

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL LEADERS ON
WORKPLACE MOTIVATION

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

This transcendental qualitative phenomenological study examined how 10 teachers experienced workplace motivation from school leaders at one kindergarten – eighth-grade school in northern Virginia. The theory guiding this study was Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, as it explains the relationship between the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that influence workplace motivation. The motivation-hygiene theory provided the theoretical framework for this study to answer the central research question and sub-questions: (a) How do teachers who interact with school leaders experience workplace motivation; (b) What experiences, if any, with school leaders have promoted workplace motivation; (c) What experiences, if any, with school leaders have decreased workplace motivation? A transcendental phenomenology was used to understand the lived experiences of teacher motivation as a result of interactions with school leaders. Purposeful sampling was used to target teachers who were knowledgeable about the issues under investigation and met the inclusion criteria. Snowball sampling was used to recruit additional participants. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a private journal entry of the participants. Upon completion of the interviews and focus groups, the accounts were transcribed. The researcher analyzed interviews, focus groups, and private journal entries for related themes. Five themes emerged during the study: effective communication, valuing staff, supporting staff, modeling leadership behaviors, and negative interactions with school staff. Results indicated that teachers experienced motivation when school leaders frequently interacted with staff in both formal and informal ways by demonstrating interpersonal behaviors that were professional, caring, supportive, and equitable.

Keywords: motivation, interpersonal relations, extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, who has given me the strength to persist. I dedicate this manuscript to my husband, David, who has supported me through four moves in three states throughout this process. I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Savannah, Reese, and Annabelle. They have shown patience throughout my journey while I have worked to completion. By watching me work, I hope to have modeled persistence in accomplishing any goal they choose to endeavor.

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List of Abbreviations

Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Leader Autonomy Support (LAS)

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Saint Gemma Galgani Catholic School (SGGCS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Teacher motivation is a construct in a school setting that may influence many facets of education. The principal's effect on employee internal drive is significant (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). Leadership theories have examined and analyzed effective leadership (Martin & Dowson, 2009). However, despite research and theories, leadership preparation programs are inconsistent in preparing future school leaders with the interpersonal skills that influence adult workplace motivation (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Many leadership approaches and theories are discussed in leadership preparation programs, but research on teacher experiences with school leaders is limited in scholarly literature. As a result, school leaders who do not understand the influence that interpersonal relations have on teacher motivation are limited in their abilities to effectively work with this population (Mngo & Mngo, 2017).

The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to understand how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. A qualitative transcendental phenomenology approach was best suited to capture the essence of this phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Peoples, 2021). Chapter One includes a discussion of the background for the study to include an overview of the historical, social, and theoretical framework which contributed to the research. The researcher then discussed the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study as it relates to school leader preparation programs. This study contained research questions and two sub-questions addressing teacher workplace motivation as a result of interactions with school leaders. Chapter One concluded with definitions of major terms used in the study and a review of the contents provided in a summary.

Background

Human motivation in the workplace has been a central theme in industrial and organizational psychology for the last 100 years (Steers et al., 2004). Understanding how to promote and sustain employee motivation has been explored through the lens of workplace motivation (Shirol, 2014). This area of study proved to be very complex when considering extrinsic and intrinsic factors for human motivation. As a result, this area of study has evolved and changed over the past 100 years to include internal and external factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). Research now focuses on the impact of demands, different patterns of leadership, team structures, and work-related interpersonal relationships (Kanfer & Chen, 2016). Leadership programs concentrating on leader standards miss the opportunity to cultivate critical dispositions for effective leadership (Welch & Hodge, 2018). Teachers' perceptions and their own experiences, ability to complete required school initiatives, navigate the relationships involved within the workplace, and perform organizational tasks compromise the school climate (Friedman & Kass, 2002). School administrators impact staff experiences and perceptions based on social reinforcement interactions between teachers and school leaders. Both positive and negative ratings of organizational climate are associated with teacher experiences and practices in the classroom (Hewett & La Paro, 2020).

Supervisors outside the educational realm focus on human relations, while educational leaders focus on the organizational component of school leadership (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory provides a context to understand adult motivation in the workplace and can be applied to the school setting. Understanding the factors that contribute to employee motivation is essential for school leaders. Motivated teachers influence teaching and learning and contribute to collective teaching efficacy. Principals who build cultures that

promote staff and student engagement while raising student achievement levels tend to be effective (Day et al., 2016). Capitalizing on teacher motivation is essential for school leaders to understand. Adult motivation in the workplace has been explored for decades; however, the application to school systems is essential for student achievement and teacher retention. Public school districts have noticed this area of need and developed training that focuses on integrity, commitment, collaboration, and servant leadership (Welch & Hodge, 2018). Examining the factors contributing to teacher motivation is beneficial for school leaders and leader preparation programs to develop the critical interpersonal skills needed to effectively lead a school.

Historical Context

Understanding human motivation dates back to ancient Greek philosophers focusing on hedonism as the driving force in behavior (Steers et al., 2004). This thinking explains human motivation as seeking pleasure to avoid pain. By the end of the nineteenth century, human motivation shifted from a philosophical concept to a new field of psychology (Steers et al., 2004). Human behavior was not easily explained; in addition to hedonistic explanations, instinct theories began to surface as a way to explain certain human behaviors. By the 1920s, instinct theories were replaced by reinforcement and learning theories (Schunk, 2020). Learning theory explains behavior in the pure context of reinforcing what is desired to maintain specific behaviors. Skinner's theory of reinforcement states that individuals learn contingent relationships between actions and consequences over time and can shape how an individual behaves based on the established relationship (Steers et al., 2004). Humans are complex organisms; therefore, a deeper look into behavior must be considered.

It was in the 1950s that Maslow emerged on the workplace motivation scene with a different approach to human behavior (Acevedo, 2018). His theory of human motivation took a

different stance on human behavior as it considers the many factors that impact the ability of a human to gain self-actualization by satisfying a hierarchy of prioritized needs (Steers et al., 2004). In 1966, Herzberg studied workplace motivation to maintain the balance between a person being happy or unhappy at work (Timmreck, 1977). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory has been applied in the educational setting to promote balance between factors contributing to workplace satisfaction. Leadership models are derived from different human relation theories. Extensive research on management and leadership exists, and even more leadership approaches are presented in leader preparation courses. In addition, many models have evolved to help systems understand worker motivation; however, the everyday organizational context is limited (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Despite the research, no clear model or theory provides the optimal combination for leaders to effectively influence teacher motivation.

Social Context

Humans are complex beings with multiple motivational influences (Steers et al., 2004). Understanding human relationships in a work setting and understanding the needs of individuals in the workplace emerged as an area of focus in the 1950s (Razik & Swanson, 2010). In a workplace setting, there are a variety of factors that can influence the motivation of an individual. Ongoing social interactions teach individuals about themselves and what is needed to fit in with a particular group (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Human behavior is complex and does not account for thinking, perception, social behavior, free will, and many other factors. Teachers' motivation as a group can be linked to collective teacher efficacy (CTE) in a school setting. CTE is associated with other positive factors, including greater job satisfaction, commitment to students and the teaching profession, positive attitudes toward teaching students with special

education needs, and professional development (Donohoo, 2018; Ford et al., 2019). However, leadership styles greatly influence CTE as it relates to student achievement. Successful schools can be measured by social values of integrity, compassion, fairness, and lifelong learning.

Successful schools have also been attributed to leaders with a clear understanding of human nature and human behavior patterns (Razik & Swanson, 2010). These social outcomes confirm that leadership values, qualities, and strategies lead to academic student success (Day et al., 2016). In addition, the interpersonal energy gained from interpersonal relationships provides a primary pathway toward motivated engagement (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Lack of effective leadership in a school setting can cause teachers to have difficulty engaging in their work and have significant implications for student learning (Orange, 2018). This problem could influence teachers to remain in the field of education and student achievement. The general public expects school leaders to be active leaders of instructional programs and cultivate conditions for high-quality education while motivating professionals in the school to implement new visions (Razik & Swanson, 2010). While these are the expected skills of a leader in the 21st century, these skills are not developed in leadership preparation programs.

Theoretical Context

Many theorists have attempted to understand human motivation since the times of ancient Greek philosophers, into the industrial revolution, and in present times (Furnham et al., 2021; Steers et al., 2004). In the context of human motivation, many theorists have attempted to explain human motivation by applying learning theories, human needs theories, and social theories. While each theory in isolation has a relevant foundation, intertwining elements of each theory yields a greater understanding of best practices to motivate employees. The acceptance of social interactions on human behavior was then examined in the context of workplace

productivity and motivation. Frederick Herzberg began research on understanding the nature of man and motivational factors (Timmreck, 1977). He explains that motivation occurs when motivating factors are understood, promoted, and given latitude to function (Timmreck, 1977). This area of study is of high value for workplace organizations as motivation is integral to overall performance (Steers et al., 2004).

Herzberg also researched factors that influenced work motivation. These factors examined job satisfaction and dissatisfaction and contributed to the Herzberg motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg explains motivation as energy or desire within an individual (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Hygiene factors are described as influences that impact the climate of the job. Factors that improve job dissatisfaction include pay, supervision, policy, and work conditions (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory provides a basis for the human and social factors influencing workplace behaviors.

Leader preparation programs focus on the managerial aspects of school leaders with little focus on their behavior and actions on teacher motivation (Welch & Hodge, 2018). While managerial and human resource skills are necessary to operate a school, cultivating a school of excellence requires adept interpersonal and human relations skills to elicit the best human potential (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Research on the emotional state of teachers has identified that principal behavior is essential to improve or deteriorate workplace emotions (Lambersky, 2016). Herzberg's theoretical framework has been applied in exploring teacher attitudes toward their jobs (Shirol, 2014; Timmreck, 1977) but has not explored teacher motivation due to experiences with school leaders. Applying Herzberg's theory in managerial positions shows a desire for recognition by supervisors, colleagues, and seeing other people's ideas implemented (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Further investigation of the influence of school leaders on

teacher motivation can add to the body of literature on building strong organizational culture. This research extended the body of existing literature on effective leadership practices by emphasizing the need to develop school leaders with strong interpersonal skills to effectively develop the human potential in their school buildings.

Problem Statement

The problem is that school leader preparation programs do not prepare school leaders with the interpersonal skills needed to effectively influence teacher motivation in the school setting (Collie et al., 2012; Friedman & Kass, 2002; Taylor & Youngs, 2018; Wang et al., 2016). Factors influencing teacher motivation include school leader support, CTE, leadership approaches, relationships with administration, and receptiveness to change (Day et al., 2016; Donohoo, 2018; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Talbot & Campbell, 2014). In addition, leadership strategies that focus on developing people to become innovative and more rigorous in their teaching also play an important role in the school improvement process (Day et al., 2016). Leitão et al. (2019) found that professional respect, having a good work environment, and feeling supervisors' support influenced workers' sense of contribution to productivity.

Current research has yet to investigate the shared experiences of teacher motivation due to interpersonal relations with school leaders. Research by Kondacki et al. (2016) showed that a high failure rate of change in schools is connected to teachers' limited faith in school leaders. This statement was strengthened by Steers et al. (2004) when their research shared that direct influence by school leaders can affect goal level and goal attainment. In addition, Day et al. (2016) found that successful principals use elements of instructional and transformational leadership strategies depending on the ongoing diagnoses of the needs of their staff and students. A qualitative study on this phenomenon was needed to better understand how interactions with

staff influence workplace motivation. These lived experiences can enhance the existing research on leadership practices and preparation. Quantitative studies have shown correlations between leadership approaches and the influence of teachers in carrying out school and district-level objectives. Leadership preparation programs that focus on the emotional dimension of leadership can provide school leaders with the necessary skills to positively influence teachers' emotions (Lambersky, 2016). This phenomenological study examined how interactions with teachers by school leaders influence workplace motivation in the school setting.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to understand how selected school teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. At this stage of the research, teacher motivation was generally defined as factors that drive a teacher to participate in the school environment, design effective lessons, and implement feedback as well as school-wide initiatives. The theoretical framework comprising this study is based on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. This theory explains the external and internal factors that influence people in the workplace. Motivation and work output are connected to recognition, responsibility, achievement, and self-development opportunity. In contrast, hygiene factors are related to working conditions and environments, such as salary, benefits, interpersonal relationships, and company policies (Hur, 2017). This theory is important for this research as it will help school leaders better understand how specific interactions with school leaders can influence the workplace motivation of teachers. This research will provide school leaders and administrator preparation programs with valuable information on interpersonal interactions' influence on teacher motivation. This research will build on current practices in school leader preparation programs by understanding how interpersonal interactions with teachers directly

influence teacher motivation. Current and future school leaders can integrate the findings of this study into their leadership practice.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study provided valuable information to current and future school leaders on the influence interactions with teachers have on workplace motivation. It also supported the need for school leader preparation programs to focus on the emotional intelligence of school leaders (Lambersky, 2016). Motivation in the workplace impacts the productivity and collective efficacy of staff. Research on workplace culture shows that trust and supportive management contribute to greater collaboration and positive work outcomes (Kondacki et al., 2016).

Theoretical

Motivation encompasses factors that influence and sustain human behavior over time (Steers et al., 2004). Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory explains that work motivation is maintained and sustained by intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Herzberg et al., 2017). Reasons for teacher motivation can vary based on many factors in the school's climate. Studies have also explored how leadership can impact employees' willingness to actively engage in new initiatives. Extrinsic factors alone do not provide the long-term motivation needed for teachers (Ford et al., 2019). A leader's emotional competence is one of the most important determinants of morale (Herzberg et al., 2017). Leaders of an organization must be cognizant of the human-related factors that impact an employee's workplace motivation. motivation.

Empirical

This research study builds on quantitative studies that examined how school leaders influence teacher perceptions and attitudes about school leadership (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020;

Edge, 2014; Vrhovnik et al., 2018). Increasing staff motivation with certain leadership styles to suppress stress levels has been an effective trait of leaders (Ingsih et al., 2021). This area of study is helpful for school leaders to understand the impact of interpersonal relations on motivation from a teacher's perspective. A transcendental phenomenology provided a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences with school leaders, and these lived experiences provided a detailed description of teachers' interactions with school leaders. This qualitative account of teacher experiences added to the body of research on leadership approaches.

Practical

This research topic provided a greater understanding of school leaders' influence on teacher workplace motivation. Leader preparation programs have historically focused on the managerial aspects of leading a school (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Current research has stated the need for school leaders to be emotionally competent and possess a core set of leadership dimensions (Lambersky, 2016; Welch & Hodge, 2018). In the field of education, some barriers exist that impact a teacher's efficacy and mindset. Barriers include workload, student behavior issues, workplace bullying, and stress (Lambersky, 2016). School leaders need to recognize how their behavior influences teachers or may need help understanding how to exercise their power in positive ways (Orange, 2018). Examining teacher accounts of school leader behavior provided valuable information to current and future school leaders. Caring for the needs of teachers is essential for the climate and culture of the school building. By understanding teachers' lived experiences, school leaders can understand their behavior and its influence on teacher motivation. Understanding teachers' lived experiences can also provide an understanding of this phenomenon and provide school leaders with recommendations for strengthening interpersonal relations and adequately prepare school leaders to engage with teachers on an emotional level.

Research Questions

School leaders can operate a school by demonstrating competence in managerial skills, instructional leadership, and interpersonal interactions. School leader preparation programs focus primarily on supervision and approaches to learning through leadership and pedagogy (Frick & Riley, 2010). These domains are focused on the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders outlined by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA] (NPBEA, 2015). While programs present a variety of leadership theories and approaches, a deep understanding of human motivation is an area of need for effective leadership (Lambersky, 2016; Vermeulen et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). To better understand this phenomenon, understanding teachers' lived experiences was essential to prepare current and future school leaders with effective interpersonal skills necessary for school leadership.

Central Research Question

How do teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders?

Sub-Question One

What experiences, if any, with school leaders have promoted workplace motivation?

Sub-Question Two

What experiences, if any, with school leaders have decreased workplace motivation?

Definitions

1. *Collective Teacher Efficacy* – Beliefs of a group of teachers that can encourage or constrain the behaviors of others (Donohoo, 2018).
2. *Emotional Intelligence* – The awareness and understanding that behaviors and actions influence the emotions of others (Lambersky, 2016).

3. *Hygiene Factors* – Conditions in the workplace that can decrease motivation. Examples include salaries, wages, policy and administration, interpersonal relationships, supervision, working conditions, and work-life balance (Herzberg et al., 2017).
4. *Interpersonal relations* – Communication strategies that involve certain listening modes and messages that promote positive emotions (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020).
5. *Leader Autonomy Support* - Leaders who take an interest in the perspectives of their employees, provide opportunities for choice and input, encourage self-initiation, and avoid using external rewards or sanctions to motivate behavior (Slemp et al., 2018).
6. *Motivator Factors* - Conditions in the workplace that can increase motivation. Examples include a sense of personal achievement, status, recognition, challenging work, responsibility, the opportunity for advancement, and promotion (Herzberg et al., 2017).
7. *Self Determination Theory* – A broad theory of human motivation that concerns individuals' innate growth tendencies and basic psychological needs and focuses on the degree to which individual behavior is autonomously motivated or controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2017).
8. *Workplace motivation* – Factors or events in the workplace that energize, channel, and sustain human behavior over time (Steers et al., 2004).

