drive in a filing cabinet in a secure office. I will destroy the original data sources.

**Trustworthiness**

In this section, I addressed the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings of the proposed study. All these factors are essential to any research study.

**Credibility**

I used the triangulation of interviews, focus groups, documents, and records to ensure the research was credible (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Furthermore, in line with Merriam (2009), I used member checking to reduce any personal influence or biases. Following Stake’s (1995) recommendations, I applied member checking by taking the information I gathered from the participants back to them to ensure that I had correctly interpreted their experiences and drawn appropriate conclusions. The participants judged the accuracy and credibility of the account I provided, which ensured that they played an active role in the case study (Stake, 1995).

**Dependability**

Dependability is essential to trustworthiness as a measure of whether findings are consistent and repeatable. Trustworthiness is a measure of the accuracy of findings and the degree to which they support any conclusions drawn (Anney, 2014). I used an inquiry audit to ensure dependability. An inquiry audit involved having a qualified person outside the data collection and data analysis processes examine these processes and the results. I maintained an audit trail by keeping track of all documents, interviews, and other data in an orderly manner that permitted replication of each aspect of the study as needed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit
trail confirmed the accuracy of the findings and ensured that the data collected supported the conclusions drawn.

**Confirmability**

Researchers use reflexivity to ensure the confirmability of their research. Reflexivity is an attitude that a qualitative researcher adopts when collecting and analyzing data to ensure the credibility of the results by reducing the chances of the researcher biasing the study. I looked at my background and position to identify how they influenced the research process, and I maintained a reflective journal. My influences, as recorded in the reflective journal, provided valuable insight for readers to understand how I derived the themes from the data (Moon et al., 2016).

**Transferability**

Researchers establish transferability by providing readers with evidence that their research findings apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Patton, 2015). I used detailed and thick description as a technique to establish transferability by providing a robust and accurate account of my experiences during data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed the importance of transferability in qualitative research to permit the application of lessons learned. By achieving transferability, I connected to the cultural and social contexts that surrounded my data collection. Making this connection meant talking about where the interviews occurred and other aspects of data collection, which provided a more vibrant and fuller understanding of the research setting.

**Ethical Considerations**

I first gained approval to conduct this study from my dissertation committee at Liberty University. I then sent a letter to the superintendent of the school district in which I conducted
the research. This letter described the study and requested permission to conduct the study. Once I received approval from the superintendent, I sent a letter to the principal of the high school I proposed to study. The letter explained the study in detail so that the principal was aware of precisely what would occur in their school. Each of the participating teachers signed an informed consent form. I maintained participant confidentiality and anonymity during the research process. I used pseudonyms for the setting and all participants to ensure confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used privacy to empower participants by clearly stating that I would report only information that they wanted to reveal in interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I acted in a caring and fair manner during interviews by avoiding questions that led to emotional distress. There were no conflicts of interest besides me being an educator, and I took specific steps to keep natural biases out of the study as much as possible. I stored all data on a password-protected computer.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology of the proposed study, including the forms of data to collected, the proposed procedures, and the methods I used to collect and analyze data. I also discussed how I would establish trustworthiness and ethical considerations. Teacher retention impacting Title I high schools was researched through valid, confidential, and reliable approaches to convey a clear perspective and understanding of the issue. Interviews and a focus group with 10 to 15 participants provided indispensable evidence and conception of the issue that teacher retention presented to Title I high schools. Former and current teachers discussed their perceptions of factors that influenced teacher retention at this Title I high school. Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling procedure and invited via email. Participants used the attached consent form. Data analysis and collection approaches helped in revealing teacher
retention issues at this Title I high school and was manipulated responsibly and ethically. The information was transcribed to use for data and coding. As the role of the researcher, I kept all information confidential, organized, credible, and valid. Design selection, research questions, and the setting for this study were all relevant to the establishment of solid research. The findings from this study helped identify factors that influenced teachers at the Title I high school to change professions and provided resources for creating programs to retain effective teachers (Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2016).
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of the case study was to examine current and former high school teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention. In this chapter, I will provide the findings based upon the analysis that I completed on the collected data. This chapter will begin by highlighting the demographic backgrounds of the participants of this study. I will then report the results of the study, by discussing the themes that emerged from the dataset, as well as answering the research questions.

Participants

The participants in this study were high school teachers working at Manker High School and former teachers who had departed Manker High School. I used both purposeful and snowball sampling to select participants. All participants had received certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. I aimed to recruit a sample of 12–15 participants from the approximately 57 current teachers at Manker High School, as well as former teachers. The final sample size was nine participants for the semi-structured interviews and nine participants for the focus group. In relation to the nine participants for the semi-structured interviews, I experienced data saturation on the eighth interview, and therefore completed one more to confirm saturation. Table 1 below highlights the demographic characteristics along with the pseudonyms that were assigned to each participant.
Table 1

Teacher Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Educational Degree</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy (P1)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>9-12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara (P2)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim (P3)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamika (P4)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (P5)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott (P6)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Interrelated</td>
<td>All subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane (P7)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Educational Specialist</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>9-12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob (P8)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>40 years</td>
<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasha (P9)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme Development**

Within this section, I will begin by discussing the synthesis of meaning which includes both textual and structural descriptions of the participants. I will then provide an overview of the theme development of the semi-structured interviews, the focus group, and the document review.
Synthesis of Meaning

I will report the findings using a verisimilar style, which involves providing a realistic picture to help the reader experience the feelings and attitudes of the participants (Creswell, 2013). As an educator at a Title I high school with a high attrition rate, I may have been biased in my relationships with the participants because we may have had similar experiences. Therefore, I used open-ended questions to allow participants to express their own experiences rich in participant reality but without researcher bias (Austin & Sutton, 2014). I guarded against bias while developing questions, selecting participants, analyzing data, and reporting findings. Research bias could have affected this study in many ways; therefore, I used reflexivity, which was the process of creating data-gathering tools, when collecting, analyzing, and reporting data (Berger, 2015). According to Mruck and Breuer (2003), researchers should discuss themselves and their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and activities during the research process. Reflective practices such as this aim to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of the research outcome, a construction that “originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching” (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3). Therefore, some textual and structural descriptions must be discussed before highlighting the themes that emerged from the dataset.