Summary

Chapter One was organized by first providing a discussion on the background and contextualization of the research study. The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to understand how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The problem was that school leader preparation programs do not prepare school leaders with the interpersonal skills needed to effectively influence teacher motivation (Collie et

al., 2012; Friedman & Kass, 2002; Taylor & Youngs, 2018; Wang et al., 2016). The study provided insight to future leaders on the value of specific interpersonal interactions on workplace motivation in the school setting. This qualitative study provided insight into teacher motivation based on the lived experiences of interactions with school leaders utilizing a transcendental phenomenological approach.

Chapter One explored how teachers experience motivation based on interactions with school leaders. This study provided valuable information for current school leaders and leaders in school administration preparation programs. Incorporating the principles of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory when examining teachers' lived experiences provided prospective leaders with the value of caring for the needs of staff and the impact it has on workplace motivation. Examining teachers' experiences exposed the degree to which this study can provide value to the field. When working with teachers, school leaders who have a solid understanding of the underlying motivational factors can enhance school culture and climate. The results of this study contributed information to current school leaders and have the potential to change leadership preparation practices. Furthermore, this study emphasized interpersonal human relations that increase workplace motivation as effective leadership practices.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The researcher conducted a systematic review of related literature to explore teacher experiences and school leadership's influence on their work motivation. Understanding teacher motivation and self-efficacy is a well-researched topic in education (Donohoo, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Leadership styles and approaches are also widely studied, as leadership directly ties to teacher behaviors (da Silva et al., 2019; Ingsih et al., 2021; Orange, 2018; Şenol & Akdağ, 2018). This research focused on the driving factors for teacher motivation and how specific school leader interactions influence the workplace motivation of teachers. This chapter reviewed the current literature related to the topic of study. The first section of this literature review provided a deeper understanding of the theoretical model of Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory as it relates to an educational workplace setting. The following section included a synthesis of recent literature on teacher job satisfaction and experiences related to workplace motivation. Leadership styles and school leader behaviors were also reviewed regarding teacher motivation. This literature review concluded with an examination of current leadership preparation practices as well as the characteristics of multigenerational individuals. Finally, a summary of key points and a gap in the literature presented a viable need for exploring how specific experiences between school leaders and teachers influence teacher workplace motivation.

Theoretical Framework

Information in this literature review explored Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg, 2008; Herzberg et al., 2017). This theory explains the factors that support human motivation in the workplace context. The motivation-hygiene theory is relevant because school

leaders can be considered both a satisfier and a dissatisfier concerning the workplace. This finding is relevant to the school setting because interactions with school leaders can either be a satisfier or dissatisfier, influencing teacher motivation. Data must be collected to accurately capture teachers' experiences to understand school leaders' influences on workplace motivation. This can be accomplished through semi-structured interviews that describe the influence of these positive and negative interactions on teacher workplace motivation. The theoretical framework and related literature provide a deeper understanding of school leaders' influence on teacher workplace motivation.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Understanding human motivation dates back to Greek philosophers focusing efforts on seeking pleasure and avoiding pain (Steers et al., 2004). Leaders in the industry sector have had a keen interest in how to facilitate and sustain employee motivation since the Industrial Revolution (Slemp et al., 2018). The concept of human motivation shifted from the philosophical realm to the field of psychology by the 19th century. During this time in history, the world was experiencing a significant boom in industry and factory production; applying human motivation factors in a factory setting interested the scientific management movement (Steers et al., 2004). Industries that rely on human capital for production and profits were keen to keep and maintain employee motivation. For these companies, the more productive employees are, the more profit can be generated. By the 1930s, a human relations movement realized that the failure to treat workers as human beings resulted in low morale (Gross & Bendix, 1956). A series of studies in the Hawthorne experiments found that work performance depends on social issues and job satisfaction (Shirol, 2014). As a result of the Hawthorne studies, Herzberg, among other researchers, took an interest in this field. The results of the Hawthorne studies indicated that the

relationship between workers' supervisors has a more significant influence than the job's working conditions (Herzberg et al., 2017). Understanding the role of the individual served as the basis for content theories and understanding how work activities and the nature of the job influence motivation (Steers et al., 2004). This shift to the understanding of the role of the individual in the workplace became the foundation for Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory.

Herzberg believed that work motivation is largely influenced by the extent to which a job is intrinsically challenging and provides opportunities for recognition and reinforcement (Herzberg et al., 2017; Steers et al., 2004). Herzberg's research yielded the first formal theory of motivation in employment (Holme et al., 2016). His theory is based on identifying two contexts in which an individual can be satisfied in the work setting. Intrinsic factors that serve as motivators or satisfiers include achievement, job recognition, responsibility, and advancement. All these factors contribute to the employee's general sense of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 2017; Shirol, 2014). These intrinsic factors influence a person's behavior in the workplace. The motivation-hygiene theory involves both hygiene and motivation factors existing together to allow for workplace motivation (Herzberg, 2008; Herzberg et al., 2017). Herzberg theorized that both factors must be present to meet employees' needs. Both factors are illustrated in studies where conditions with ideal environments and highly skilled workers do not alone motivate an individual to perform at their best (Herzberg et al., 2017). Furthermore, Herzberg et al. (2017) provided a clear example of finding the balance between motivator and hygiene factors. He stated, "The motivators fit the need for creativity, the hygiene factors satisfy the need for fair treatment, and it is thus that the appropriate incentive must be present to achieve the desired job attitude and job performance" (p. 116). Hygiene factors must be accounted for when jobs have

few motivator components. When hygiene factors alone are improved, job dissatisfaction decreases.

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory shaped this research study, the researcher used this theory to examine school leader behaviors as both a motivator and hygiene factor for teacher motivation. The research questions outlined in Chapter allowed the researcher to understand teachers' experiences as a result of interactions with school leaders. These experiences were identified as motivators or hygiene factors contributing to teacher motivation. The following literature review synthesized teacher job satisfaction based on experiences with school leaders. This review also examined leadership styles and leader preparation practices. Data from this study described common themes regarding teachers' experiences with school leaders on teacher motivation. Results will be shared with current and future school leaders to change leadership practices, so school leaders can increase interactions that serve as motivators.

Related Literature

Workplace motivation in an educational setting is essential for school leaders to understand to create the optimal school environment for teachers from all generations and students (Wiedmer, 2015). Understanding leadership practices, styles, and leader preparation practices as hygiene factors that enhance teacher motivation provide context to the identified problem. Research on leadership practices and the resulting impact of such practices have been studied; however, the conditions surrounding leadership success make a difference in the outcome of a school community (Leithwood et al., 2020). A successful leader motivates, mobilizes, and satisfies employees in a job and environment (Ingsih et al., 2021). Teacher motivation influences many parts of the school, including the implementation of school initiatives and the culture of the school building. A lack of teacher motivation can negatively

impact the efforts of the school leaders and cause individual and collective teacher efficacy to decrease. In addition, school variables such as school climate, school leader behavior, sense of community among school staff, and school decision-making procedures are hygiene factors that influence the teacher's sense of professional efficacy (Friedman & Kass, 2002).

A school setting is a living ecosystem that thrives from the direction of leadership. It contains many factors that can intrinsically and extrinsically motivate teachers to perform at their professional best. Research on motivation in different school settings found no difference in teacher motivation across grade bands and school levels (Akdemir, 2020). Studies have correlated teacher motivation to higher salaries (Ingsih et al., 2021; Kongcharoen et al., 2019). The reality for school leaders is that they have an indirect effect on student achievement and a direct effect on collaboration and the internal structures that promote staff development, including a positive school climate (Day et al., 2016). Catering to motivator factors in a school setting allows the school leader to recognize the achievement of employees and foster professional growth. School leaders can adjust their behavior and current leadership practices to promote teacher motivation and reduce job dissatisfiers (Kondacki et al., 2016). Despite the body of research on leadership practices, many leadership preparation programs focus on the extrinsic, or hygiene factors, for teacher motivation. The components of the motivation-hygiene theory are intertwined into the practices of the school environment. The commonality of these factors for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the influence of school leadership on the motivation of teachers and the influences that school leader behaviors have on teacher motivation.

Teacher Perceptions of School Climate

A critical factor for teacher motivation is how staff and teachers perceive the school climate. School climate is the sum of many variables that make up the school's atmosphere. Saint

et al. (2021) described school climate as parental involvement, school connectedness, school safety, and academic rigor. School leadership influences teachers' motivation to engage in professional development (Bektaş et al., 2020; Cohen, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021). In schools where leadership is part of collaborative actions, teachers have increased motivation and engage in professional learning activities (Bektaş et al., 2020). In addition to motivation, principals' attitudes positively impacted teachers' readiness for change (Cohen, 2019). However, principal attitudes alone do not increase motivation. Studies on the quality of the relationships between school leaders and teachers were found to be essential in fostering inquiry habits of mind practices and teachers' innovative behavior (Vermeulen et al., 2020).

Another factor that promotes school climate is the absence of organizational deviance perceptions (Erturk & Ziblim, 2020). Opposing views that do not align with district and school-level initiatives are known as organizational deviance. Specifically, this term refers to individuals who engage in behaviors that distract the standard work progress. The type of organizational deviance that occurs at the individual level is known as production deviance. Emerging research on production deviance defines absenteeism, lack of punctuality, extended breaks, or any behavior that affects work performance (Erturk & Ziblim, 2020). Students can engage in these behaviors when their leader is not enthusiastic about modeling new skills learned to address organizational deviance (Cohen, 2019). These two factors significantly impact the teacher's perceptions of school climate.

The school climate encompasses many factors, including leadership practices and student behavior. The way that teachers perceive their school leaders demonstrating empowering behaviors can positively influence teachers' psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2016). Another element of school climate is student behavior and how school leaders respond to student

behavior (Lambersky, 2016). Research on school climate and student behavior indicates that teachers who perceive student behavior as positive also reported greater job satisfaction and lower stress (Collie et al., 2012).

Motivation is described as an internal state or condition that activates behavior and gives a particular direction (Shirol, 2014). Ingsih et al. (2021) further described motivation as a psychological factor that influences an individual's interest in work, provides a sense of satisfaction, and takes responsibility for what is carried out. Herzberg described internal factors as motivators and satisfiers; external factors are referred to as hygiene factors or dissatisfiers. Herzberg et al. (2017) recognized that there is a complex relationship between internal and external variables that influence workplace motivation of people.

Teacher Motivator Factors

Herzberg's theory has been applied in many work settings, including education. The field of education has many barriers that account for issues in the profession. Barriers to education include program access, implementation, data use, funding, and system alignment and coordination (Brixey & Keily, 2021). Hygiene factors are essential to prevent dissatisfaction in the school setting, and these factors alone do not equate to job satisfaction (Timmreck, 1977). Understanding the motivators that bring and retain teachers to the field is of interest to school systems across the United States. Further examination of the motivator and hygiene factors that teachers encounter in a school setting is necessary for school leaders to understand their influence on teacher workplace motivation.

Teacher motivation is a topic that originates from many sources. Examining teacher motivation by identifying hygiene or dissatisfiers is relatively easy to identify. All school settings share the same hygiene factors of working with other staff members, classroom environment,

physical work conditions, salary, job security, and leadership practices. The motivation-hygiene theory states that improving hygiene factors does not alone increase motivation (Herzberg et al., 2017). Teachers are motivated to remain in the profession due to hygiene factors that sustain a lifestyle they have become accustomed to (Chiong et al., 2017). Studies have examined the impact of specific hygiene factors and their effect on teacher motivation. Research has correlated higher financial compensation to teacher motivation (Ingsih et al., 2021; Kongcharoen et al., 2019). Another hygiene factor linked to teacher motivation is the teacher's and supervisor's interpersonal relationship. This hygiene factor can cause the teacher to feel stressed (Kongcharoen et al., 2019).

Focusing on these external factors related to teacher motivation is frequently studied. While substantial literature is based on the extrinsic reasons for the lack of teacher motivation, addressing hygiene factors alone is sustaining the culture of workplace dissatisfaction (Holme et al., 2016). The motivation-hygiene theory stresses the importance of having motivators to satisfy teachers while decreasing the hygiene factors that cause dissatisfaction. In a school setting, it is essential to have teachers who are satisfied with their jobs. When teachers are highly motivated and eager to demonstrate passion in their lesson delivery, the teaching and learning process is optimal (Şenol & Akdağ, 2018). For a high level of workplace motivation to occur, leadership stress, in terms of a hygiene factor, must be decreased. The impact of motivated teachers yields innovative and modern teachers (Şenol & Akdağ, 2018).

Teacher Hygiene Factors

The motivation-hygiene theory identifies poor interpersonal relations with supervisors as a dissatisfier and can influence workplace motivation. Therefore, improving employee relations and recognizing achievements can improve workplace motivation, thus decreasing hygiene

factors that contribute to dissatisfaction. When teachers have a sense of achievement and affiliation, they are motivated to perform (Ingsih et al., 2021). A sense of achievement is a motivator factor that enables a person to energize, channel, and sustain behavior over time (Steers et al., 2004). Teachers' positive experiences can strengthen their sense of professional mastery and reinforce their reasons for entering the field of education (Holme et al., 2016). In addition, teacher motivation is also related to work discipline and can be attributed to the intrinsic factors that maintain effective teaching practices (Ingsih et al., 2021). Job satisfaction has a different meaning for each person experiencing it, and it could be due to how well the job satisfies their needs, success in the position, or social aspects (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). School leaders who recognize the importance of creating satisfactory work conditions and supportive working environments create the means for teachers to effectively execute school and district initiatives (Liou et al., 2019). Herzberg (2008) believed that employee job satisfaction is achieved when the motivators neutralize the hygiene components in the workplace setting. While literature exists on the implication of school leader involvement in staff behavior and perception, a more significant body of research exists on the barriers to teacher efficacy. A teacher's career is highly relational and contains memories of past experiences, present emotions, and future expectations (Rytivaara & Frelin, 2017). Failure to neutralize hygiene factors can decrease the motivation of staff. Employees who express unhappiness based on the conditions surrounding doing the job are not necessarily dissatisfied with the work (Herzberg et al., 2017). Dissatisfiers can exist from both inside and outside the school building. Studies have identified that teachers who worry about their safety are more likely to feel demotivated and leave the teaching profession (Maran & Begotti, 2020).

In the case of workplace violence, teachers report that perpetrators have been students, students' parents, colleagues, and supervisors (Maran & Begotti, 2020). These barriers can impact the motivation of teaching staff and can have an impact on teaching behaviors. Feeling exhausted and disengaged can increase teachers' absenteeism and negatively influence their efficacy, with significant repercussions on the classroom culture, management, motivation, and academic commitment (Maran & Begotti, 2020). When these factors are present, motivating staff to perform as trained is challenging for school leaders. Brandebo (2020) found that a leader's behavior can be destructive to subordinates despite the actions and inactions of the leader. A school leader must understand how hygiene factors can decrease workplace motivation.

Leadership Styles

School leaders can impact teacher motivation by offering rewards and recognition. Recognizing teacher behavior is a motivator identified by Herzberg's research on workplace motivation. Intrinsic properties of teaching refer to autonomy at work, professional prestige and status, personal development, and self-esteem (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Extrinsic factors such as physical aspects of the workplace and salary also contribute to teachers' occupational perceptions (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Herzberg theorized that employee performance is affected by being able to provide for psychological needs and promote professional growth and developmental needs (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019; Herzberg et al., 2017).

Teachers must also be able to trust their leaders. Research has shown that trust and supportive management contribute to greater collaboration and positive work outcomes (Kondacki et al., 2016). In addition to trust, communicating positive emotions triggers more positive responses through current circumstances, memories of past experiences, and envisioning the future (Wang et al., 2016). Providing opportunities that encourage professional development

creates a supportive teaching environment, especially when the activities are individualized to the teacher. Activities that are personalized to individual needs and carried out in day-to-day work offer relevant experiences to improve performance (Jones et al., 2016). School leaders who demonstrate responsive behaviors to teachers' needs and offer recognition for efforts impact perception and staff motivation through this type of reinforcement. Research has shown that prioritizing the emotional health and well-being of the whole school, including staff and students, is a prerequisite for successful teaching and learning (Coleman, 2020).

Leadership styles can impact teacher motivation—many leadership theories and practices guide school leaders on the best approaches to leading a school. Leader preparation programs describe the qualities of transformational and distributed leadership practices. Leader autonomy support (LAS) refers to a cluster of supervisory behaviors theorized to facilitate self-determined motivation in employees, potentially enabling well-being and performance (Slemp et al., 2018). Transformational leadership centers on a shared vision with all stakeholders while encouraging teachers to be reflective practitioners (Brezicha et al., 2015). Distributive leadership practices shift the responsibility from the school leader to the school stakeholders. Research on differentiated leadership practices has emerged to meet the individualized needs of a school. Differentiated leadership includes understanding individual teachers and then differentiating the support given to teachers (Brezicha et al., 2015). Differentiated leadership combines characteristics of transformational and distributed leadership practices while considering the social and individual needs of the teachers (Brezicha et al., 2015).

While many leadership styles are presented in leadership development programs, two types of leadership styles continually emerge in the literature regarding teacher motivation (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Transformational and transactional leadership styles drive individual and

group performance in a school setting (Cheung et al., 2018). However, increased performance is possible when there is a reasonable level of expectation and the social exchange between supervisor and subordinate is fair and equal (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders were found to motivate, inspire, and challenge their workers to increase workplace performance (Cheung et al., 2018). Employees' work attitudes can be linked to transformational leadership practices. When employees are empowered to participate in the organizational decision-making process facilitated by open communication between the supervisor and the subordinates, their occupation perception increases (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). School leaders who take the perspective of their teachers understand teachers' feelings and ways of thinking (Da'as, 2020). Research on transformational leadership approaches found that leaders who employ this leadership approach are better positioned to develop and foster positive feelings and attitudes in teachers (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Transformational leadership behaviors link principals' and teachers' cognitive abilities to understand perspective-taking (Da'as, 2020). In addition, transformational leadership directly affects in-role performance and indirectly through occupation perception (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019).

Teachers must be able to trust their leaders, and research has shown that trust and supportive management contribute to greater collaboration and positive work outcomes (Kondacki et al., 2016). Providing opportunities that encourage professional development creates a supportive teaching environment, especially when the activities are individualized to the teacher. Activities personalized to individual needs and carried out in daily work offer relevant experiences to improve performance (Jones et al., 2016). School leaders who demonstrate responsive behaviors to teachers' needs and recognize their efforts increase staff motivation.

Transactional Leadership

School leaders can impact teacher behaviors by offering rewards and recognition. Reinforcing teacher behavior can impact motivation and CTE. Studies show that transactional leaders were also found to motivate employees with rewards; however, despite the reward offered, there was a lack of inspiration and mentoring (Cheung et al., 2018). Though rewards are the main component of transactional leadership, it is not the only characteristic of this approach to leadership. Transactional leaders focus on setting goals while clarifying the link between performance. Furthermore, they provide feedback to maintain employee on-task behavior (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Since transactional leaders base their relations on an exchange, empathy is not a characteristic of this leadership style (Da'as, 2020). Instead, this leadership style recognizes followers' needs and desires while framing how the wants and desires will be met in exchange for employee performance (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Studies also found that leaders who engage in transactional leadership tend to wait for issues to arise before fixing problems and only offer help when needed (Cheung et al., 2018).

Current Leadership Practices

Lack of teacher motivation can impact the efforts of school leaders on program initiatives. Studies on program implementation investigate the role of the school leader in the successful rollout of new initiatives. Instructional leadership is vital for implementing programs that involve human and material resources (Mngo & Mngo, 2017). In addition, research shows that the school principal's active participation is the most critical predictor of a change in practices, improving services, and implementing new initiatives (Mngo & Mngo, 2017). Past experiences with school administration can impact teacher efficacy. Carry-over perceptions from previous leadership experiences can impact a new school leader to a school. School leaders must

understand that there may be history impacting their ability to change school culture. Cases of carry-over perceptions could result from mistreatment in the school setting. Adverse experiences include workplace bullying and violence. Research indicates that teachers who experienced mistreatment from school leaders believed their age, teaching behaviors, race or ethnicity, gender, and professional affiliations were targeted by school leaders (Orange, 2018). Another study on workplace violence found that physical violence was perpetrated almost half the time by colleagues and superiors (Maran & Begotti, 2020).

School leaders who foster a growth mindset know this can be accomplished through education and hard work (De Meuse, 2019). Leaders can control certain hygiene factors in the school setting, including school climate, leadership behavior, sense of community among school staff, and school decision-making procedures to promote a sense of professional efficacy among teachers (Friedman & Kass, 2002). One study focusing on the role of intrinsic motivation for teachers found an association between a lack of principal support and a sense of community at the beginning of the school year as a predictor of depersonalization when teachers' motivation was autonomous (Benita et al., 2019). Leadership theories in development programs do not create effective leaders alone. Research on leadership traits shows leaders with intrinsic prosocial values are best suited to foster organizational sustainability and appropriately understand social issues (Ewest, 2018).

The common theme in research on leadership is the need for trust between the teacher and leader (Bektaş et al., 2020; Cohen, 2019). Studies on transformational leadership practices showed that positive and enthusiastic leader behavior inspired enthusiasm and motivation in staff (Cohen, 2019). Vermeulen et al. (2020) expressed that the transformational leadership approach supports communicating and interacting with various stakeholders necessary for a 21st-century

leader. As a result, leadership development is beginning to shift practices to develop new leaders in a different capacity than they have developed in the past (Akers, 2018).

Leadership Preparation Practices

Current leadership development practices at educational institutions focus predominately on leadership theories and do not account for the development progression a leader undergoes (Ewest, 2018). Most leadership preparation practices focus on student achievement without much depth into leadership dispositions (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015). However, some specialized leadership preparation programs focus on interpersonal contexts (Taylor & Youngs, 2018). Herzberg et al. (2017) shared that supervisory training to improve interpersonal relationships is essential to maintaining good hygiene at work. However, the extent to which leadership preparation programs focus on the emotional competence of future school leaders varies from program to program (Wang et al., 2016). Emerging research suggests that leader preparation programs could focus on the transformational leadership approach as it positively influences and increases teachers' occupational perceptions (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019).

To improve the perceptions about the teaching profession, school leaders must understand how their role and behavior affect teachers' perceptions of the occupation and performance (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). To further complicate the variety of leadership preparation programs, different generations of educators have experienced different concepts in education for sustainability and concepts of leadership (Heppers, 2018). Therefore, research suggests that school leaders can adapt to different roles in the school under different environmental conditions (Akers, 2018). Leadership programs concentrating on leader standards miss the opportunity to cultivate critical dispositions for effective leadership (Welch & Hodge, 2018). The integration of emotional competence training into transformational leadership

programs provides a low-risk intervention that has the potential to impact school leader behavior positively (Wang et al., 2016). Various factors must be considered in addition to the scope and sequence of leadership development programs. A leader's personality, emotional intelligence, and ability to gain followers' buy-in are some examples of innate and learned skills of effective leaders (Akers, 2018). Because of a lack of awareness at the higher education level regarding the emotional intelligence of potential school leaders, school districts have taken it upon themselves to cultivate school leaders by providing training to aspiring leaders that focus on integrity, commitment, collaboration, and servant leadership (Welch & Hodge, 2018).

Studies on how to improve a leader's interpersonal skills and abilities offer a variety of approaches. Heppers (2018) suggested that educating professionals in a group setting where they live and study together provides opportunities to reflect on education practices as a collective group. This is best suited to take place at the university level of education or during higher teacher examination training. Abu Nasra and Arar (2019) advocated for training programs that provide administrators with tools and strategies to instill meaning and value in teachers' jobs. Cohen (2019) took a different approach by suggesting that school leadership training programs encourage discourse and share transformational leadership skills while reflecting on their leadership approach. Despite the approach, current research in the field recognizes that a shift needs to occur to create workplace environments that inspire others' vision, mission, and passion (Hassan et al., 2017).

Leadership Behavior

School leaders can motivate teachers and satisfy employees in a particular job (Ingsih et al., 2021). Mounting research demonstrates that positive relations and perspective taking is essential in creating a school culture that is free of conflict and misunderstandings (Da'as, 2020).

School leaders should ensure there are leadership opportunities for teachers to satisfy intrinsic motivators and offer opportunities to feel valued (Bektaş et al., 2020). Involvement in school initiatives and tasks offers ways for teachers to feel valued and be recognized in the school setting. School leaders who share the responsibility of school improvement and district initiatives demonstrate confidence in the capabilities of the teachers. Bektaş et al. (2020) found that schools where leaders share responsibilities among teachers had more trust in their school leaders and participated more in professional learning activities. Participatory leadership has been found to significantly positively affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment for both teachers and school leaders (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). This positive effect leads to feelings of value and affirmation on the part of the teacher (Vrhovnik et al., 2018). Studies have shown that teachers respond to motivating language; leaders must use influential language strategically to maintain and increase commitment to the field (Sabir & Bhutta, 2018). Over time, these leadership opportunities become motivating factors that energize and sustain a person's behavior (Steers et al., 2004).

Mounting research indicates that leadership may be more than theories and approaches (Akers, 2018; Dickhäuser et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Examining the neuroscience that comprises successful leaders is under examination. The emerging field of organizational neuroscience examines how biological systems, psychological processes, and social stimuli interact to shape human behavior (Wang et al., 2016). Previous studies have linked dopamine with motivation and obtaining leadership positions (Li et al., 2015). Current research now recognizes that leadership behaviors depend on leaders' dispositions and the environment in which they find themselves (Wang et al., 2016). Furthermore, genetics alone do not predict leadership behaviors; instead, the interactions between a leader's genes and experiences influence

leadership behavior. This supports previous research on innate skills and abilities that an individual may possess to be a successful leader (Akers, 2018). Some experiences that may influence leadership at the genetic level include childhood experiences, past professional experiences, leadership training, and mentorship (Wang et al., 2016).

A significant barrier to motivation-hygiene in a school setting is a negative school environment. Hygiene factors or dissatisfiers, also known as external factors, usually describe the environment a person works in (Timmreck, 1977). Herzberg et al. identified hygiene factors as the following: supervision, interpersonal relations, physical work conditions, salary, job security, and leadership practices (2017). Hygiene factors can be linked to company policy, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, and working conditions (Herzberg et al., 2017). School leaders can serve as hygiene factors regarding teacher workplace motivation. While literature exists on the implication of school leader involvement on staff behavior and perception, research also exists on destructive leadership styles. A teacher's career is highly relational and contains memories of past experiences, present emotions, and future expectations (Rytivaara & Frelin, 2017). Lack of meeting basic needs can also influence collective teacher efficacy (CTE) and individual teacher efficacy. Research studies have identified that teachers who worry about their safety are more likely to feel demotivated and leave the teaching profession (Maran & Begotti, 2020).

Toxic leadership is a broad term that describes workplace bullying and abusive leadership. It encompasses characteristics such as self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that adversely influence subordinates, the organization, and mission performance (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). Research on workplace violence in the school setting shows that teachers report that perpetrators have been students, students' parents, colleagues, and

supervisors (Maran & Begotti, 2020). These barriers can impact the CTE of teaching staff and affect teaching behaviors, as toxic leadership affects the overall institution's performance (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). Feeling exhausted and disengaged can increase teachers' absenteeism and negatively influence their academic ability. This can also influence the general stability of the classroom, the continuity of students' experience, and teachers' ability to support students' motivation and academic commitment (Maran & Begotti, 2020). Toxic leadership damages a school's culture by decreasing the commitment and motivation of its members (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). When the leader and the subordinates provoke one another through anger, aggression, and impulsivity, a cycle of negative emotions is perpetuated in the organization (Wang et al., 2016). Research on principals' ability to deal with emotions has shown that it can encourage teacher motivation (Cohen, 2019). Workplace motivation is very difficult when these negative hygiene factors are present in a school environment.

School Leader Motivation

External factors that impact teacher behavior have been well documented. Examining the experiences of school leaders provides insights into the school leader's behavior. While leadership is viewed as a position of respect, school leaders experience motivation and hygiene challenges. Past experiences with teachers and negative attitudes can act as barriers to effective leadership behaviors. Research studies found that the legacy of the former principals created challenges for the new principals in that they had to re-engineer and restructure the staff's behavioral patterns (Rajbhandari et al., 2016). Training and coaching can shape and alter leadership styles (Cheung et al., 2018). However, a school leader must recognize the need to change and be willing to be flexible when transitioning to new school culture to address staff needs. A school leader with "learning agility" refers to leaders who demonstrate flexibility and

willingness to grow (De Meuse, 2019, p. 26). Studies have shown that school leaders who demonstrate learning agility have higher rates of leadership success (De Meuse, 2019). School leaders encouraging creative turmoil or new ideas to incite improvement and innovation are the driving force for novel learning (Hulsbos et al., 2016). It is essential to understand the barriers that school leaders experience because school leader hygiene factors indirectly influence teacher motivation.

Just like the teaching profession has challenges, leadership roles also have challenges. Research has shown that potential school leaders are not drawn to leadership positions due to a decrease in the quality of personal life, personal health, and overburdening of administrative duties (Taylor & Youngs, 2018). Teachers may be unaware of these stresses and hold negative perceptions of school leaders. Creative turmoil may only be well received if the staff positively perceives school leaders (Hulsbos et al., 2016). Studies show that a certain degree of existential threat and the feeling of "all or nothing" often accompany creative turmoil (De Meuse, 2019, p. 26). The stress of leading a school must not eclipse the needs of the teachers, and school leaders must be aware of the implications of their actions despite the demands of the leadership position. Research on leaders who encourage autonomous learning positively influences the effectiveness of teachers' learning experiences because they do not feel pressured to engage in learning activities (Zhang et al., 2021).

School principals experience dissatisfaction when teachers do not align with the school leader's expectations (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). Principal dissatisfaction is associated with directive leadership that guides subordinates and tells them what to do, where to do it, when to do it, and who should do it (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). Research on teachers' emotional pressure revealed that when teachers had less autonomy over professional development, their teaching

was less effective (Zhang et al., 2021). However, participatory leadership styles affect leaders' job satisfaction and commitment to the organization in which they work (Banjarnahor et al., 2018).

Teacher Behavior

Unlike other business organizations, teachers are a unique group to lead, as each teacher is a leader in their own right (Wiedmer, 2015). Motivated teachers directly impact the implementation of educational change and experience success and satisfaction (Emiroglu et al., 2017). Leaders who provide staff motivators such as opportunities to lead and engage in meaningful activities that contribute directly to the school increase teacher motivation. Teachers are a type of leader in the school setting; school leaders must respect the teacher's expertise while maintaining the mission and vision of the school and district (Wiedmer, 2015). Schools with more teacher leaders have a shared perception that they directly impact student outcomes (Donohoo, 2018). School leaders who provide teacher-leaders opportunities cultivate a high level of psychological empowerment (Vrhovnik et al., 2018). This can allow school leaders to engage in participatory leadership and foster the teachers' job satisfaction because they are included in formulating the school goals (Banjarnahor et al., 2018).

Teacher empowerment is an intrinsic motivator that includes job meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019; Lee & Nie, 2016; Vrhovnik et al., 2018). Studies show that when the school climate has a strong sense of organizational self-efficacy, teachers engage in more collaborative behaviors and participate in school decision-making (Friedman & Kass, 2002). Collaboration with colleagues is not always a positive experience. If teachers perceive collaboration time as a requirement by the administration, there are negative effects on teachers' outcomes (Collie et al., 2012). Banjarnahor et al. (2018) found

that directive leadership styles decrease job satisfaction when tasks require structured work and promote leadership goals. This can contribute to teacher burnout, emotional exhaustion, and an overall decrease in self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Emotional exhaustion leads to reduced accomplishments which negatively affects self-efficacy. While research exists on the influence of a school leader's behavior on teacher motivation, applying this knowledge is less frequent. School leaders may not be aware of their behavior's impact on teachers when it comes to making a positive impact on them without adding to their stress (Steers et al., 2004).

Leaders' Influence on Teacher Behavior

The actions of school leaders also can impact teacher motivation positively and negatively. Transformational leadership positively influences teachers' occupational perception (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). Teachers may negatively perceive school leadership due to a lack of attention and interaction from school leaders. Research on teacher perceptions of school leaders indicates that teachers need support in terms of receiving "support and encouragement" and "recognition of achievement and contribution" (Daniëls et al., 2020, p. 656). Teachers with a weaker sense of organizational efficacy tend to confine themselves to the classroom (Friedman & Kass, 2002). The more teachers perceive their teaching job as a position that is central to their lives, the more intrinsic satisfaction a teacher will have (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019). In addition, studies show that teachers who see their principal as supporting and facilitating the school vision, teacher development, and encouragement foster academic motivation and stimulation (Da'as, 2020). Herzberg's two-factor theory maintains that employees are motivated by the social environment that includes aspects of the job and work climate (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019).

A school leader can influence a teacher's self-efficacy, among other variables within a school setting. Friedman and Kass (2002) described teacher self-efficacy as:

The teacher's perception of his or her ability to (a) perform required professional tasks and to regulate relations involved in the process of teaching and educating students (classroom efficacy), and (b) perform organizational tasks, become part of the organization and its political and social processes (organizational efficacy). (p. 684)

A significant relationship between teacher perception of administrators and professional peers influences how teachers respond to student behavior, specifically bullying (Farley, 2018). Other variables include motivator and hygiene components such as school climate, school leader behavior, sense of community among school staff, and school decision-making procedures, which are important for the teacher's sense of professional efficacy. Studies on supportive school structures linked teachers' achievement goal orientations, learning goals, and positive feedback as critical factors (Dickhäuser et al., 2021).