Textural Descriptions

Many of the participants were able to provide strong textural descriptions regarding the importance of having administrators provide support for them to remain working in their position. The participants reported that their administrators had an open-door policy, which encouraged them to communicate openly with each other. Additionally, another important textual description was that of the campus or the environment. The participants were able to
report that the environment of the school allowed them to work independently, but also still be
an integral part of the team. Although many of the participants did not discuss that their current experiences in the school were aligned with wanting to leave their post, they were able to discuss how lack of support from administrators and high workload and stress were important factors that would influence them to leave their posts.

**Structural Descriptions**

Some structural descriptions emerged from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group. One of the main structural descriptions that emerged from the dataset included the participants reporting the importance of seeking out professional development opportunities. The participants discussed how their school offered plentiful professional development opportunities, which allowed them to be trained in a variety of ways to impart this knowledge to their students and other stakeholders in the community. Additionally, another structural description included the participants discussing the importance of schools continuing to ensure that there are strong communication patterns, the building of relationships, and increased support from administration to increase teacher retention.

**Theme Development**

Within this analysis, several themes emerged from the dataset that aligned with the research questions. The themes that emerged from the dataset included: (a) administrative support, (b) culture and environment, (c) professional development opportunities, (d) lack of administrative support, (e) high workload and stress, (f) increase relationships, communication, and support, and (g) virtual environments.
Administrative Support

The first theme that derived from the data was that of administrative support. Within this theme, seven out of the nine semi-structured interview participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 highlights the participants that contributed to the themes, whereas Table 3 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

Table 2. Administrative Support: Theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Administrative support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Theme 1 Sub-Themes: Administrative Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Supported by administration</th>
<th>Open-door policy</th>
<th>Compassionate</th>
<th>Encourage</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Address any concerns</th>
<th>Assisted me</th>
<th>Asking for help</th>
<th>Supporting parents</th>
<th>Supporting communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Administrative support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 2 above, 78% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they continuously felt supported by their administration and were able
to discuss how this has influenced them to stay within their position as a teacher. For example, Amy was able to discuss how they identified support in their current school. She stated:

I feel like we're supported by the administrative staff. I feel like they have an open-door policy for the most part and they are willing to listen to us, too. and hear our concerns (Amy).

Additionally, Amy was able to state how this support is extremely important for newly seasoned teachers, as it can influence whether they will stay for longer periods within their careers. Amy provided a personal experience and stated:

I think it has to do with the support because they definitely need support because when I was a new teacher, first year out of school, I felt like I wasn't supported then I would second guess what I was doing, and it made me want to leave (Amy).

Participants in the focus group also reported that they felt that if administrators provided strong support, teachers were more likely to remain in their profession or positions. Within this theme, seven out of the nine focus group participants were able to contribute, which is presented in Table 4. Table 5 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

Table 4. Administrative Support: Theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1: Support from administration
Table 5. Theme 1 Sub- Themes: Administrative Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Support from administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different skill sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different personalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive school environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow as a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted by Table 4 above, 78% of the focus group participants contributed to this theme. For example, Kim discussed how they enjoyed autonomy and also the family-like environment that the administration has created. Kim reported:

I like my school because I just feel like it's like we're a family that's what I like. I'm the only child even though I do have a big family, but I see you know, I spend a lot of my time here also people don't bother me, and I like when people don't bother me, I just kind of can do my own thing and don't have to worry about being micromanaged (Kim).

Kim also continued to provide a personal example of how she experiences administration support within their school environment:

The cool thing about the administration here in like participant what already stated, you know, we're in a state of flux has transitioned. I think there is an administrator here for everybody. And the reason why I say that is administrators have different personalities. They have different skill sets. They have different teaching philosophies. And so you may not gravitate to the one that's a sign over your department, but there is an administrator here for you if you want there to be one, but it may not be the one that's
assigned to your department, which is fine. So, there are some who feel no problem with
going straight to the principal asking their questions some gravitate towards the API
some gravitate towards the other administrators, but there are administrators here with
different personalities that will allow you to feel like they kind of know where you're
coming from (Kim).

Culture and Environment

The second theme was that of the school’s culture and environment. Within this theme,
five out of the nine semi-structured interview participants were able to contribute, which are
presented in Tables 6 and 7. Table 6 highlights the participants that contributed to the themes,
whereas Table 7 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

Table 6. Culture and Environment: Theme 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Culture and environment</th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Theme 2 Sub-Themes: Culture and Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Culture and environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture is pretty good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The atmosphere is of a good camaraderie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As depicted by Table 6 above, 56% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt that the culture and environment were important when it came to teacher retention, providing comfortability within a family atmosphere. For example, John was able to discuss the experience of a family-like environment at their school which influenced their decision to stay. John discussed:

Everyone is hardworking fun-loving and everybody kind of hold you accountable. No one's going to hold your hand. They expect you to do what you're supposed to do. But if you need help, you can find it…: It feels like a family here (John).

Additionally, Tasha was also able to discuss the culture and environment at their school by reporting:

The atmosphere is of a good camaraderie, especially in the special ed department. Definitely a family atmosphere, you know, push and pull struggles of any office structure or profession with different opinions and grown adults are included but definitely our like-mindedness of our pursuit of what we do and with the family atmosphere just surrounded make it more comfortable (P9).