Individual teacher self-efficacy is one of many aspects on which school leader behavior can negatively impact. School leaders who change teacher assignments without considering teachers' social ties may miss an opportunity to capitalize on the potency of established teaching teams for innovation (Spillane & Shirrell, 2017). This is called CTE when multiple teachers' self-efficacy is impacted. Donohoo (2018) found that CTE was predictive of positive feelings and attitudes of the teacher. Obvious behaviors that include bullying and abusive actions not only have an impact on teacher behavior but on the school environment. Research on CTE shows teachers' self-efficacy changes when colleagues manage different teaching aspects (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Barriers to Teacher Efficacy

While literature exists on the implication of school leader involvement in staff behavior and perception, a greater body of research exists on the barriers to teacher efficacy. A teacher's

career is highly relational and contains memories of past experiences, present emotions, and future expectations (Rytivaara & Frelin, 2017). As outlined by Maslow, a lack of meeting basic needs can also influence CTE and individual teacher efficacy. Research studies have identified that teachers who worry about their safety are more likely to feel demotivated and leave the teaching profession (Maran & Begotti, 2020). Barriers can exist from inside and outside the school building. In the case of workplace violence, teachers report that perpetrators have been students, students' parents, colleagues, and supervisors (Maran & Begotti, 2020). These barriers can impact the CTE of teaching staff and can have an impact on teaching behaviors. Feeling exhausted and disengaged can increase teachers' absenteeism and negatively influence their academic ability, with important repercussions on the general stability of the classroom. These factors can also impact the continuity of students' experiences and teachers' ability to support students' motivation and academic commitment (Maran & Begotti, 2020). When these factors are present, motivating staff to perform as trained is challenging for school leaders.

Lack of action by school leaders is subtle behavior that can be perceived as disconnected and uninvolved. Studies on collaborative climate suggest that it is negatively associated with performance goals and higher performance-avoidance goals (Dickhäuser et al., 2021). Neglecting the basic needs of teachers and misuse of authority can severely impact teachers' perceptions of school leaders. School leaders may fail to recognize how their behavior impacts teachers or may not understand how to exercise their power in positive ways (Orange, 2018). While specific abusive actions and workplace bullying can lead to negative perceptions about the administration, the lack of action can also contribute to negative perceptions. Other studies indicate that handling stress appropriately impacts relationships with staff (Fors Brandebo, 2020). Teacher stress and burnout are part of today's teaching reality. School leaders who are

aware of this can take action to provide for teacher well-being while also addressing the school environment (Embse et al., 2019). Ensuring that staff needs are being met is one way for staff to gain positive perceptions of school leadership.

Generation Differences

School leader behaviors may be one of many factors in staff's quality of interpersonal relations. Mounting research on generation differences is a known factor that may influence teacher behavior due to leadership styles that do not account for a multigenerational workplace (Akers, 2018; Edge, 2014; Ewest, 2018; Hassan et al., 2017). It is common to have a span of five generations found in a school community, including traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Y, and Z, with the majority of the staff being categorized as Generation X and Y (Sabir & Bhutta, 2018; Wiedmer, 2015). There are definite differences between Generation X and Generation Y workers in the workforce. The most noted difference between the two generations is trust in their approach to relationships at work (Edge, 2014).

Generation X workers are characterized as superficial and more egotistic than previous generations of individuals in the workforce (Heppers, 2018). Due to these differences, leadership is even more important in a workplace with mixed generations (Cheung et al., 2018). Generation Y and Generation Z are the latest professionals entering the workplace. Generation Y individuals were born between 1980-1995, and Generation Z was born between 1996-2010 (Heppers, 2018; Lester, 2011). These individuals are independent, entrepreneurial thinkers who relish responsibility, demand immediate feedback, and expect a sense of accomplishment hourly (Akers, 2018; Hassan et al., 2017). Despite these characteristics, younger generations in the workforce demonstrate less trust toward colleagues and the organizations in which they work (Edge, 2014). Compared to other generations, Generation Y individuals tend to be more social

(Wiedmer, 2015). Generation Y and Z workers seek work that is fulfilling and aligns with their values (Akers, 2018). In addition to these attributes, Generation Y and Z learners prefer creative learning settings, trial and error, and mentoring instead of directives (Heppers, 2018). Generation X and Y individuals are more interested in a work-life balance and less concerned with socioeconomic status (Heppers, 2018; Wiedmer, 2015).

In contrast, Generation X believes that hard work earns respect, job security, stability, and control over personal space (Akers, 2018). Generation X individuals are born before 1979 (Heppers, 2018). Generation X individuals also tend to be more loyal regarding staying in their companies. This may be because Generation X individuals have experienced the highest level of education in the United States to date (Wiedmer, 2015). This generation was raised with the common understanding that education is the key to rising social and economic status, with teaching being an undesirable vocation (Heppers, 2018).

Leading multiple generations in one workplace environment has its challenges. However, current school leaders may need to know the best way to communicate with multiple generations of teachers. Understanding young professionals' perceptions are necessary for leaders to ensure the future success of organizations (Nazarian et al., 2017). This is accomplished by establishing a supportive work climate to promote teachers' psychological bonding to enhance positive work outcomes and commitment (Sabir & Bhutta, 2018).

Leadership Traits for New Generations

To meet the needs of Generation X and Y individuals joining the workforce, school leaders must adapt to the needs of the teachers in their school buildings. Limited research exists on generational patterns in the school as it relates to school leadership and improvement (Edge, 2014). Organizations, like educational settings, are beginning to recognize the importance of

adjusting current practices to motivate millennials within a multigenerational workplace (Ewest, 2018). Therefore, fostering interpersonal skills in leaders who enable prosocial behaviors is a skill that leaders need to recognize and develop (Ewest, 2018). Generation Y individuals expect more supervision, feedback, and structure but get bored easily (Wiedmer, 2015). In addition, Generation Y individuals are motivated by their need for purpose and belonging.

Effective leaders must recognize the continuous change that occurs in an organization and develop the capacity to respond according to the needs of the individuals they supervise (Hassan et al., 2017). Transformational leadership approaches neutralize the effects of age diversity on routine tasks and team performance (Cheung et al., 2018). However, transactional leadership characteristics of certificates or money are preferred by Generation Y individuals because of the association of the value provided by the supervisor (Wiedmer, 2015). School leaders may need to develop a skill to understand how to lead multigenerational schools through specific approaches to individualized professional development, retention strategies, and career planning (Edge, 2014).

Leadership Traits for a Multigenerational Workforce

School leaders are responsible for supervising all staff in a school building, and a school staff encompasses a wide range of ages among employees. Organizations, including the educational field, must adjust current practices to properly motivate Generation Y and Z workers within a multigenerational workplace (Ewest, 2018). Leaders who motivate and inspire employees to achieve personal goals in work foster positive work relations between leaders and subordinates (Cheung et al., 2018). School leaders must possess an understanding of a mixed-generation staff and the skill to effectively communicate with staff based on these similarities and differences (Wiedmer, 2015). Transformational leaders strive to challenge

traditional ways of practice to foster intellectual stimulation (Cheung et al., 2018). One example is the traits of Generation X individuals in the workforce. These individuals tend to question policy and projects; therefore, school leaders must be prepared to provide this generation of workers with credible reasons for tasks, decisions, and opportunities for input (Wiedmer, 2015). It is also noted that Generation X individuals do not like to be micromanaged but find workplace formality fun and motivating (Wiedmer, 2015).

The ability to adapt and change to the needs of staff is different for every leader. Developing effective leaders has much to do with the innate leadership ability of the leader and the skills learned in leadership development programs (Akers, 2018). Upcoming school leaders will be comprised of multigenerational individuals. Leaders must understand the differences between working with multigenerational individuals in their building and navigating how these groups of people work and collaborate. Generation Y workers prefer to work with boomers rather than Generation X individuals, while Generation X workers tend to be more self-reliant (Edge, 2014).

Multigenerational school leaders who understand and value the different generations are essential in building strong school communities while supporting each generation's unique outlook on work and teaching approaches (Wiedmer, 2015). In addition, the development of the new generation of leaders must be intentional to account for the needs of the individuals in the school (Ewest, 2018). Leadership practices that foster prosocial and social justice behaviors complement Generation X and Y individuals (Ewest, 2018). Research indicates that leaders are better able to meet the needs of all individuals by learning how to recognize and create opportunities to nurture trust among different generations (Edge, 2014).

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the influence that positive and negative experiences with school leaders have on teacher motivation in the school setting. Currently, there is a problem with school leader preparation programs emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships and their influence on teacher motivation. Despite the known research and theories of workplace motivation, leadership preparation programs continue to provide future leaders with a broad understanding of transactional and transformational leadership approaches.

Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory guides this study by examining school leadership as both a motivator and a hygiene factor (Herzberg et al., 2017). Focusing on teachers' specific interactions and experiences when working with school leadership provided a deeper understanding of the influence of school leadership on teacher motivation. Leaders who neutralize hygiene factors such as supervision and administrative practices and emphasize human relations could improve teacher motivation in the school setting (Herzberg et al., 2017). Schools with leaders who understand how interpersonal relations, especially in the context of a multigenerational staff, influence teacher motivation can impact many areas of the school culture.

The problem was how school leaders influence teacher motivation. Examining the experiences between school leaders and teachers were needed to understand how interpersonal interactions can influence teacher motivation in the school setting. External factors have been linked to teacher dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 2017). Leadership styles and approaches are taught in school leader preparation programs; however, there was little research on teachers' experiences with school leaders that influence teacher motivation.

Teacher motivation can vary based on external hygiene factors and leader-specific experiences. Factors that influence intrinsic motivation can impact many aspects of a school environment. Studies have examined employee motivation in all sectors of the workforce. Studies have also explored how leadership can impact an employee's willingness to actively engage in new initiatives, stay in the field, and influence student achievement (Brezicha et al., 2015; Collie et al., 2012; Holme et al., 2016). A leader of an organization must be cognizant of the many factors that can impact an employee's workplace motivation. In addition, a leader must create an age-neutral workplace that fosters worker productivity, tolerance, and teamwork to encourage employees to function at their optimal professional capacity (Wiedmer, 2015). Though research exists on school leadership styles and extrinsic factors that influence teacher motivation, a gap in the literature is still needed to link specific school leader behaviors to motivation. Exploring this influence based on teachers' experiences and perspectives was of value to school leaders and school leader preparation programs.

While the topic of teacher motivation is well researched, it is not known how specific experiences with school leaders influence teacher workplace motivation. A gap in the literature exists on the experiences of teacher motivation and school leaders. As a result, the need to conduct a phenomenology to describe teacher experiences with school leader interactions has been identified. Examining the experiences of teachers and school leaders on teacher motivation will contribute to leadership preparation practices. The results of this study will provide leader preparation programs with valuable insights that promote the theoretical framework and practical significance for current and future school leaders in a K-8 setting. Herzberg's theory claims that meeting the needs through satisfiers alone without consideration of the hygiene factors in a workplace does not lead to job satisfaction. School leaders who focus on both the satisfier and

hygiene components of motivation may increase teacher motivation. The practical application of this study can impact not only leader preparation programs but also teachers who are currently in the field of education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. This chapter describes the research design, procedures used in this study, and data analysis techniques employed. A rich description of the setting and participants provides an understanding of the site and the researcher's role in this study. The following sections in this chapter include the rationale for the research design and the methods and procedures used to gather data from participants. The chapter concludes by reviewing the researcher's positionality and establishing the trustworthiness of the research and methods through careful consideration of the researcher's credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Ethical considerations were reviewed to ensure that participants were protected from any repercussions of this research.

Research Design

The research design for this study was qualitative because it focused on the participants' lived experiences regarding a specific phenomenon. Qualitative research is used when there is a need to share individuals' stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships between the researcher and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research questions selected for this study sought to understand a person's experiences. This study examined teacher experiences with school leaders to understand how specific interpersonal interactions influence workplace motivation. A rich description of the individual's experience provides a deep understanding of school leader interpersonal relationships on the workplace motivation of teachers. A qualitative approach to this research sought to understand how people interpret their

experiences, construct their world, and the meaning behind their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In this study, teachers' experiences were shared to better understand the phenomenon of motivation from school leaders in a K-8 school setting. A phenomenological approach to understanding teacher experiences was best suited for this type of research. Phenomenology is the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows through experiences (Moustakas, 1994). A unique aspect of phenomenological studies is that the researcher abstains from suppositions and derives findings from participant experiences that serve as the basis for future research and reflection (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological approach to understanding the workplace motivation of teachers was best suited because it provides a detailed description of the experiences between school leaders and teachers. A phenomenological approach allowed this researcher to illuminate, through rich descriptions and personal meanings, the lived experiences of teachers with school leaders related to workplace motivation.

A transcendental phenomenology approach was used to examine the lived experiences of several individuals without the influence and bias of the researcher's own experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A transcendental approach allows the researcher to set aside preconceived understandings or judgments when trying to understand the phenomena under study. Putting aside beliefs and biases is known as epoché and allows the researcher to interpret the phenomenon in an open way (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) further described epoché as a "new way of looking at things, a way that requires that we learn to see what stands before our eyes, what we can distinguish and describe" (p. 33). The goal of a transcendental approach is to maintain a level of objectivity in which the researcher brackets personal opinions related to the topic of study before proceeding with the experiences of others. For this research study, a

transcendental approach allowed the researcher to view the experiences of teachers without bringing any thoughts or preconceived feelings into the analysis of the teachers' lived experiences.

Research Questions

This study is guided by one central research question and two sub-questions.

Central Research Question

How do school teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders?

Sub-Question One

What experiences, if any, with school leaders promote workplace motivation?

Sub-Question Two

What experiences, if any, with school leaders decrease workplace motivation?

Setting and Participants

The site selected for the study was Saint Gemma Galgani Catholic School (SGGCS). The school is located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States between two large cities on the eastern coast of the United States. The surrounding area around the site is undergoing rapid growth, and new housing neighborhoods are being built due to the expansion of the suburban areas surrounding the cities. Participants in this study are teachers who currently teach in a private school setting. Many teachers at this site also have experience teaching in public settings. Participants in this study are K-8 private school teachers who teach at SGGCS.

Setting

This study is located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The county in which this school resides represents a suburban county that is experiencing growth due to housing demands as a result of job expansion from the larger surrounding urban areas. This suburban

school district educates 12,683 students in 50 schools (Catholic Diocese of Arlington, n.d.). The school district's leadership is comprised of a superintendent and four assistant superintendents. The school district is comprised of 42 elementary and middle schools, six high schools, and one virtual school. The location of this site draws professional staff with a wide range of expertise and collective experiences. This site was chosen because it is a suburban district representing a typical Mid-Atlantic suburban community. The suburban location of the study draws 1,583 teachers with various experiences. Forty-seven percent of Diocese of Arlington Catholic school teachers have completed post-graduate work and have a combined teaching experience totaling over 16,000 years (Catholic Diocese of Arlington, n.d.).

The demographic composition of this district reflects the average suburban school district within the commuting distance of two major cities. Though face-to-face interviews would be preferred, participants were offered the choice of face-to-face interviews or video chat methods. The same rationale was presented to the focus groups concerning video call preference. For this study, the teachers of SGGCS were recruited as participants. SGGCS has 150 students enrolled in grades PreK-8th grade. SGGCS is fully accredited by an outside accreditation agency called Cognia Advanced Ed. This site was chosen for the number of education professionals who have completed post-graduate work. About 47% of Diocese of Arlington Catholic school teachers have completed post-graduate work. Not having professional connections to the research site minimized the consequences for volunteers participating in the study. Due to geographic location and COVID health precautions, video conferencing methods were utilized to conduct interviews between the interviewee and the researcher. The same rationale was used for the focus groups concerning video call preference.

Participants

Participants in this study were teachers at SGGCS who have had experience working with at least two school principals. The target population for the study was teachers in kindergarten to grade eight from the approved research site. Participants were selected based on their current status as classroom teachers. This study investigated teachers with teaching experience in various core content subjects with no minimum time in the classroom. While no minimum time in the classroom was required, participants were selected based on working under at least two school leaders or principals. The inclusion criteria captured the experiences of teachers who shared their lived experiences working with more than one school leader.

For this study, the researcher selected individuals because they provided an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From these initial participants, snowball sampling was used to recruit additional participants. Snowball sampling uses current participants to find others who may fit the criteria and add to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was useful for finding prospective participants who could contribute key information (Patton, 1990).

Researcher Positionality

I have had the opportunity to teach and lead in many school districts in the United States. As a military spouse of an active-duty service member, I have had to restart my career over the past 20 years several times. Each new beginning in an unknown school district has allowed me to collect and catalog experiences with school leaders. Each experience has been different as it relates to the interpersonal skills of the school leaders. My experience is not isolated or unique; fellow teachers and colleagues in the field have also collected their experiences with school leaders. Some experiences have been incredibly motivating and inspiring, while others can cause

feelings of defeat and loss of passion. These diverse experiences highlight a divide in leadership behavior and interpersonal skills. All school leaders are selected based on their abilities to lead a school. Despite the qualifications to hold a leadership position, school leaders differ in their interpersonal skills to effectively lead a school. A lack of focus on interpersonal skills in school leader preparation programs is evident when examining teachers' experiences with school leaders.

Interpretive Framework

An interpretive framework is an approach to understanding the complex nature of a participant's subjective experiences. My research adopts the interpretive framework of social constructivism. This framework seeks to understand the work in which the participants in this study develop subjective meaning from experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A social constructivism framework validates and recognizes one's background as it relates to interpreting participants' experiences in a study. By bracketing and practicing epoché, I set aside my biases and prejudgments to perceive the experience openly (Moustakas, 1994). Doing this allowed me to interpret participants and construct meaning from their accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As my research progressed, I relied on an inductive approach to determine the meaning and themes from interviews with participants.

Social constructivism is a social science; it allows the researcher to examine participants' experiences through a social scientist's lens. This is done by accepting multiple realities of experiences based on the interactions with the social world in which they exist (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructivism integrates the ontological view that multiple realities are constructed through lived experiences. Axiological beliefs of social constructivism strive to honor individual values. An epistemological belief of social constructivism co-creates reality

between the researcher and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions can change throughout a career, and my philosophical assumptions have changed as I have progressed in my career. Understanding my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions assisted with understanding my research approach and provided context to the readers of this study. For this research, a social constructivist interpretative framework guides my ontological beliefs about the nature of reality, epistemological beliefs, how reality is known to me, and my axiological beliefs that serve as my values.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions are philosophies that consider the different perspectives of individuals in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My research embraced the idea of multiple realities; examining teachers' lived experiences provided an understanding of the participants' realities. As the researcher, it was my primary task to report the realities of my participants by sharing their experiences with school leaders. This was accomplished by collecting multiple forms of evidence through individual interviews, focus groups, and journal entries. Evidence of participants' realities was organized into themes using the words gathered in the interviews, focus group, and journal prompt. The process of imaginative variation was used to identify themes that account for the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Using a phenomenological approach allowed me to report how participants experience the phenomena differently (Moustakas, 1994). As participants explained their experiences, horizontalization emerged, and a new reality was developed through the many perspectives (Moustakas, 1994).

Epistemological Assumption

An epistemological assumption seeks to clarify the knowledge about a topic of interest by getting as close to the participants as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Questions for the researcher included: What counts as knowledge, and how are claims justified? In addition, the researcher acknowledged the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched. To understand the experiences of the teachers in my study, I attempted to get as close as possible to the participants being studied with the understanding that the lived experiences shared were subjective. Spending time with the participants during the interviews and focus groups allowed participants to view me as a trusted person to disclose specific experiences. This was accomplished through face-to-face interviews and focus groups using video conferencing methods. From this relationship, I collected evidence through direct quotes capturing the lived experiences as described by participants.

Axiological Assumption

Axiological assumptions address how the researcher's values play into the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I have experienced positive and negative interactions with school leaders throughout my career and experiencing these differences in leadership practices has influenced my motivation to remain in the education field. Though I have strong opinions regarding this topic, I bracketed out my beliefs while conducting this research. The information gathered from the field provided valuable information for future and current school leaders.

Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher was to be the facilitator of information as the human instrument. The human instrument in qualitative research relies on the researcher's knowledge, skill, and training as it relates to the interpretation of the participants' experiences (Guba &

Lincoln, 1981). As the human instrument, my role as the researcher was to conduct a reliable transcendental phenomenological study. Before research and recruitment could begin, securing appropriate approval through Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was necessary. After the approvals were secured, participants were recruited with informed consent, and data collection commenced. As the human instrument, I was responsible for accurately interpreting the participants' lived experiences and describing the phenomenon under study. Empowering individuals to share their stories was the goal of this qualitative research. My role in this research was to be the human instrument to convey the information from the participants. My primary role was to effectively communicate the lived experiences of the teachers in my study to understand how interpersonal relations with school leaders influence teacher motivation.

Working with various school leaders throughout my teaching career piqued my interest in this area of study. I have witnessed how the interpersonal relations of school leaders have influenced teacher motivation, and these experiences have influenced the workplace motivation of teachers. After witnessing some teachers soar under leadership while others have left the field, I began to question the specific interactions with school leaders that influence teacher workplace motivation.

I am currently in the field of education and serve as a district-level teacher. I support teachers in the classroom and often hear about specific experiences and witness changes in teacher behavior. I do not work at the research site described in this study, nor do I have any authority over the participants in my research. While I have opinions about the phenomenon being investigated based on personal experiences, I did not allow my thoughts and biases to infiltrate the semi-structured interviews or focus groups. The semi-structured interviews for this phenomenological study allowed me to ask participants for more information about their

responses or specific experiences. Employing a transcendental phenomenological reduction allows me to explain the phenomena with a conscious and deliberate intention to provide meaning to the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). This process involved constant reflection on the lived experiences and studying them accurately as they are recorded (Moustakas, 1994).

Procedures

The data collection steps for the study began with IRB and research site approval. Approval from Liberty University's IRB department was obtained before the research commenced (see Appendix I). Site approval was secured as part of the IRB process (see Appendix E). This process involved selecting email distribution as the method of communication and attaching the recruitment and IRB approval letter. Potential participants were emailed a brief description of the study and inclusion criteria. Initial participants were selected using purposeful sampling. From these initial participants, snowball sampling was employed to find peers of teachers who may have had similar experiences.

Purposeful sampling was used to target teachers who were particularly knowledgeable about the issues under investigation. Purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals for the study by informing them of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process involved sending an email to the teachers at the research site. Inclusion criteria for the study included any teacher who currently teaches in grades K-8 and has worked for at least two administrators. This type of sampling to select participants allowed for a selection of cases that were aligned with the study purpose and provided meaningful data to the research questions (Patton, 1999). This research aimed to select 10-15 participants for the study. No new participants were selected once saturation occurred, and no additional themes emerged from the interviews.

Individual interviews were scheduled with interested respondents who met the inclusion criteria for the study. A consent form was emailed to participants before the scheduled interview (see Appendix A). As a result of living and working during a COVID-19 global pandemic, participants met virtually through video conferencing methods. Microsoft Teams was used as the video conferencing platform and captured the semi-structured interviews. This platform also provided the participants with ease and flexibility in scheduling. Microsoft Teams allowed the researcher to record audio and video through the software's capabilities. A backup method was also used to capture the dialogue of the interview. This involved the use of the audio recording feature of the Otter application on a personal mobile device. The interviewer took notes and memos to capture any significant statements that may have accompanied the interview. These notes were captured on the interviewer's copy of the interview questions. After the interview, a copy of the Teams recording was downloaded on a secure external storage device and saved using the alpha-numeric coding for participants.

Participants were provided an interview guide and semi-structured questions (see Appendix B). A semi-structured interview method was utilized to gain a deeper understanding of participants' responses. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to respond and clarify comments and experience the participants' worldview by allowing new ideas to emerge from the initial question asked (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Upon request, a transcript of the interview was provided to the participant to review and check for accuracy. Once the participants accepted the transcript, the interview was analyzed for themes and coded. Providing the participant with the transcribed interview was an effective way to leverage member checking, allowing the researcher to review interviews for accuracy.

Participants were informed that the use of pseudonyms protects any personal information regarding their names and the names of school administrators. Alpha-numeric codes link the data to identify the individual. The researcher is the only person who possesses access to the true identity of the research participants. All virtual interviews and focus group responses were secured on the researcher's personal, password-protected computer. The real names of the participants were never used in this research. Participants submitted their journal prompts as an email attachment with no personal identifying information on the attachment. Participants did not notate any identifiable personal information when completing their journal entries.

Journal entries were used to triangulate the data gathered from the individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The journal prompt is broad and allows the participants to share as much or as little detail by the participants. The themes discovered when reviewing the data were classified according to categories discovered in the individual interviews and focus group interviews.

Based on the initial data analysis of the journal prompts and individual interviews, focus group questions were constructed to follow up on specific themes and experiences. Focus groups were another valuable way to member check as they gave the researcher an avenue to ask follow-up questions about specific points that seemed important to the participants (Patton, 1990). The focus groups were analyzed according to themes to validate the semi-structured interviews, and the data from the focus group were categorized into themes and subthemes. In both the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups, the researcher bracketed out her experiences and perceptions regarding the topic of study. This process was conducted to understand how the participants viewed the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Permissions

Permission was required by both Liberty University's IRB process and the research site. IRB approval was necessary to protect the participants who volunteered for this study. Liberty University required IRB approval prior to conducting research. Site approval was secured before the initial IRB application. Site approval was included in the initial IRB application.

Recruitment Plan

The sample pool of participants included K-8 teachers who were actively teaching at the elementary and middle school levels at SGGCS. Phenomenological studies produce a large amount of data from few participants; therefore, the researcher did not need many participants in this study (Patton, 1990). A sample size of 10-15 participants was the goal for this research study. Small sample sizes provide depth to understanding a phenomenon and valuable information related to the topic of investigation (Patton, 1990). An email to the site's teachers was mass distributed using the school's directory. The initial email introduced the study and contained the inclusion criteria for participating in this study. A flyer was also placed in the teachers' breakroom at the site. Participants were considered if they met the inclusion criteria of working with at least two administrators in their teaching careers and who are currently in a teaching role. Prospective participants were asked to provide informed consent by signing a consent form. This consent included the risks and benefits of participating in the study and was reviewed with each participant. Based on interest from the initial email, purposeful sampling was used to ensure representation from the elementary and middle school grade bands. Once an initial interview was established, snowball sampling was used to ask participants if they knew other teachers who may want to participate and offer valuable information on this topic (see Appendix F, G, and H).

The focus groups were made up of participants from the semi-structured interviews. Focus group interviews involved open-ended interviews with groups of five to eight people on specially targeted or focused issues (Patton, 1990). For this study, two virtual focus groups comprised of four teachers participated in the focus groups. Participants from the individual interviews were invited to participate in the focus groups and were grouped based on common themes found in the individual interviews. In the focus groups, the researcher asked specific questions and guided the discussion to ensure that the individuals in the focus group addressed the questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). At the onset of the focus group, the researcher requested that all participants contribute to the discussion. The purpose of conducting focus groups was to build on other participants' comments in a way that would not have been accomplished through an individual interview (Check & Schutt, 2012). The researcher asked questions, and the responses were captured using two audio recording devices. During the interview, the researcher took notes while the participants shared their experiences. Data collection and analysis occurred until saturation was reached and no new themes emerged from the participants (Patton, 1990). The term saturation is referred to when enough data is gathered to fully describe the phenomena under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When the researcher determined saturation, data collection and participant recruitment ceased (see Appendix C).

Data Collection Plan

Three data collection methods were used for this study. Data was collected through virtual individual interviews, virtual focus groups, and a private journal entry. Before data collection was analyzed, the researcher bracketed any personal preconceived judgments or perceptions about the topic from the analysis. Data collection methods in this study were analyzed through the process of epoché in which the researcher is free from perception and

judgment. This process required constant awareness by the researcher to set aside biases and prejudgments (Moustakas, 1994). Once this was accomplished, the researcher could describe participant accounts using textural language and the qualities of the experience. This was accomplished through phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Each time an experience was examined, horizontalization occurred. This constant, recurring experience allowed the researcher to revisit the participants' experiences and perceive each experience differently (Moustakas, 1994). Clustering the horizons into themes as they occurred provided the essence of the experience. The next step in analyzing transcendental phenomenologies was to describe the experience. Capturing this description is known as imaginative variation. Imaginative variation enabled the researcher to derive structural themes from textural descriptions obtained through phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). The final step was to create an essence of the phenomena from the textural and structural descriptions captured by the participants.

The interviews were designed to collect information from personal experiences and interactions with school leadership. These interactions could be positive or negative. The researcher also probed teachers on how these experiences influenced their workplace motivation. Capturing the experiences through interviews allowed the researcher to fully understand what the participants wanted to say (Check & Schutt, 2012). Focus groups were conducted after the interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the problem being studied. The purpose of the focus groups was to allow participants to hear the experiences of other teachers in the same situation and to provoke a sharing of information that was not captured in the semi-structured interviews. In the case of this research, the focus group was utilized to validate responses and refine themes from the initial interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The final method of data collection used in this study was participation in an anonymous journal entry. An open-ended journal prompt was

provided to participants so they could reply in any way they chose. This final reflection provided the researcher with a comprehensive way to validate the qualitative nature of this study through triangulation of the data collection methods (see Appendix D).

Individual Interviews

The researcher created a series of semi-structured interview questions that were used for data collection. Interviews were necessary when conducting a qualitative phenomenological study as they allow the researcher to collect data from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A semi-structured interview method was utilized to gain a deeper understanding of participants' responses. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to respond to the situation and allow new ideas to emerge due to the initial question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The validity of the semi-structured questions was established through field testing before conducting research and after IRB approval.

Participants interacted with the researcher through video conferencing methods. This choice was offered to promote participation and allowed participants more flexibility in their schedules to connect from a preferred personal device. Utilizing video conferencing methods to capture the semi-structured interviews provided the participants with flexible scheduling. Video conferencing methods also provided the researcher with the ability to record using the capabilities of the software.

The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to elicit information about the experiences of teachers who had positive or negative interactions with school administrators and the influence that these interactions have on workplace motivation (Daniëls et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2019; Herzberg et al., 2017). The semi-structured interview questions aligned with the central research question and the sub-questions. The interview questions were developed to reflect

alignment with the literature on teacher interactions with school leaders, leadership components, and workplace motivation.

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we had just met one another. CRQ
2. Can you please tell me where you live and the grade level you teach? CRQ
3. How long have you been a teacher? CRQ
4. What grade levels and subjects have you taught over your teaching career? CRQ
5. How many school administrators have you had while you have been teaching? CRQ
6. Thinking back to before you entered the teaching profession, what were some reasons why you entered the field? CRQ
7. Have your feelings about the profession changed in any way? CRQ
8. How would you describe the climate of your school? SQ2
9. What are some reasons that motivate you to remain in the teaching profession? SQ1
10. What indicators do you look for to gauge the climate of a school? SQ1
11. What school administrator practices do you perceive as supportive of your workplace motivation? SQ1
12. Can you describe any interactions with school leaders that have positively impacted your experience as a teacher? SQ1
13. What kind of interactions with school leaders have negatively impacted your experience as a teacher? SQ2
14. Have you felt your motivation to continue teaching fade over the years? What are some factors that helped you to overcome this? SQ1

15. Think about a school leader whom you most respect. Which of their strengths would you integrate if placed in a leadership position at the school level? CRQ

Questions one through six were knowledge questions used to establish rapport with the participant while gaining a basic understanding of their experience in the educational profession (Check & Schutt, 2012). These questions were strategically placed at the beginning of the interview to show interest and provide the interviewee with an avenue to talk about their careers. These questions are also designed to engage the participant in reflecting on why they entered the teaching profession. While all semi-structured interviews begin in the same manner, some questions were adjusted as necessary for each participant to gain clarity from the participant.

Questions seven through nine were designed to examine teacher satisfaction and motivation. Teachers feel supported when their psychological needs as learners and professionals are satisfied (Ford et al., 2019). Certain factors in the school environment maintain the balance between being happy and unhappy. The hygienic factors are described as dissatisfiers and are essential in preventing dissatisfaction in a school (Timmreck, 1977). These questions seek to understand the experiences of the participant's school climate as it relates to workplace motivation.

Question 10 was intended to understand teachers' experiences with supportive school administration. Teachers who have experienced feelings of burnout had their perceptions altered by supportive interactions with school administration (Ford et al., 2019). Research on supportive practices of school administrators correlated strongly with more internalized forms of motivation (Slemp et al., 2018). Further research also states the importance and value of empathetic listening and promoting emotional well-being by school administrators to teachers (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020).

Questions 11, 12, and 13 investigated specific interactions that may have contributed to the teachers' experiences. Positive experiences have been associated with fostering collaborative relationships and providing individualized concern and support (Lee & Nie, 2016). Negative experiences range from absent administration, indiscreet information sharing, undermining the dignity of persons, abuses of power, displays of favoritism, and prioritizing personal gain (Sam, 2021).

Question number 14 involved investigating a teacher's desire to continue in the field of education. Teachers who have experienced burnout have often considered leaving the field of education. Research has shown a distinction between teachers who leave the profession and those that choose to leave the school. Teachers who do not feel supported through interpersonal reasons tend to leave the school. Intrapersonal deficits related to the school district and organizational issues contribute to teachers leaving the profession (Ford et al., 2019).