Professional Development Opportunities

The third theme that emerged from both the semi-structured interview and the focus group participants was that of the teachers being offered professional development opportunities or lack thereof. Within this theme, eight out of the nine semi-structured interview participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Tables 8 and 9. Table 8 highlights the participants that contributed to the themes, whereas Table 9 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.
Table 8. *Professional Development Opportunities: Theme 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Professional development opportunities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 8 above, 89% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt that it is important for schools to offer professional development opportunities to not only help teachers build skills but to also demonstrate support. For example, Sara stated:

They [the school] professional development. There is a schedule for professional development. But then even when teachers feel like they need other professional developments that is not being offered at that time our administrators make sure that we...
get that whether they can determine that based on evaluating us in the classroom or us going to them saying I really not sure (Sara).

Kim also reported administrators regularly offer professional development opportunities:

Well, we always have been given a lot of professional development. It can be geared toward being knowledge about your content, computers, or just simple things like Microsoft teams. Whatever you're not very comfortable with it, they always providing training for us (Kim).

Scott reported why their schools want to offer professional development, while Bob discussed how it is important to collaborate on professional development through all stakeholders.

The second sub-question aimed to understand what the participants’ perceptions were regarding factors that influenced teachers to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels. Within this sub-question, two themes emerged from the dataset: (1) lack of administrative support; and (2) high workload and stress.

Some participants reported a lack of professional development opportunities, which they reported could influence teachers to leave their teaching professions and positions. Within this theme, four out of the nine focus group participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Table 10. Table 11 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.
As depicted in Table 10 above, 45% of the focus group participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt that the lack of professional development opportunities or offerings could influence a teacher to leave their position or profession. For example, Sara stated:

We need the escalation training or mindset training as is called will be very beneficial because it teaches professionals educators how to see a situation and walk it back down the mountain as opposed to elevating the situation. We deal with a lot of students who have emotional limits and by emotional limits, I mean, they do not have the proper
communication or coping skills, to convey what they’re experiencing in real time in a proper manner (Sara).

Sara went on to state:

So, the escalation training will actually be something that will help us to walk some things down the mountain. It also helps Educators know how to not participate in a situation that is going in the wrong way. So, it teaches teachers how to manage themselves as well. I think this will be great for administration because they can exacerbate the situation and so everybody kind of needs to know how to deescalate (Sara).

Finally, Scott stated:

I would suggest maybe having more content specific professional development because number one it's going to keep my interest anything that I can you know, if you give me an example and it's just on math or it's just on science. It's focused on that but if you can kind of Leverage it and you give me some other example, how can I apply it to a business class? Okay. I can work I can now you have me there so it's going to keep me there so I would say content-specific professional learning (Scott).

Lack of Administrative Support

Another theme that emerged from the dataset highlight that the participants perceived that a lack of administrative support could influence teachers to leave the profession, or switch schools, districts, or grade levels. Within this theme, eight out of the nine semi-structured interview participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Tables 12 and 13. Table 12 highlights the participants that contributed to the theme, whereas Table 13 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.
As depicted by Table 12 above, 89% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt the lack of support from the administration was one of the reasons why teachers are influenced to leave the profession, or switch schools, districts, or grade levels. For example, Scott stated:

Feeling unsupportive. And so, teachers have to decide whether or not is there in a negative situation to be around the administrators or people who will help them out of that situation, but I think it's really disciplined (Scott).

Jane was able to provide a current example of how they experienced a lack of support from their administration:
I'm at the point where I don't feel like that care about me as a human like I know professionally you don't really care about my career and my trajectory of where I'm going. Not your job. I'm over that but I'm at the point where I feel like if I laid down and died today. You wouldn't care that bothers me (Jane).

**High Workload and Stress**

The participants also perceived that a high workload and stress could influence teachers to leave the profession, or switch schools, districts, or grade levels. Within this theme, eight out of the nine semi-structured interview participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Tables 14 and 15. Table 14 highlights the participants that contributed to the theme, whereas Table 15 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14. High Workload and Stress: Theme 5**

**Table 15. Theme 5 Sub-Themes: High Workload and Stress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: High Workload and Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More of a workload Demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear many hats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becomes too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worn down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As depicted by Table 14 above, 89% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt that teachers leaving their professions, schools, districts, or grade levels were influenced to do so due to high workload and stress. For example, Tamika agreed with all other participants as she stated:

It will play a big part and it may not be the biggest, but it is a big part because when you overwhelm a person, they become stressed and so they're ready get away from whatever stressing them out (Tamika).

**Increase Communication, Relationships, and Support**

This theme emerged in alignment with sub-question three from the semi-structured interview participants was that of their perceptions that to increase teacher retention, administration and school officials must work at increasing communication, relationships, and level of support. Within this theme, seven out of the nine participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Table 16. Table 17 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

Table 16. *Increasing Communication, Relationships, and Support: Theme 6*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amy</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Kim</th>
<th>Tamika</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Tasha</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1: Increasing communication, relationships, and support
As depicted by Table 16 above, 78% of the semi-structured interview participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt that administrators needed to increase communication skills, build stronger relationships with both students and teachers, and provide stronger levels of support. For example, Scott reported that it is important for administrators to show higher levels of support:

To try to find out what teachers need, or the teachers need to try to develop a plan or program that they can participate where they see that their work their worthiness and their value. This will cause them to say that I need to stay a little longer but also say that if I'm not getting those things that support me to keep me here then it's room for me to look other places (Scott).

Bob highlighted the importance of building stronger support systems:

I think developing support systems so that they actually help teachers examples just include administrative support and what I mean by that I don't just mean the system principles but I’m talking about Administrative Assistant doing some of the more written tasks that seem to always roll down to teachers (Bob).
Finally, Tasha discussed how administrators need to act more like professional peers than personal friends:

Definitely peer support and not being buddy-buddy. Don't be in everybody business and give personal support. Give your teachers benefit of the doubt first, don't take parents side and take kids side because give them the support first. I promise you keep everybody in the building (Tasha).

**Virtual Environments**

The theme that emerged in alignment with sub-question two from the focus group participants was that the participants perceived that in the current teaching landscape, virtual environments influenced teachers to leave the teaching profession. Within this theme, four out of the nine participants were able to contribute, which are presented in Table 18. Table 19 highlights the codes that were used to develop the theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 18. Virtual Environments: Theme 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Virtual environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 19. Theme 7 Sub-Themes: Virtual Environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Virtual environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught virtually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A virtual thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As depicted by Table 18 above, 45% of the participants contributed to this theme. These participants reported that they felt because of the current landscape of teaching in virtual environments, teachers could be influenced to leave the profession. For example, Amy stated:

So for example, no administrators that we're teaching with right now have taught virtually but they got a lot to say about virtual which I understand, you know, everybody got a lot to say about factual, but it would be great if they were teaching a course (Amy).

Finally, Scott stated that now that they are teaching in a virtual environment, they are taking on even more responsibilities than usual:

For me what I've experienced and in talking to other people, I'm hearing that it is a great demand on teachers much more now than in the past years. You played so many roles you wear so many hats you're asked to do so much, and more is being added but nothing is being taken. Wait, and so you'll list is growing (Scott).

The third sub-question aimed to understand what the focus group participants’ perceptions were regarding strategies that could be utilized to increase teacher retention. Within this sub-question, one theme emerged from the dataset: Administrator consistency and support.

Document Review

The third and final portion of the analysis was that of a document review. I was able to obtain information from online sources that provided statistics of the school from both a demographic and learning standpoint. As of 2021, the school under study had 1,088 students with a ratio of 14:7 students per teacher (SchoolDigger.com, 2021). Compared to the national average of 16:1 teacher-student ratio, these statistics demonstrate that teachers at this school are responsible for fewer students than the rest of the country (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).
Additionally, the school under study has a county-wide school improvement plan for which this school follows. For example, the Consolidated School Improvement Plan which has been implemented by Manker County School District has a teacher retention plan that is built from two different areas:

1. Professional learning.
2. Teacher retention implementation

The school’s teacher retention plan reports that the school offers a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers that include: (a) tiered professional learning; (b) professional learning communities; (c) model classrooms; (d) coaching and peer coaching; (e) peer observations; and (f) data-driven individualized learning plans. Within this section of the plan, teachers and administrators can work together to find the best professional development learning opportunities that can assist in increasing the skillset, learning, and effectiveness of the teachers.

The plan also articulates the need for new teachers to be provided with appropriate support. For example, the plan outlines how Teacher Support Specialists (TSS) are assigned to new teachers up until they reach two years of teaching experience. Additionally, the teachers and their TSS are required to meet at least one time per month, the administration works to ensure that new teachers have met professional development opportunities and that new teachers do not miss any meetings with their assigned TSS.

Research Question Responses

This section will address the research questions that guided my study. The central research question that guided my study included: What factors do high school teachers perceive
as influencing the teacher retention rate in a selected Title I high school in a U.S. southern state?

The three sub-questions included:

1. What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to stay in the teaching profession?

2. What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence teachers to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels?

3. From a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention?

The answers to these research questions will assist in the development of a stronger understanding of the phenomenon that was being explored.

Central Question

The central research question that guided this study aimed to understand what factors high school teachers perceive as influencing teacher retention. Throughout the identification of the three sub-research questions, the participants were able to discuss the importance of administrative support, the offering of professional development opportunities, and the environment and culture of the school. The participants reported that in their case, they enjoyed working and remaining at the school, simply because the culture that administrators built included a team spirit, where although teachers could work independently, they were also provided with support through administrators, peers, and professional development opportunities. The teachers also reported that when a school does not offer strong communication or support as well as too high of a workload and stress. Although the participants perceived that working as a teacher tends to promote high workloads, it was the support from administrators that made them feel like they could cope with the stress. Additionally, the participants reported that being provided with professional development opportunities allowed
them to learn new skills which can allow them to impart this newly acquired information to
students, administrators, and peers alike.

Sub-Research Question 1

The first sub-research question was: What are high school teachers’ perceptions of the
factors that influence teachers to stay in the teaching profession? Many of the participants of this
study were able to discuss specific factors that influenced them to stay within the teaching
profession. For example, participants of the semi-structured interviews reported that support
from administration, culture, and environment of the school, and professional development
opportunities. Some participants reported that it is the administration’s support that provides a
top-down approach to how teachers feel about wanting to stay or remain at a particular school,
while other participants reported that it is also how the school’s community and environment of
being helpful and part of a team that influences them to remain.

Sub-Research Question 2

Sub-research question 2 aimed to understand what the perceptions of high school teachers
were regarding factors that influence them to leave the profession, switch schools, switch
districts, or switch grade levels. Many of the participants reported that the main factor of leaving
the profession, switching schools, districts, or grade levels was due to lack of administration
support, high workload and stress, and the lack of professional development opportunities.
Additionally, some of the focus group participants reported that because of the current
environments of the school due to COVID-19, because teachers are working in a virtual
environment. The participants perceived that since schools were transitioning into either full-
time virtual learning environments or blended learning environments they may not have felt as
appreciated as usual but reported that they understood due to the difficulties that schools are facing.

**Sub-Research Question 3**

The third sub-research question aimed to understand, from a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention. The participants were able to provide many different examples, such as the need for administrators to demonstrate consistency and support. For example, many of the participants reported that they need administrators to be on their side and to understand the challenges and difficulties within their work. Also, the participants were able to discuss consistent policies and procedures when it comes to addressing certain issues that come up within the academic school year. By providing a stronger alignment with consistency and support, the participants reported that it would help maintain and increase teacher retention within educational environments.