The final question was designed to allow the participant to share any other information they may want to disclose at the end of the interview. Question number 15 was designed to allow the participant to share a final thought or to offer valuable insight or advice (Taylor & Youngs, 2018). This question closed the interview while allowing the participant to provide any insight that may have been provoked during the interview questions.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Before transcribing the interviews, this researcher used phenomenological epoché to disconnect from any prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under investigation (Moustakas, 1994). When the semi-structured interviews reached saturation, meaning no new information or themes emerged from interviews with participants, the interviews concluded. The in-depth individual interviews were transcribed verbatim then each

experience relevant to the experience indicated in the study was listed (see Appendix K). After transcription, phenomenological reduction was used to identify the textural language of the qualities of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The software program NVivo was used to analyze the unstructured text, audio, and video captured during the interviews and in the journal prompt. NVivo aided in the organization and coding of multiple data sources from this qualitative research study. The software reduced and eliminated codes to determine invariant constituents. This process involved the researcher reflecting on two questions: Does it contain a moment of the experience that is necessary and sufficient for understanding it? Furthermore, is it possible to abstract and label it (Moustakas, 1994)? The next phase was to cluster or place the invariant constituents into themes. All related experiences were placed together and organized according to a theme. Verbatim excerpts from the interviews were matched with a theme. Each research participant's interview was given a textural-structural description of the essence of the experience and then categorized according to the invariant constituents and themes (Moustakas, 1994). Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. The rationale for collecting and analyzing data simultaneously was to determine when the moment of saturation occurred. Saturation occurs when new interviews provide little new information to the research already collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Focus Groups

Focus groups provided an opportunity for the researcher to interact with multiple participants at the same time while encouraging dialogue amongst participants about the area being researched. Focus groups provide value for exploring complex, multi-layered concepts from the participants' perspectives. Patton suggested that focus groups are comprised of five to eight people (1990). For this study, two focus groups comprised of three to four teachers were

conducted. Patton (1999) discussed the use of focus groups to confirm concepts and expand themes revealed in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of holding a focus group discussion was to discuss certain topics that were revealed in the semi-structured interviews (Peoples, 2021). Participants from the individual interviews were invited to participate in the focus groups. In a focus group session, the researcher discusses specific topics and guides the discussion to ensure that the focus group members can answer the questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). At the onset of the focus group, the researcher requested that all participants contribute to the discussion. The purpose of holding a focus group discussion was to build on others' comments in a way that would not have been possible in an intensive interview (Check & Schutt, 2012). The researcher asked the focus group questions in this study. Responses were captured using two audio recordings while the researcher took notes (see Appendix C).

Focus Group Questions

The following questions were asked in a focus group format:

1. Tell me about an experience where you observed an unmotivated co-worker. SQ2
2. How would you describe the school leader's influence on the motivation of your colleagues? CRQ
3. Describe an experience in which your school leader has supported you? SQ1
4. How do you experience motivation as it relates to school leaders? CRQ
5. How do experiences with school leaders influence your collective job motivation? CRQ

Questions one and two were designed to have participants share about an experience they may have observed with colleagues. These questions were strategically placed at the beginning of the focus group and allowed participants to express their opinions naturally (Check & Schutt, 2012). Placing these questions at the beginning of the session allowed the participants to get comfortable with the focus group format while discussing an indirect personal experience.

Questions three and four were intended to understand how specific experiences with school leaders have resulted in teachers feeling supported. Each teacher has a unique perspective on workplace motivation because of their own experiences with school leaders. Teachers require support in various ways, such as through encouragement and the recognition of achievement (Daniëls et al., 2020). Research on supportive leadership practices shows the value of leaders who foster the intellectual motivation of teachers (Da'as, 2020). Research by Holme et al. (2016) showed that positive experiences could reinforce professional competency and motivation for teachers to remain in the field of education.

The final focus group question was designed for participants to share how school leaders may influence the collective motivation of teaching staff. Ingsih et al. (2021) defined successful leaders as individuals who can motivate and satisfy employees in a workplace. Question five focused on specific experiences that may influence the CTE of teachers. Research on CTE shows that when it is greater among teaching staff, deeper implementation of initiatives occurs, as does the receptiveness to new ideas (Donohoo, 2018). Prioritizing teachers' emotional health and well-being is a prerequisite for teachers to implement successful teaching and learning practices (Coleman, 2020).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Phenomenological epoché was practiced for the researcher to set aside any bias and prejudgments when analyzing the focus group responses (Moustakas, 1994). As in the semi-structured interviews, the researcher bracketed out her own experiences and perceptions regarding the topic of study when analyzing the focus group data. This process was done to determine how the participants viewed the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Focus group data were analyzed in the same way as the semi-structured interviews. The focus

groups were analyzed using phenomenological reduction and then organized into themes. The themes from the focus groups were categorized and coded according to textural themes (Moustakas, 1994).

Journal Prompts

A journal entry was collected as part of the data collection plan for this qualitative study. Participants were invited to reflect on their experiences with school leaders and share them in an open-ended journal prompt. Specifically, participants were asked to reflect on a pivotal moment when a single interaction with a school leader directly impacted them. This journal entry allowed teachers to share their experiences in their own written words and served as a primary source of information that provided a deeper understanding of specific interactions with school leaders. Through this journal prompt, the researcher invited all participants to contribute anonymously to a personal experience with school leaders (see Appendix D).

Journal Prompt Data Analysis Plan

Journal blog entries were used to triangulate data gathered from the individual semi-structured and focus group interviews (see Appendix J). The journal prompt was broad and allowed the participants to share as much or as little detail as they desired. Themes were discovered when reviewing the data and were sorted according to categories discovered in the semi-structured and focus group interviews.

Data Synthesis

After the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts were completed, data coding began. The in-depth individual interviews were transcribed verbatim. From this transcript, each experience was examined and considered as part of a transcendental-phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). The next step of data analysis was to read each

interview and delete any information that was not needed, like repeating statements and non-essential language such as "um," "uh," and "you know." The interview transcripts were coded and assigned to a word or short phrase that captured the essence of the participants' statements (Saldaña, 2021). Moustakas describes this process as capturing the essence of the experience and categorizing it according to the invariant constituents and themes (1994). This initial coding of transcripts is referred to as first cycle coding and was applied to the individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts (Saldaña, 2021). NVivo software was used to aid in the analysis of the phenomenological data and was used to analyze data from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts.

After examining the first cycle codes, further analysis was conducted to condense similar codes together. From this list of generated codes, the researcher used imaginative variation to create a structural description of what is being experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) recommended that researchers answer two guiding questions when recording statements: Does it contain a moment of the experience that is necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding the phenomenon, and is it possible to abstract and label it (Moustakas, 1994)?

After the first cycle coding was completed, the transcripts were analyzed, and codes were organized into categories and themes (Saldaña, 2021). For this research, all related experiences were grouped into categorical codes and clustered into themes. All codes for the three data collection methods were organized into categories. During data collection, preliminary jottings were conducted during the semi-structured interviews and focus groups to capture ideas for analytic consideration while the study progressed (Saldaña, 2021). When listening to the transcripts of the interviews, analytic memoing was used to synthesize and integrate ideas simultaneously as data collection and analysis progressed. Saldaña provided 15 prompts to

consider and reflect upon when analyzing data. For this research, the participants' actions, reactions, and interactions were noted, and the statements that the researcher found intriguing, surprising, and disturbing (Saldaña, 2021). Analytic memoing added value to the data by providing additional concept-generating theories about the topic of study (Saldaña, 2021). When no new themes were revealed after interviewing the participants, the researcher knew that saturation had occurred. Saturation refers to the point where no new information is being gleaned from the interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The final step in data synthesis was to reveal the essence of the experience from the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994).

The focus groups were also analyzed according to themes. The same process of reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of the descriptions provided the essence of the experiences' meaning. The themes from the focus groups were categorized and coded according. In both the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups, the researcher bracketed out her own experiences and perceptions regarding the topic of study. This process was done to understand how the participants viewed the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Saldaña (2021) shared that utilizing NVivo was appropriate for novice qualitative researchers and for studies that prioritize the participant's voice.

Journal blog entries were also used to triangulate the data gathered from the semi-structured and focus group interviews. The prompt was broad and allowed the participants to share as much or as little detail as they wanted. The themes discovered when reviewing the data were assigned a code and sorted according to categories discovered in the semi-structured and focus group interviews.

The data from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal entries created a general description of the meaning of the participants' experiences (Peoples, 2021). These general experiences were organized to each research question. The goal of triangulating the data from semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and the journal prompt were to unite the major phenomenological themes into a cohesive description of experiences (Peoples, 2021). After themes were captured from the three approaches, member checking was employed to ensure that the essence of the phenomena was an accurate representation.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research requires alternative methods than those utilized in quantitative research. More than one data collection method was used to increase the trustworthiness and eliminate the potential for unobtrusive data. Interpreting the meanings and significance of data is heavily inferential, and researchers must approach making interpretations carefully (Hatch, 2007). While quantitative researchers establish trustworthiness using statistical means, qualitative researchers address trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Naturalistic studies are described as a paradigm for inquiry, with the study's outcome being a working hypothesis (Guba, 1981). These four components of trustworthiness for qualitative research align with their quantitative counterparts. Credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability align with internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity respectfully (Guba, 1981). This researcher used multiple data collection methods to increase this study's trustworthiness through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and private journal entries.

Credibility

The credibility of any research study refers to the researcher's ability to connect the findings to the problem. In the case of a qualitative phenomenological study, the study's credibility depends on the time spent in the field, the detailed description, and the closeness of the researcher to the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These processes validate the problem of study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality. Credibility depends on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher. To achieve credibility, the researcher used member checking. Member checking involves soliciting the participants to reflect on the accuracy of the account developed by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Conducting member checks is a powerful practice for establishing credibility (Guba, 1981). After data was collected, this researcher approached key participants who participated in the journal prompts, interviews, and focus groups. These participants provided a verbal analysis to determine if the data analyses from the study provided an accurate portrayal of their contribution.

Transferability

Transferability is related to the external validity of a study and is concerned with the study's findings and its applications to other situations (Shenton, 2004). Transferability in this study is promoted by collecting a detailed description of data and the specific description of the methods used to study a particular group of people (Shenton, 2004). This research provided a rich description of the participants, the research site, and the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher's goal was to provide a thorough description of the context of this study to conduct future studies and achieve transferable results.

Dependability

Focus groups and individual interviews promoted the dependability and confirmability of this research. Dependability and confirmability were established through auditing the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process and methods for this research were described in rich detail to allow future researchers to repeat the work (Shenton, 2004). While the same results may not be achieved due to different participants' experiences, the study's dependability was accomplished by providing a rich description of the research design and its implementation, detail of data collection, and a reflective appraisal of the research (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), which can be demonstrated through a detailed description of the procedures undertaken for the study. Dependability is accomplished through an inquiry audit, which at Liberty University occurs with a thorough review of the process and the research products by the dissertation committee and the program director.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the qualitative researcher's concern for objectivity (Shenton, 2004). Qualitative research seeks to confirm the data by establishing the value of the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation was used to establish confirmability in this research. Triangulation involves collecting data from various perspectives, using various methods, and drawing upon various sources, so the researcher's preconceptions are rigorously tested (Guba, 1981). This research used the information gathered in the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal posts to cross-check themes and establish confirmability.

Ethical Considerations

Several measures were used to minimize ethical issues and minimize risk to participants. The most significant potential risk posed to the participants was their answers regarding positive and negative interactions with school administrators. Teachers may be hesitant to disclose any information to the researcher for fear of repercussions. To minimize this risk and provide assurance to participants, the researcher did not have any pre-existing professional relationships with the administrators or teachers in the site identified for the study. The consent form is listed in Appendix A.

Participants were informed that the use of pseudonyms protects any information regarding their names and the names of school administrators. Alpha-numeric codes link the data to identify the individual. The researcher was the only person with access to documentation regarding the true identity of the research participants. All interviews and focus group responses were secured on the researcher's personal, password-protected computer. The real names of the participants were never used in this research. In addition to giving participants pseudonyms, the researcher deleted any reference of the participants' names and schools. This extra measure ensured that participants could not be identified. The journal prompt was submitted directly to the researcher with no indefinable personal information. Participants did not have to record personal information when completing their journal entries.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants could remove themselves from the study at any point during the research. Permission was obtained from each participant before data collection began. There were no requirements to participate in all three data collection methods in the research. Participants were invited to join in as much or as little as they felt comfortable. IRB approval was secured before the researcher could conduct research at the

school site. The researcher followed the protocol to conduct research at the site. Once participants were obtained, the researcher addressed any questions that the participants had regarding the study. Participants were also provided with the researcher's contact information if questions arose later.

Summary

Previous research on teacher experiences with school administrators has indicated that school administrators can affect teacher motivation (Daniëls et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2019; Herzberg et al., 2017). However, researchers did not describe teacher experiences when interacting with school leaders in a K-8 setting. In addition, previous research does not describe interpersonal relations in depth. The goal of the study was to fill this gap in existing research. Workplace motivation is a facet of Herzberg's motivation theory utilized as the foundation to connect teachers' experiences to workplace motivation (Herzberg et al., 2017). This qualitative transcendental phenomenology methodology was selected for the study because the research questions addressed teachers' experiences concerning interpersonal interactions and workplace motivation.

The qualitative methodology selected to investigate this phenomenon provided depth to the literature based on the participant experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The teachers selected for this study came from a K-8 private school located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Participants were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. Research commenced once appropriate IRB approval was secured, and site permission was obtained. The researcher chose to conduct the research at this site because it contains active K-8 teachers who have experience in private and public schools with multiple school leaders. Pseudonyms were used for all participants. School administrators were mentioned by name in the interviews but

were also protected. The rationale for these protection measures was to protect the participants because they were asked to describe personal experiences regarding specific interactions with their supervisors. Data was collected from individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal entries and secured on the researcher's external hard drive utilizing password protection measures to gain access to files. Participants were asked to review their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. After interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, they were coded and categorized based on themes. Trustworthiness was established through member checks for credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, which contributed to the study's validity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The next chapter presents the findings and the analysis of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The transcendental phenomenological approach used for this study allowed the researcher to bracket out any personal bias through the epoché process to examine the unique and individual experiences of the teachers in this study (Moustakas, 1994). Chapter Four presented the findings of this study and results based on themes. This chapter describes the 10 teachers who participated in this study. In addition to participant descriptions, this chapter contains a table (see Table 1) of the information gathered from the individual interviews. Data collection and analysis were conducted as described in Chapter Three. The themes and subthemes discovered as part of this research are represented in tables. Additionally, outlier data was noted as part of the findings. The chapter concludes with the results from the study in the context of the central research question, sub-questions, and discussion of the themes.

Participants

The following section includes a narrative summary of each of the 10 participants in this study. These summaries provide insight into how participants felt about being an educator, their background in education, and their experiences with school leaders. Participants were identified as eligible to participate in this study if they had worked with more than one school leader and were currently in a teaching role at the research site. Ten participants volunteered for the study after receiving a recruitment letter from the researcher.

Through individual interviews, focus groups, and the completion of a journal prompt, the researcher was able to construct the essence of each participant's experience as it related to how

school leaders influence workplace motivation. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants in the study. Verbatim quotes were used to share the lived experiences of these teachers and how school leaders influenced workplace motivation (Moustakas, 1994). Participants were recruited by placing a flyer in the teachers' lounge at the research site. Each teacher in the school was emailed information regarding the study following permission from the site. Participants contacted the researcher to participate in the study. After reviewing if the potential participant met the inclusion criteria for the study, a consent form was provided via email. A paper copy of the consent form was also provided upon request. Participants either returned the consent form to the researcher via email or in person. After one week, a follow-up email was sent to potential participants who did not respond to the initial recruitment email. The aforementioned recruitment process described produced 10 female teachers who met the study's inclusion requirements. Responses from the individual interviews and focus groups yielded common themes amongst participants as an indicator that saturation was achieved.

Participants in this study were all female. The teaching experience varied from 2 to 30 years of classroom experience. As a group, the participants in this study had a combined 78 years of teaching experience. While participants in this study taught in a K-8 private school setting, there was a representation of all grade levels in public and private school settings from past teaching experiences. Three participants with the most teaching experience have taught in public and private schools in grades ranging from elementary to high school. In addition, these same participants have worked with eight or more school leaders in their careers. Seven participants exceeded the minimum exclusion criteria of working with more than one school principal or an administrator. Table 1 describes the teaching experiences of the research participants.

Table 1*Teacher Participant Information*

Pseudonym	Total Years of Experience	Number of Principals	Content Areas Taught Over Career	Grade Levels Taught Over Career
Elizabeth	15	10	Elementary/Music	4 th – 6 th
Abigail	4	2	Science/P.E.	K-8 th
Deborah	11	3	Math/Library Computers	K - 8 th
Margaret	4	2	History/Religion	6 th – 8 th
Jodie	30	13	English Language Arts	6 th – 12 th
Veronica	4	3	Kindergarten	K
Angela	2	2	Math/English Language Arts	6 th – 8 th
Barbara	8	3	Math	3 rd – 8 th
Ann	7	3	Math	6 th – 8 th
Faith	20	8	Resource	K – 8 th

Elizabeth

Elizabeth has taught for 15 years in public and private school settings. She has taught in three different states and a total of seven schools in her career. Elizabeth taught general education in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, and she has also taught music as an elective. The majority of her teaching career has been in the fifth grade in Title I Schools. She currently

teaches fifth grade at SGGCS. She has worked under 10 school principals and 7 assistant principals because she has worked in many schools.