**Summary**

The purpose of this case study was to examine current and former high school teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention. In this chapter, I provided the findings based upon the analysis that I completed on the collected data. This chapter began by highlighting the demographic backgrounds of the participants who participated in this study. I then reported the results of the study, by discussing the themes that emerged from the dataset, as well as answering the research questions.

Nine participants participated in semi-structured interviews and nine participants participated in a focus group. When it came to the first sub-research question that focused on factors that influence teachers to stay in the teaching profession, three themes emerged from the dataset in relation to the semi-structured interview participants: (1) administrative support; (2)
the school’s culture and environment; and (3) the offering of professional development opportunities. With the semi-structured interview participants, the second sub-research question aimed to understand what factors influenced teachers to leave the profession or switch schools, districts, or grade levels. Within this sub-question, two themes emerged from the dataset: (1) lack of administrative support; and (2) high workload and stress. The third research question aimed to identify strategies that could increase teacher retention. Within this sub-question, one theme emerged from the dataset: increase communication, relationships, and support.

Nine participants also participated in a focus group session, which was structured around the same three sub-research questions. Within this sub-question, one theme emerged from the dataset: the level of support from the administration. When examining factors that influenced teachers to leave the profession or switch schools, districts, or grade levels, two themes emerged from the datasets: (1) virtual environments; and (2) professional development opportunities. Finally, the third research question focused on teacher retention strategies found one theme emerged from the dataset: Administrator support.

Concerning the document review, I found that the school under study experienced a smaller teacher-student ratio than the rest of the country, as the school reported 14.7 students per teacher whereas the country reported a 16:1 teacher-student ratio. Additionally, the school does have an identified teacher retention plan that promotes required professional learning experiences as well as mandated teacher support for new teachers that have less than two years of experience. These results appear in alignment with both the semi-structured interview and focus group themes, as administrative support and professional development opportunities appeared to be the most significant themes that were uncovered from the data analyses. The next chapter is that of Chapter 5, which will conclude the study by providing a robust discussion on
the results, the implications within the field of education, the limitations that were experienced within this study, and recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this case study was to examine current and former high school teachers’ perceptions of factors that impacted teacher retention. Within this chapter, I will provide a conclusion to the study by presenting a summary of the findings, a discussion of the findings and the implications in light of the relevant literature and theory. I will then conclude this chapter by discussing both methodological and practical implications, the study’s delimitations and limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

This study was guided by the following central research question and three sub-research questions. The central research question asked what factors high school teachers perceived as influencing teacher retention. Findings revealed the value of administrative support, the availability of professional development opportunities, and having a positive school environment and culture as all the three influences. The presence of these influences can prevent teachers with high workloads from burning out and leaving their profession.

The first sub-research question asked what high school teachers perceived as the factors that influenced teachers to stay in the teaching profession. Findings showed that participants perceived support from administration, culture, and environment of the school, and professional development opportunities as the most crucial factors.

The second sub-research question aimed to understand what the perceptions of high school teachers were regarding factors that influence them to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels. In high contrast to what they answered as factors that could influence teacher retention, participants claimed that due to lack of administration
support, high workload and stress, and the lack of professional development opportunities were factors that can make teachers leave their jobs. Some had specifically raised these problems as being aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As schools were transitioning into either full-time virtual learning environments or blended learning environments, their sense of administrative support could lessen.

The third sub-research question aimed to understand, from a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention. Most of the participants reported that they need administrators to be on their side and to understand the challenges and difficulties within their work. Having consistent policies and procedures to address certain issues that come up within the academic school year was another strategy. Lastly, participants claimed having a stronger alignment with consistency and support from administrators could help increase teacher retention rates.

Discussion

This section will provide a discussion of the results that demonstrate any alignment between the sub-research questions and previous literature and what can be of practical use for teachers and principals. Additionally, I will also discuss the results of each sub-research question in relation to the theoretical framework that guided this study.

Sub-Research Question One

The first sub-research question aimed to understand high school teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influenced teachers to stay in the teaching profession. The participants reported that support from administration, culture, and environment of the school, and professional development opportunities can retain teachers. These results appear in alignment with previous literature as highlighted by numerous studies. For example, Hanselman et al. (2016) purported
that factors that impacted or influenced teacher retention also had important implications for the development of collective social resources, which involved bringing resources and people together in an organized way to achieve social change; this process formulated trust, shared norms, and support among school professionals. Therefore, this is in alignment with the current study, simply because remaining at a school allows teachers to experience collective social resources while also formulating trust and support between the teachers and the administration. Furthermore, Mihaly et al. (2015) highlighted that school and district characteristics that impacted teacher retention included support from administrator and other members. Novice teachers who underwent induction and mentoring were less likely to leave teaching than those without such support.

This specific finding shows that schools must make sure there are professional development opportunities that can be crafted not just to make teachers improve their profession but feel their growth and journeys as teachers are being prioritized and valued. Schools should not just be concerned about providing proper salaries and incentives to teachers, but also programs that can make them continue to see the value of their profession, improve their overall profession, and hone their individual craft. The more teachers are presented with professional development opportunities, the more prepared they can be for their students; the more experience they gain; and the more money and advancement they can achieve.

Sub-Research Question Two

The second sub-research question aimed to understand what the perceptions of high school teachers were regarding factors that influence them to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels. The factors that were revealed by the participants were lack of administration support, high workload and stress, and the lack of
professional development opportunities. The findings of this sub-research question are also in alignment with previous research. For example, Dinham (2007) reported that one common, but important complaint teachers have related is a lack of support from principals.

Additionally, Atkins et al. (2003), Cappella et al. (2008), Shernoff et al. (2011) all reported that overcrowding, constant disruptive student behavior, and combative accountability policies were some of the factors that have caused stress among teachers which can influence the, to leave the profession, switch schools, switch districts, or switch grade levels. Sanchez (2007) completed a study that aimed to understand what causes teachers to leave their post and found that the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) harmed teachers’ job satisfaction and mostly contributed to teacher burnout and dissatisfaction because of the increased accountability, testing, and recordkeeping required.

A practical implication of this finding is that principals were called to recognize that all teachers could be leaders and that there were various ways to build relationships among school faculty because not making them feel supported, motivated, and fueled with growth opportunities, and protected from stress can make them ultimately leave. One way that principals could build relationships with their faculties was to occasionally lend a hand and being available as much as possible. Teachers should feel that providing quality education is the culture of the school, not just some personal goal they want to meet. Because of the required school testing mandates that schools and teachers must follow, teachers feel increased pressure and demands that can only be alleviated with a strong and reliable presence of principals and policies that do not make them feel alone and unsupported.
Sub-Research Question 3

The third sub-research question aimed to understand, from a teacher’s perspective, what strategies may increase teacher retention. The participants were able to provide many different examples, such as the need for administrators to demonstrate consistency and support. The findings of this sub-research question appear in alignment with previous research that has already been noted. For example, Sanchez (2007) conducted a study of what influenced teachers to stay in the teaching profession in urban and poorly resourced schools. The researcher found that teachers were most likely to stay if there were an adequate number of teachers in their school, if parent and community engagement was strong, and teachers had time to complete tasks. Additionally, when it came to administrator support and consistency, Grissom et al. (2016) examined the effects of principal effectiveness on teacher turnover, teacher evaluation, and teacher merit pay. These strategies mentioned by the participants can lead to the practical assertion that effective principals and positive school culture were associated with higher retention. Attrition rates of low-performing teachers, as measured by classroom observation scores, can decrease substantially with higher-rated principals at the helm.

Theoretical Discussion

The findings of this study are in alignment with the theoretical framework that guided this study. Using Maslow’s (1970) motivational theory as a theoretical framework to explore the factors that contributed to teacher job satisfaction, assisted in determining specific factors that influenced teachers to leave the profession, and by extension, offer areas in which to focus improve teacher retention. Additionally, this theory assisted administrators in leading their teachers to self-actualization. An organization’s culture should reflect the importance of the employees’ physiological and security needs, which in turn will result in improved performance
of the organization (Maslow, 1970). The findings of this study identified different factors that influenced teachers to stay, support and consistency from administration, professional development opportunities, and the culture and environment of the school. Additionally, the teachers of this study perceived that workload and stress, lack of support from administration. Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs was relevant to this study, as I examined whether teachers’ needs were being met in their selected school and investigated the effects of teachers’ demands on attrition. In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, individuals can move up the hierarchy only once their needs are met. The different needs include physiological needs, safety, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Within this study, many of the participants reported that they would consider leaving the profession, school, district, or grade level that they were teaching, if they experienced an inability to move toward self-actualization. Many of the teachers in this study appeared to struggle in the areas of safety, love, and self-esteem. The connectedness of the school, administration support, and professional development opportunities could have allowed them to continue working toward self-actualization. In essence, once teachers do not feel that they can move toward self-actualization, they will more than likely leave the school, the district, or the grade level of which they teach.

Herzberg’s (1959) motivation theory outlined two factors that affected motivation in the workplace: hygiene factors and motivating factors. Hygiene factors could cause an employee to work less when not present, whereas motivating factors could encourage an employee to work harder if present (Herzberg, 1959). Motivating factors included recognition, achievement, the possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself. Hygiene factors included salary, interpersonal relations at work, supervision, company policies and administration, working conditions, factors in personal life, status, and job security (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).
This study aligned with this theoretical framework, simply because the participants reported motivating factors of professional development opportunities, administration support and consistency, and the environment of the school. This appeared to lead toward specific hygiene factors such as interpersonal relations, working conditions, and company policies and administration.

**Implications**

This section will address the implications of the study that include theoretical, empirical, and practical implications.

**Theoretical Implications**

The results of this study aligned with the theories that guided this study, which were Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s (1959) motivation theory. The Maslow theory-supported findings imply that it is essential for schools and districts to concentrate on both the journey of self-actualization of teachers. Additionally, the findings as supported by this theory, imply that schools and districts must work on the environment of the school so that it can address the safety aspects that can influence teachers to stay, as well as support from administration (love), and professional development opportunities (self-esteem). Concentrating on these areas can allow schools and districts to better understand the needs of their teachers and to ensure that they are adequately addressed. If schools do not follow the hierarchy of needs, they can experience teachers being unable to reach self-actualization, where all stakeholders of the school can suffer, teachers, administration, students, and parents.

In relation to Herzberg’s (1959) motivation theory, the results of this study also demonstrate strong implications. For example, many of the participants in this study reported it was essential to experience hygiene factors; hygiene factors could cause an employee to work
less when not present, whereas motivating factors could encourage an employee to work harder if present. Therefore, intrinsic rewards of feeling valued and supported matter as much as extrinsic rewards of monetary compensation and financial incentives. This finding implies that schools and districts need to better understand how professional development opportunities should be made, administration support and consistency should be provided, and the environment of the school can be made more conducive for better instruction. It is recommended that schools and districts examine their working conditions, their policies, and how they build relationships with their teachers and staff in order to promote a culture that influences teachers to remain at their posts.