When asked what motivates her to remain in the teaching profession, Elizabeth stated, "I couldn't see myself doing anything else but teaching. I still love teaching." When asked about positive interactions with school leaders, Elizabeth replied, "setting clear standards and then leaving me alone." She further elaborated this statement by adding, "trust me to perform my job to the best of my ability. If problems arise, being able to talk to them [school leaders] and problem solve together with them."

Abigail

Abigail has taught for four years and has worked under two school leaders. She is a middle school teacher and teaches multiple subjects at SGGCS. In her teaching career, she has taught middle school math and science. For her science courses, she taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. She also taught physical education from preschool to eighth grade in addition to middle school science. As an extra duty, Abigail is the athletic director of the school's sports programs.

Abigail entered the teaching profession to make a difference by helping people and enjoys working hands-on. She shared, "I feel that my students care that I'm there and I can help them individually in the school and emotionally." When asked what positive interactions with school leaders influence her motivation, Abigail shared that frequent checking in by school leaders was supportive. She shared an experience where a school leader was not supportive:

Not only was watching to make sure I was doing a good job, but he was definitely coming in from a supportive angle, so it made me want to try harder to make sure I was doing the best I could.

Deborah

Deborah has taught her entire career at SGGCS. For the past 11 years, she has taught library and computers for kindergarten through eighth grade. In addition to teaching library and computers, she teaches middle school math for sixth and seventh grade as well. Deborah has worked with three school leaders during her time teaching.

Deborah described her decision to enter the teaching profession as opportunistic. As her children became school-aged, she worked part-time at the school and then moved into a full-time position to be closer to her children. She is motivated to remain in the teaching profession because of the administration. She expressed how she enjoyed working with "a group of people who have the same vision and teach kids how to perform and be strong enough to withstand some of the influences." When asked about supportive administrative practices, Deborah said, "the ones where they'll back you up and very strongly take care of their people first." She further described how teachers will "shine if they [school leaders] take care of them."

Margaret

Margaret has taught for four years and has worked under two administrators during her tenure at SGGCS. She is a middle school teacher who teaches religion and history and has taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Margaret went into the teaching profession because she enjoys being around children. She described her passion for education when she said:

I enjoy seeing them learn new experiences, new concepts and I really just try to bring out the love of learning that is inside every kid, whether they know they have it inside them or not, just like seeing them grow in their educational experiences.

Margaret's primary reason for continuing to teach is for her students, and she is not interested in pursuing another profession. When asked about school leaders' practices that are supportive, she

shared, "[I] likes knowing they have my back and don't take the side of the other party." She also said she "just likes knowing that they are there and that we can go and talk to them if we are having any issue or difficulty."

Jodie

Jodie is a secondary English teacher at SGGCS, teaching sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. She has worked in the education field for 30 years, and her experience as a teacher includes public, private, and Catholic schools in middle and high school settings. In her expansive teaching career, Jodie has worked with 13 school leaders. Jodie recalls only wanting to be a teacher and said, "I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

When asked about her experience with supportive administrator practices, she expressed words of affirmation. She stated, "letting us [teachers] know that we're doing a good job." She also shared that many interactions are informal and related them to interactions in the classroom when she said, "students learn more with those little interactions." Jodie emphasized that her experiences with school leaders were not often major incidences but instead "constant, little touching base, and hearing your issue" type of interactions.

Veronica

Veronica is a kindergarten teacher and has been teaching for four years. Before stepping into the lead teacher role in kindergarten, she worked as a preschool assistant for two years. As a classroom teacher, she has worked with three school leaders. Before becoming a teacher, Veronica volunteered in a Montessori setting. She found the process of how children learn at a young age to be interesting and then furthered her studies in education. Veronica loves the profession and enjoys being a teacher because of her students. She stated, "I sometimes relate to

children better. I'm able to communicate with them and connect with them because I understand the psychology part of it and how to make those connections and relationships."

Veronica stressed the importance of personal relationships when asked about supportive school leaders. She shared her own positive experience of how she could "walk into the door of their office whenever I need to or address any concerns that I have." She also shared that positive interactions with school leaders have impacted her experience as a teacher, especially when staff feels like they can approach school leaders with anything.

Angela

Angela has taught in multiple education settings, including a homeschooling group, as a substitute teacher, and middle school teacher in a private school. She has taught third and fourth-grade science, music, and art. As a substitute, she taught grammar and literature. Angela currently teaches sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade math and literature. She worked for two school leaders during her time as a classroom teacher. Angela recalls that her path to becoming a teacher was both a calling and an opportunity. Her calling to homeschool her children became an opportunity when a teaching position was offered at SGGCS.

Angela shared that a substantial pay raise and the remittance of her children's tuition were motivating. However, she ultimately remained in education due to being called to the field. When asked what school administrator practices she perceived as supportive, she shared, "asking feedback about what professional development would be helpful for us [teachers] and actually getting help for us." She also stated that it would be helpful if the school leaders recognized the need for onboarding new teaching staff.

Barbara

Barbara majored in math in college, and when a position opened at the school to teach math, she accepted it. She has been teaching math at SGGCS for eight years. She teaches grades three to eight, with most of her time at the middle school level. Math classes are differentiated at SGGCS; therefore, Barbara splits some grade levels into a higher or lower-level group for each grade. She and her classroom teacher teach the higher or lower level for each grade level.

Barbara shared that she enjoys teaching moments when "kids are struggling, and they finally get it." She described these moments as "joys that I will keep" and when teaching is no longer enjoyable, she will retire. When asked about her experiences with supportive school leaders, she shared that school leaders who are helpful "offer to take it [tasks] off your plate." She also said that school leaders who "got your back" when parent concerns arise by never undermining you in front of parents were some supportive practices.

Ann

Ann has been teaching for eight years at SGGCS and has served in various roles, including teaching and school administration. She has taught math and social studies for seventh and eighth grades and has worked for three different school leaders. Ann entered the teaching profession because of her love for children. She said, "my absolute love of kids and being able to do something with them and be able to share my knowledge to help them grow both academically and personally," when describing her experience as a teacher and working with children.

From her experience, Ann shared that the biggest impact that a school leader can make on a teacher is by positively providing support and criticism. She elaborated, "I think all of us educators want to improve and grow in that respect," regarding school leaders supporting

teachers professionally. Like other participants, Ann highlighted school leaders who support teachers regarding interactions with parents. Ann shared that when a school leader shows support, "it goes a long way" in terms of motivation.

Faith

Faith has been in the teaching profession for 20 years. She has taught and supported students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. Her experience includes being a resource teacher, art teacher, and classroom teacher. She has experience in early childhood education as a preschool teacher and working in an educational textbook company. Currently, Faith is the resource teacher at SGGCS and works with students in all grades, kindergarten through eighth grade. When asked what brought her to education, Faith shared, "everything kept bringing me back to working with kids. I love it."

Faith expressed that she feels supported when school leaders have assisted her professionally and personally. Besides trusting teachers' decisions in the classroom, school leaders must understand the value of family. Faith described a personal issue she had several years ago and how her school leader responded to the situation. She said:

I've watched when whether it be me or another teacher has a family situation, being very supportive and being ready to jump right in and even if they're the principal. [They] take over your class if they have to so that the kids are taken care of and, you don't have to worry about it. Because of that, you always feel like you want to work harder.

Results

Through analysis of the individual interviews, focus group dialogue, and the individual journal prompts authored by the participants, themes and subthemes emerged from the data collection methods. Table 2 shows the themes and subthemes that emerged to form the results of

this study. Many participants shared the same experiences related to their school leaders and their influence on workplace motivation. Triangulation of the data sources provided reliability and ensures validity for this qualitative study as the researcher developed themes and subthemes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using Moustakas' (1994) transcendental approach to qualitative research, the following themes were developed: effective communication, values staff, support teachers, demonstrating desired behaviors, and negative interactions. The researcher bracketed her experiences working with school leaders and the influence it may have had on workplace motivation from the research.

NVivo software allowed the researcher to upload semi-structured interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, and journal prompts for analysis. After reading the transcripts and analyzing them through multiple cycles, codes were developed concerning the central research question and sub questions. Themes and subthemes were assigned based on the codes established from the three forms of data collection in this study. See Table 2 for the themes and subthemes.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Effective Communication	Transparent Shares Vision and Expectations Easy to Access
Values Staff	Professional Recognition Personal Care and Concern Helpful Utilizes the Strength of Teachers
Supports Teachers	Prioritizes Teacher Perspectives on Issues Values the Input of Teachers Professional Trust

Demonstrates Desired Behaviors	Professional Present and Visible in the School Setting Positive Attitude and Outlook Responds to Conflict
Negative Interaction	Avoids Conflict Unilateral Decisions Displays Favoritism Belittles Staff

Effective Communication

The first theme identified through the horizontalization of data was that teachers desired their school leaders to be effective communicators. Teachers expressed that effective communication between the school leader and the teacher is necessary for teachers to have a common understanding of the school vision. This theme emerged in all three methods of data collection. Teachers with many years of experience and those with only a few years of teaching experience expressed that effective communication by the school leader influences their workplace motivation. This can be seen in the accounts shared by Jodie and Faith. Jodie shared her overall thoughts on a school leader's communication effort when she said the following:

I think it's that communication piece, about being approachable and being personable. I think that's something that's hard to learn. I think just being able to make others feel included and welcome and being able to give them the support and make them feel like they have the support.

This sentiment of ineffective communication was also shared through experiences described by Faith. When asked to describe how the school leader influences the motivation of colleagues, Faith said that leaders "constantly change expectations, and you're just floundering to

trying and keep up." She continued, "You do what you're supposed to be doing, and you're just not sure what that is." Three subthemes emerged as teachers continued to talk about effective communication: leaders who are transparent, leaders who share their vision and expectations with teachers, and those that are easy to access were subthemes that emerged from effective communication.

Transparent

Transparency is another common theme that teachers expressed during the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups. Teachers expressed the desire to be apprised of issues and concerns impacting them directly. Teachers also expressed the desire for the school leader to communicate about issues, news, or events occurring in the school community or district. Faith expressed appreciation when school leaders "make sure that things that we should be aware of, we are made aware of, and not trying to hide things that would affect us directly." She further stated, "it's good that the administrator is open and honest with us so that we know what we're dealing with." Margaret described an experience when transparency from the school leader made her feel supported when she was made aware of a situation that involved her. She said:

I would say leadership's support for me has been more along the lines of bouncing ideas off like, 'hey, they just want to let you know that this happened.' Keep everyone in this circle in case it comes back, and it comes to the principal. And same with me, 'be on the lookout for XYZ and let me know if anything comes out of it.'

Deborah shares an experience where her school leader provided explanations for decisions being made at the school. She expressed:

Morale among the staff was strong prior; however, this only made the work environment a much happier place. We were assured that our principal and business manager were

supportive. I believe this style of leadership, taking care of your people, is what makes our school successful.

Shares Vision and Expectations

Eight teachers shared accounts about the school leader effectively communicating common visions and expectations. This led to the development of the subtheme of leaders who share their vision and expectations with their teachers. Leaders who share and effectively communicate a common vision provide teachers with direction to perform to their fullest potential. Understanding expectations from the onset brings clarity to all staff members. Deborah described her experience with school leadership in the following way, "I think sometimes just having the leader share their vision so we [teachers] don't have to have ESP (extrasensory perception) to try to figure out what's going on."

Deborah further shared how sharing a common vision and expectations benefited her and her colleagues. She said:

In the last five to six years, it would be the administration. It would be the coworkers and working with a group of people who have the same vision of what we think or how we would like to see the world and how to teach these kids.

Veronica discussed that school leaders who communicate their vision and expectations with staff are more effective. She described her experience, "We're all a team, so we should all be sort of equal togetherness and equal partners in whatever it is that we have to handle."

Easy to Access

The subtheme of access to school leaders emerged in conjunction with effective communication. Teachers like knowing that their administrator is accessible to them. The ability for them to approach their school leader to talk about an idea or issue is important for teachers.

When speaking about being able to informally speak to her school leader Margaret stated, "just knowing that they are there. You know, we could go and talk to them if we were having any issue or difficulty. To know that the door is open for the most part." During a focus group, Jodie referenced easy access when she said:

You want to be able to walk into the room and feel like you can say whatever it is that you want to say. You still want to be able to have a relationship and have that open door where you feel supported.

Abigail, a teacher with four years of teaching experience, expressed the following about quickly accessing the school leader:

I would stop by all the time and ask questions and they both had a very much an open-door policy. You never really had to feel like you had to make an appointment to discuss things, so it was always really positive.

Values Staffs

Teachers want their opinions to be considered and valued by the school leader. Barbara described an experience when her school leader sought her advice when she shared, "My school leader actually listens to me and sometimes actually seeks my advice, which is kind of fun. Sometimes I don't know what she's really looking for because I don't think I know anything more than her." The theme of valuing staff contained three related subthemes of professional recognition, personal care and concern, and helpfulness. Teachers felt valued by their school leaders when they were recognized for their efforts as a teacher or received professional recognition for their efforts. School leaders who showed care and concern for their teachers found ways to make teachers feel valued. Teachers also felt valued by school leaders when the leader provided help to them or helped others in the school.

Professional Recognition

Teachers expressed that they value recognition from school leaders. All participants shared this sentiment. Interestingly, the participants shared that they did not need formal or elaborate ways to be recognized. Instead, informal communication between the teacher and the school leader was highly motivating and increased feelings of being valued. Jodie shared that she works harder for school leaders who notice her work when she said, "You feel motivated if you feel valued, and you don't need a special award every month." She further described that just a word from the school leader or the school leader noticing something in the classroom was motivating. She elaborated, "I saw you do this in your classroom, and it was great!" During the focus group, Elizabeth added to Jodie's comment about not needing a special award to feel recognized professionally. She said, "We [teachers] don't need a special word every month. Just a word of I saw this in your classroom. That was great! I'll bend over backwards for an administrator like that."

Margaret shared about an experience in which a school leader made her feel valued professionally when they left a note for her. She provided examples such as, "I appreciate you, you're doing a great job, [and] thanks for doing that." Margaret described how these small encounters with school leaders influenced her motivation. She said, "I think that it's been a big factor in keeping on in the hard moments of the school year." She further stated:

I think sometimes we do so much and we're giving, giving, and giving. When that's not recognized, we kind of get a little bit down. We've been doing so much, and is anyone noticing everything's being done? When the school leader gives a head nod or a shout-out, that does help to bring up the motivation.

Aside from verbal ways of showing professional recognition, participants felt supported when their school leader advocated for them as professionals regarding salary. Deborah described how the school leader worked with the budget office and restructured the pay scales to be fair and align with the diocesan standards. She stated, "that made a huge difference," which led to feeling valued as an educator. Angela shared she felt valued when she received a decent pay raise. She further said that pay does not matter if "morale is great and leadership is effective, willing, and happy to see you thrive."

Personal Care and Concern

The subtheme of personal care and concern emerged from the parent theme of valuing staff. Most teachers expressed that they found it motivating when the school leaders expressed care and concern for staff on a personal level. Teachers expressed that they felt motivated by school leaders who understand the importance of family. Ann noted her perspective in both teaching and leadership roles when sharing:

I would think that of all the qualities and all of the things that I consider that a good leader to do, it's the care and concern that I have for those that work for me or work around me at the end of the day. That's all that really matters. We all obviously are here to do a job and to do a really great job. How we treat one another trickles down.

Margaret shared a deeply personal experience of losing a family member during the school year and how her school leader helped her to prioritize family over the profession. She noted:

My principal helped me realize that I needed to prioritize myself at times too and needed to be with my family at that time. I contribute his advice about self-care to helping me get through our Covid times rather well as far as the work-life balance.

Faith also shared a personal experience where her school leader valued her on a personal level during a serious health issue. She recalled, "I have had a serious health issue a couple years back. And the principal had the whole school praying for me and bent over backwards making sure things were covered while I had to be out on medical leave." Faith observed her school leader doing this with other teachers as well when it comes to personal family situations. Feeling valued on a personal level makes one "feel like you want to work harder" for leaders who show care and concern for colleagues.

Helpful

The subtheme of helpful emerged from the parent theme of valuing teachers. Most teachers said they valued a school leader who was helpful. Teachers expressed appreciation and feelings of motivation when school leaders helped them with tasks or reduced their task load. Abigail recalled an experience when her school leader helped her when she said, "She saw that I was struggling and helped to work things out with me. She jumped right in and didn't make me feel bad about it."

Faith described an interaction:

Being very supportive and being ready to jump right in and, even if they're the principal. [They] take over your class if they have to so that the kids are taken care of, and you don't have to worry about it.

Barbara described an experience when her school leader was helpful in problem-solving technology issues in her classroom. She valued his help even though he was the school leader at the time and had many other responsibilities.

Ann described an experience when she observed the school leader helping other teachers by guiding them and recognizing teachers when they needed help. Faith commented that teachers

often put in more work hours than they are compensated. She said that school leaders who notice the efforts "recognize that you're human and they are going to be there to help instead of chastise you." Faith stated that this helpful approach "goes a long way" regarding professional support and being helpful.