**Empirical Implications**

This research has led to empirical evidence that teachers perceived it was important to be offered administrative support and professional development opportunities in order to influence them to remain in their posts. Therefore, it is important for schools to examine their current schedule of professional development opportunities to determine if they are in alignment with the teachers’ needs. For example, schools could complete interviews with teachers to better understand what they require when it comes to professional development opportunities and support and then begin to tailor teacher responses to policies and procedures. Furthermore, schools and districts can also examine how they currently interact and support their teachers in order to increase motivation to stay. For example, administration can provide one-on-one support to teachers and meet with them on a regular basis to build relationships, offer supportive resources and services, and lend a hand when teachers become overwhelmed in relation to the negative factors that can influence them to leave.
Practical Implications

In relation to practical implications, schools and districts can continuously check in with the teachers at their schools overtime to ensure that they are meeting the needs. Because teachers can struggle with different experiences and hence their motivational needs changes, it is important for schools and districts to continuously monitor the needs of teachers and provide them with the resources, professional development opportunities, and support that they require. This can occur if administration continues to meet regularly with teachers in order to find out any changing needs and how to better support them so that they can remain at their post. This can benefit all stakeholders such as teachers, administration, parents, students, and the wider community, as schools and districts will be able to retain qualified teachers who are motivated, happy, and eager to fulfill their duties.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was delimitated to a specific population. The population in this study included teachers who met the following criteria:

- All participants had received certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- All participants had worked at Manker High School for at least five years.
- All participants completed an interview remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) guidelines in response to the COVID-19.

There were some limitations of this study that must also be discussed. The first limitation is that the results of this study may not necessarily be generalized to other populations or geographical regions. For example, because this study focused on teachers at Manker High School in the southeast region of the United States, future research would need to be completed
in order to explore this same phenomenon for other grade levels outside of the high school years, as well as other schools within the district or geographical region. A second limitation to this research could include researcher bias. Researcher bias occurs when the researcher injects her personal thoughts, opinions, and values into the study, thereby potentially effecting the results. In this study, I addressed researcher bias by having a panel of experts review the interview questions that were asked to the participants. The panel were encouraged to recommend any changes if they noticed any misalignment between the interview questions and the study’s purpose, problem, research questions, and theoretical frameworks. Additionally, I also addressed researcher bias by completing member checking with the participants. Member checking is a process where I had the participants review the transcripts of their private interviews and focus group in order to ensure that the data was accurate. If any of the participants would have reported that their transcript was inaccurate, I would have made changes to reflect exactly what the participant said. It is important to note that in this study, neither the panel of experts or the participants reported any changes to be made; however, just because these procedures were followed did not necessarily mean that researcher bias was eliminated, it was just limited. However, one limitation that could have affected how I addressed the first two limitations is the fact that this research was carried out in the middle of the COVID-19. Sometimes, safety concerns and mobility issues have affected how the researcher delved more deeply into the participants’ responses. Because the interviews had to be undertaken remotely, the virtual setting could have affected the interaction in unknown ways; thereby possibly interfering with the data that was collected. If I had followed a more traditional face-to-face approach during the semi-structured interviews, the participants may have felt more comfortable to provide more
information, and I could have potentially asked higher level follow-up questions to clarify the additional information.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Research should be continued within this arena because of the results of the study. The first recommendation for future research is that it should be continued to be explored the factors that influence teachers to remain or leave their post outside of Manker High School. Because this study concentrated on Manker Higher School, other factors could be present at other schools and geographical regions that could be different from this current study. Therefore, future research should continue to be directed on this phenomenon in order to continue to ensure that teachers are being represented within research.

A secondary recommendation for future research is that of a longitudinal study. Because this current study only collected data from a snapshot in time, a longitudinal study will allow for a stronger understanding of factors that change over time. Additionally, it would behoove future researchers to concentrate on novice or newly seasoned teachers, as this current study only focused on teachers who had a minimum of five years’ experience. Future research would be able to identify different factors between novice teachers, experienced teachers, and seasoned teachers, which can provide important information on how to increase teacher retention and attrition within schools and districts.

A final recommendation for future research is to complete a quantitative study that can allow for a larger sample size. Because this study only collected data from nine teachers, the sample size was considered small. Future research that utilizes a quantitative design could find results that are in alignment with larger populations and geographical regions, providing a more consistent or clear snapshot of teachers’ needs.
Summary

The problem of this study was that secondary Title I schoolteachers departed their positions, and in some cases the teaching field altogether, in numbers that exceeded averages from non-Title I schoolteacher turnover. Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to understand current and former teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influenced attrition of high school teachers in a Title I school in a southern U.S. state. This chapter concluded the study by discussing the results in relation to the literature. The results of this study concluded that support from administration, culture, and environment of the school, and professional development opportunities were essential for teachers to remain in the teaching profession. Additionally, lack of administration support, high workload and stress, and the lack of professional development opportunities were reasons why teachers would leave their school, their district, or the grade level of which they were teaching. Finally, the need for administrators to demonstrate consistency and support was considered a factor that would increase teacher retention.

This chapter also discussed the study’s implications. It is imperative that schools and districts examine their policies and procedures, especially when it comes to offering resources and professional development opportunities so that teachers can feel supported when completing their daily duties. Additionally, schools should also work towards increasing administrative support to their teachers so that they can build strong relationships and be a source of strength and resource so that teachers feel acknowledged and worthy within their careers.
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January 15, 2021

Laronica Gilmore

David Vacchi

Re: IRB Conditional Approval - IRB-FY20-21-423 A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS THAT IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION AT A TITLE I HIGH SCHOOL IN A SOUTHERN U.S. STATE

Dear Laronica Gilmore, David Vacchi:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been conditionally approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Conditional approval means that your complete approval is pending our receipt of certain items, which are listed below:

Documented approval from each research site you are enrolling in your study. Acceptable forms of documentation include a letter on official letterhead or a time-and-date-stamped email from a person with the authority to grant permission.

Please keep in mind that you are not permitted to begin recruiting participants or collecting data until you have submitted the above item(s) and have been granted complete approval by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well as you continue working toward complete approval.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office
APPENDIX B: PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER

February 2, 2021

Ms. Laronica Gilmore
3748 Wolverton Circle
Lithonia, Ga 30038

Dear Ms. Gilmore:

I have reviewed your research proposal: “A Collective Case Study of Teachers’ Perceptions of Factors that Impact Teacher Retention at a Title I High School in a U.S. Southern State” and have approved it with the following conditions:

- All participation must be on a voluntary basis during non-duty hours only.
- All resources and/or supplies will be provided by the applicant. (District resources will not be used.)
- Written authorization is required from the principal before conducting surveys.
- No individual participant(s) or school(s) will be identifiable through the research project.
- Due to the system’s comprehensive academic program, research activities will be conducted during the following months unless special arrangements have been approved: September - November AND February-April

I wish you every success as you begin this very important project. I would appreciate a copy of the final report along with any recommendations that your research may offer Rockdale County Public Schools.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Laura Grimwade
Director of Assessment & Accountability

Michele Stephens, Director of Human Resources
Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to understand current and former teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence attrition of high school teachers in a Title I school in a southern U.S. state. Participants will answer questions about how working at Manker High School has influenced their decisions to continue teaching or leave the teaching profession. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be a current or former certified teacher at Manker High School and have completed at least five years of teaching at Manker High School. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview and a focus group. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes, and the focus group should take around 30 to 45 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [redacted] to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent form contains more information about the research. If you would like to participate, please sign, and email the consent form back to me indicating that you have read the form and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Laronica Gilmore
Interrelated Teacher

Sincerely,

Laronica Gilmore
Math Teacher
APPENDIX D: CONSENT

Title of the Project: A Case Study of Teachers’ Perceptions of Factors That Impact Teacher Retention at a Title I High School in a Southern U.S. State
Principal Investigator: Laronica Gilmore, Liberty University Department of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invitation to be Part of a Research Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a current or former certified teacher at Manker High School and have completed at least five years of teaching at Manker High School. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview and a focus group. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes, and the focus group should take around 30 to 45 minutes. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the study about and why is it being done?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The purpose of the study is to understand current and former teachers’ perceptions of the factors that influence attrition of high school teachers in a Title I school in a southern U.S. state. I aim with the proposed study to give Title I high school teachers a voice in the research literature, which may inspire the creation of programs to retain such teachers—not just in the studied school, but throughout the educational profession by contributing to theory, practice, and knowledge. The findings of this study may help school and district administrators develop ways to retain Title I high school teachers.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>What will happen if you take part in this study?</th>
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<tr>
<td>If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Participate in a one-on-one interview that will take approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participate in a focus group of approximately 4-5 participants. The focus group will take approximately 45 minutes and will be audio recorded.</td>
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<tr>
<th>How could you or others benefit from this study?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include improvement of educational research for the retention of teachers at Title I High Schools.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms/codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a teacher at a Title I High School. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, reflexivity will be used to ensure ethical research practices by addressing concerns regarding the adverse effects of power on the researcher’s relationship with research participants. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Laronica Gilmore. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [contact information].
You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, [Contact Information].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the [Contact Information].

Your Consent
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

__________________________
Printed Subject Name

__________________________
Signature & Date
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE

1. Tell me about your journey to become a teacher here at Manker High School.
2. How long do you plan to be in the field of education?
3. How would you describe the culture in your school?
4. What makes Manker High School different from any other local school?
5. Briefly describe the working conditions here at your school.
6. What role do administrators play in your decision to remain at Manker school?
7. What types of supports are in place to help build teacher abilities, skills, and expertise?
8. How do these supports work with the teachers?
9. What do you think leads new teachers to keep teaching?
10. How does your teacher’s salary affect your attitude toward teaching?
11. What activities or events at Manker High School do you believe would affect a teacher’s decision to continue to work at the school?
12. Why do you think teachers enjoy working at Manker High School?
13. What are the expectations of teachers at Manker High School?
14. What causes teachers to quit working at Manker High School?
15. Describe any situations that made you want to leave Manker High School.
16. What do you think leads new teachers to leave teaching?
17. What affect does the workload at Manker High School have on teacher’s decision to leave?
18. What do you think could be done to improve teacher retention at Manker High School?
19. What characteristics or actions would you like administrators to have or demonstrate to help increase teacher retention?
20. Considering all things, what are you plans for next school year?

21. What are some other factors that teachers take into consideration when debating whether to leave their school?
APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Why did you choose the teaching profession?

2. Discuss the positive aspects of working at your school.

3. Thinking of a positive school climate: What are the key factors that contribute to a positive school climate at your school?

4. Describe the interaction between teachers at your school.

5. Describe the relationship between administrators and teachers.

6. What are some experiences that you believe may lead your colleagues to consider leaving the profession?

7. What are some duties or responsibilities that you feel could be eliminated to help teachers be more productive?

8. In what ways might these duties and responsibilities lead to teacher turnover?

9. Let’s discuss the students at your school. What role does student discipline play when a teacher is deciding whether to leave?

10. What are your feelings about administrator behaviors that could help reduce the turnover rate in your school?

11. What might administrators do to better support high school teachers?

12. High school teachers often benefit from professional development workshops that build their skills. What kind of professional development workshops might help?

13. If you could design a school where teachers would not leave, describe the school for us in full detail.

That concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with me. Is there anything else you would like to add that you did not get a chance to
share? If you have any further questions, please contact me directly with the contact information provided in the invitational email.
APPENDIX G: OTHER DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Interview and focus group transcripts, as well as documents and records regarding teachers’ perceptions of factors that impact teacher retention, will be analyzed, and coded to derive themes and patterns. Transcripts will be checked to ensure accuracy and reliability, and member checking will be performed by providing a draft of the report to participants to verify the accuracy of the findings.