Utilizes the Strengths of the Teachers

The final subtheme that emerged from school leaders who show professional support for teachers was using the teacher's individual strengths for the school's good. Teachers shared that they valued school leaders who realized that their staff has a variety of strengths to offer the school community. Elizabeth shared about a teaching experience and how she approached her school leader about her concern:

In my second year of teaching, I got to work with the learning-disabled inclusive class, and I quickly realized that is not my strength. So, I talked to the administrator. The following year, they gave me the gifted cluster and that's where I kind of found my niche. This gave me an opportunity that really helped me grow as a teacher.

All participants in this study referenced how school leaders who use the strengths of their teachers get better outcomes for the school community. Deborah shared this point in practical terms when she said, "letting the staff constantly be known of opportunities so that they feel invited, especially with technology and emails and stuff like that." She further shared that allowing staff members to volunteer for opportunities that are of interest to them who have the talents to do is ideal. Jodie expanded on Deborah's comment when she said, "the administrator sometimes has to realize that maybe a particular teacher may not be the person that can run an after-school club. Instead, they could do something else."

Margaret shared a personal experience from her initial interview where multiple teaching positions were open in the middle school. She shared that there was a position for science, math, and history. She expressed that the school leader gave her the history position because he recognized it was her strength. She said:

He tells me that he's leaning more towards history because he saw the passion that was there for history and that I was more comfortable with it. Just knowing, he was able to read me gave me that self-confidence that I can do this.

Angela added to this subtheme when she said, "I found that leadership at my particular school understands the varied gifts and allows us to discover, develop, and exercise our gifts for the good of our littler members of the body of Christ."

Supports Teachers

All teachers described instances where the school leader advocated for teachers professionally and personally. Demonstrating this support to teachers in different ways was highly motivating for teachers. Deborah described an experience in which her school leader advocated for the teaching staff of the school:

When we did get a new administrator, we just got a new business manager. And the two took care of the people, and they restructured the whole pace grade scale to be fair to align it with the diocesan standards.

Three subthemes emerged from the theme of support teachers. These subthemes were school leaders who prioritize the teacher's perspective, value teachers' input, and trust teachers to professionally deliver instruction to students.

Prioritizes the Perspective of the Teacher

The subtheme of school leaders who prioritize the teacher's perspective came from experiences where the school leader believed what the teacher said. Most teachers shared a specific experience where a school leader supported the teacher in potentially contentious situations. Barbara shared an experience with multiple school leaders where she experienced support:

The last two administrators have been very supportive. When a parent has a complaint, they will never talk to you in front of the parent. If you need to be told afterwards, it is done in private and not in front of the parent.

Deborah described an experience in her classroom when she gave a consequence to her students, and many parents did not agree. The parents then complained about her to the school leader. Instead of taking the parents' side, the school leader supported the teacher's decision and told her, "I'm going to back you up on your decision." The school leader provided her guidance on alternative actions to take if a similar situation should arise in the future. Deborah felt supported by this experience because she had not had a school leader support her in this way before. She said, "after being there eight years for somebody to say, I've got your back and I'll take care of you. That was really kind of cool."

Faith shared a similar experience where the school leader sought the teacher out to get the whole story regarding a situation. She expressed knowing your school leader "has your back" is a big motivator. Faith also shared that it is important for the school leader and the teacher to have a "united front and be on the same page" regarding issues with parents and students.

Values Input of Teachers

Another common subtheme that emerged from the supportive theme was school leaders who valued the input of their teachers. When school leaders consider the input of their teachers

in decision making, it can positively impact teachers. Knowing that their voice is being heard is highly motivating for teachers. Faith mused, "I think most people respond well when they know that their inputs being considered before a decision or something major to being done." Barbara recalled an experience where her current leader asked her for advice. She said:

My school leader actually listens to me, not that my other administrator didn't. But she sometimes actually seeks my advice, which is kind of fun. Sometimes I don't know what she's really looking for because I don't think I know anything more than the average bear. But it's kind of nice to be asked.

Professional Trust

Another subtheme that was directly connected to the theme of supporting teachers was trusting teachers professionally to do their job of teaching and mentoring students. Participants shared that they feel supported when the school leader trusts them to teach their content and develop learners with autonomy. Veronica shared her experience with her school leader on the topic of professional trust. She noted, "It's a nice thing to know that you are trusted at your job. You know, she [school leader] trusts us to do our jobs. She doesn't have to hover and micromanage us."

Elizabeth shared an experience when she was a new teacher at a school and was never observed by her school leader. The group of students she taught engaged in challenging behaviors, and she knew that if she was not doing a good job, she would have heard about it from the school leader. At the end of this particular school year, Elizabeth recalled what her school leader said to her, "The best I can say is that I never heard from a parent about you." That comment was meant as a compliment coming from the school leader. Elizabeth recalled that in

that particular school year, no one knew what she was doing but trusted her that she was doing it well.

Veronica shared that it was motivating for her to know that her school leader trusted her to be professional when talking to other teachers. Her school leader provided a space where teachers could talk to each other without being monitored. Veronica described this experience when she said, "I think that being able to share that with each other doesn't really have anything to do with necessarily the school leadership. But, allowing us to do that."

Demonstrates Desired Behaviors

The fourth theme that emerged in this study was the participants' perception of the school leader's behavior. Specifically, when the school leader engaged in behaviors that were perceived as positive leadership behaviors. All teachers shared experiences and feelings when they witnessed the school leader professionally interacting with others and engaging with the school community. These perceived behaviors emerged in individual interviews and focus group sessions. Deborah offered a unique perspective about how school leaders modeled desired behaviors for staff when she said, "for administrators, sometimes it should be more just about modeling and setting the tone for what we don't say. You can say more by not saying something." This theme developed the following subthemes: professional behavior, leaders who are present and visible in the school setting, leaders who have a positive attitude and outlook, and leaders who respond to conflict.

Professional Behavior

Participants shared experiences on how their school leaders behaved under challenging situations. This behavior was considered desirable to teachers and influenced workplace motivation when teachers observed their school leader behaving to the standards of a person

leading a school. Barbara shared a quality that she found to be professional as it related to her school leader. She said, "The ability to remain calm and to say something appropriate, correct, and logical." Abigail also shared professional traits that she perceived as positive when she described her school leader as "confidence and being sure of everything." She further described school leaders who exude confidence as "looking with they're 100% sure and ready to go." She described these behaviors as qualities that "everyone respects."

Teachers acknowledged that their ideas or opinions may sometimes be aligned with the school leaders' ideas. Teachers valued collegiate discussions when there were differences in opinions. Faith shared her opinion on school leaders who are able to have a professional discussion with teaching staff when she said:

I actually kind of enjoy when someone has a different opinion because I like to listen and think, that might be a way I can think about doing it differently. If a leader is willing to hear an opinion or an idea that they don't agree with and have a mature professional discussion, where we can collaborate and learn from each other. That's very motivating for me.

Faith also mentioned the same point regarding school leaders who demonstrate professionalism. She highlighted, "I should be looked at as a professional, and we should be allowed to have a mature conversation, disagree, and learn from each other."

Present and Visible in the School Setting

Seven participants commented on the presence of the school leader in the school. As a result, the subtheme of present and visible in the school setting emerged from the theme of leaders who demonstrate desired behaviors. Teachers noticed that when school leaders are involved in their schools, they tend to be present. Knowing that school leaders are present and

active can be motivating for teachers. Abigail summarized the interactive nature of a school leader by stating:

How present the principal is. I think that if you can see them in the hallways or if they look like they're interacting with the kids or with the teachers, that's a big deal. Versus principals who you see in their office a lot.

She also shared about an experience during her first year when her school leader physically checked on her. She described the experience, "My first year teaching, my first principal I was with, he would stop by all the time and ask if I needed anything or how things were going, and it really helps."

When talking about the school leader being present in the school, Deborah shared her experience with school leaders who are present and visible in the school setting. She noted, "Checking in with your coworkers, checking in with students, and greeting them in the hallway." Ann shared a similar experience when she described a school leader as "available, always to help, guide, and mentor." Jodie shared her experiences with school leaders being present when she recalled, "I admire the ones who don't shirk. When they are there first thing in the morning and there until the end of the day." When talking about her current school leader, she said, "She puts in 2000%, and you know she's here. She's always working."

Positive Attitude and Outlook

The subtheme of positive attitude and outlook was a trait that emerged from the theme of demonstrating professional behaviors. Most participants shared experiences of how the attitude of the school leader affects teachers' collective motivation. Angela shared that "you get a feeling for how administration's mood and temperament affect overall morale. That's a big indicator. If morale is great and leadership is effective, and they are willing and happy to see you thrive."

Deborah shared the following experience in a focus group session, "I know it's hard to be positive all the time, but I do think if somebody else is positive and leading that way, that helps the mood and makes you feel that we can get through this." Veronica offered her thoughts on how a leader's positive attitude and outlook influenced motivation when she shared, "I think their motivation motivates us. And I think also with that, our motivation is influenced by their support, their enthusiasm, their personality. That goes along with being outgoing, upbeat, and always positive." Barbara expressed how her school leader tries to make daily meetings as fun as possible and how that influences her mood. She said, "I think she sets the tone. When talking about pizza Fridays, rainy weather, or snow days and the impact on the student's behavior, we all laugh about it. Everybody's going through the same thing."

Responds to Conflict

Most teachers praised school leaders who acknowledge and respond to issues in the school environment. Deborah highlighted an experience where the school leader modeled behaviors in support of teachers. She shared, "I would probably say ones where they'll back you up. I've had administrators that didn't back us up. The last couple that we've had they've been very strongly take care of their people first." Jodie shared about an experience where her school leader responded to conflict with a parent in support of the teacher. She noted:

My principal at the time stepped in and called the parent and told them that they were not permitted to speak to any of our staff in this manner and if they continued. After listening to my principal support me, it boosted confidence in myself that I am a successful teacher and that I do not deserve to be disrespected in such a manner.

Negative Interactions

The final theme which emerged from experiences with school leaders was negative interactions. While all participants had positive experiences to share about school leaders they have worked with in their careers, they all had at least one experience that stemmed from a negative interaction with a school leader. Margaret offered an experience regarding repeatedly coming to the school leader with the same issue. She shared, "It just doesn't seem like they listen to you. I just feel they keep telling him [a student] the same thing and nothing ever happens. That's a little disheartening to kind of feel like."

Avoids Conflict

School leaders who avoid conflict were perceived negatively from teachers. Jodie shared an experience where a school leader's lack of response to the conflict between her and another school leader influenced her decision to remain at the school. She recalled:

I've had principals that were so afraid of conflict that they avoided it at any cost. I had one incident, a very disrespectful situation, where the parents did not acknowledge that their child was wrong. The principal wanted me to apologize to just make things right. She further said that her school leader exhibited bullying behavior towards her to avoid conflict with a parent. As a result of this experience, she expressed, "that was very negative and one of the final situations that I left the school." Faith discussed an experience where a school leader from her teaching career avoided conflict and would not communicate with her about an issue. She stated:

They walked in my classroom, and I did something that they would have liked to see me do differently or they didn't like. I'd rather them come right up front professionally say that they didn't like that and suggest something different. I'd much rather that because

then I can fix the problem instead of them dancing around it or being vague or being upset with you and you don't know why they are upset with you. They are just avoiding the conflict.

Unilateral Decision Making

School leaders who make unilateral decisions without informing staff emerged as a subtheme from negative experiences with school leaders. Teachers acknowledged that not all the decisions that occur in the school need to be reviewed by the teachers. However, decisions impacting individual teachers require professional courtesy when involving prior knowledge. Elizabeth shared a negative experience regarding moving teachers to different grade level. She said, "she did it all without consulting any of the teachers. It was just announced." Barbara highlighted an experience where she did not have input in the math schedule of the school even though she was the only designated math teacher in the school. She shared this experience regarding scheduling without her input:

He [school leader] had scheduled all middle school math at the same class period. I was scheduled to teach upper 7th grade math and lower 8th grade math at the same time. It was difficult for class pacing and to keep both grades going. Thankfully, that only lasted a year.

Displays Favoritism

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Belittles Staff

The final subtheme that emerged from negative interactions with school leaders involved school leaders who belittled staff. Speaking to teachers in an unprofessional way is a negative interaction that some teachers described as influencing their workplace motivation. Deborah described an experience where the school leader yelled at teachers in front of parents. She said, "At a parent meeting, he yelled at us in front of the parents. It was very embarrassing."

Barbara shared an experience when she did not have a homeroom to teach from and took her teaching materials from room to room. This particular year, she was teaching out of the computer room when it was not in use, and she was excited to have the use of a desk. She described her experience as:

As I was unloading my stuff in the room and the desk during the teacher week in August, the principal came in and told me that it was not my desk, and I can't put my things in there. I asked him if I could use at least two of the drawers and he reluctantly agreed. I completely felt that I wasn't valued or appreciated.

Elizabeth reflected on an experience where she felt belittled by how the school leader responded when she was asked to cover another teacher's class during her first block planning period. In

this instance, Elizabeth described that she was late for school that day and could not cover the class. She recalled the interaction, "She informed me that my pay would be docked the 17 minutes I was late. I was so angry at this as I often covered for favored teachers."

Outlier Data and Findings

Two unexpected findings emerged during data analysis of the individual interviews and journal entries. These findings did not align with the research questions of this study and could not be categorized into identified themes or subthemes. The outlier findings were described as gender differences between male and female school leaders and the use of humor in leadership style.

Male Leaders Versus Female Leaders

An outlier finding that was noted during data analysis was gender differences between male and female school leaders. One teacher had a unique perspective on gender and school leadership. Her experience was with male leaders who work in a school setting with predominately female teaching staff. Veronica offered her opinion on gender and leadership. She noted:

There's sort of obviously a difference between men and women. Women tend to react emotionally. I have found that having a male administrator can sometimes be beneficial in that sense that whatever is being addressed is being addressed more calmly and rationally versus with an emotional reaction.

Leaders Who Balance Humor and Rigor

The second outlier discovered during data analysis was a characteristic of a school leader who brings humor into the role of the school leader. One teacher noted that school leaders who exhibit an appropriately playful demeanor when working with children are a necessary quality of

school leaders. Because the field of education centers around children, it is important for school leaders to remember that. Jodie shared her feelings when she said, "looking back at other school leaders, he [school leader] could let his hair down a little bit." She further explained:

How you reach the kids, especially middle schoolers, because they're already a little bit cynical. It may feel like we [school team] sometimes we're just out to get them or to find them [students] doing wrong. So, I think there's a balance between the rigor of the academics and the goofiness and whimsy that comes with childhood. I don't ever want us to lose sight that these are also kids and sometimes in order to teach we have to, not be their friends, but get a little bit on their level and be silly. I try to use self-deprecating humor and I think good principals do that as well.

Barbara reflected on an experience with a former school leader when she was asked about a positive interaction. She said, "He [school leader] had a very good sense of humor and sent very funny math memes."

Research Question Responses

This section offers answers to the central research question and the two sub-questions regarding how teachers experience motivation from school leaders. Through the rich narratives provided in response to the phenomenon of teacher workplace motivation, the research questions produced themes that captured the essence of teachers' experiences. The themes of effective communication, values staff, support teachers, demonstrating desired behaviors, and negative interactions answered this study's central research question and two sub-questions.

Central Research Question

How do teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders? The participants' perspective is that school leaders' motivation comes from meeting their staff's needs through

words and actions. The themes of effective communication and demonstrating desired behaviors answered the central research question for this study.

Teachers experience workplace motivation when school leaders communicate effectively. Teachers described effective communication as leaders who are transparent, share their vision and expectations with teachers, and are easy to access. Teachers are motivated by school leaders who have open lines of communication. Whether communicating the vision for the school or the expectations for teachers, teachers are motivated by school leaders who can effectively communicate expectations. Elizabeth shared that from her experience, administrators who create an environment that feels like a team and everyone is working towards a common goal are very motivating. She stated that she would "go extra if I feel motivated and valued. I'll bend over backward for an administrator like that."

When teachers know the expectations the school leader sets, they can perform their teaching duties without questions or doubts. For example, when teachers feel they are doing a good job and meeting expectations, they experience feelings of workplace motivation. Veronica added to the central research question when she said, "It's just the communication piece and about being approachable and being personable. Being able to make others feel included and welcome and being able to give them the support and make them feel like they have the support."

The theme of demonstrating desired behaviors also answered the central research question for this study. Teachers experience motivation when they see their school leaders demonstrating behaviors they perceive as desirable leadership behaviors. These behaviors included support, trust, care, and positivity. Participants used these words to describe how teachers experience workplace motivation from their school leaders. Teachers described these

behaviors when they observed their school leader engaging in professional behavior with school stakeholders, having a positive attitude and outlook when interacting with others, and responding to conflict. Being present and visible in the school setting was a key component of workplace motivation for teachers.

Teachers notice when school leaders take an active role in the school community. Seeing their school leader actively participate in the school community embodied the theme of demonstrating desired behaviors. Teachers experience workplace motivation when their leader works alongside them in the school setting. Leaders who are active and visible in the school environment demonstrate behaviors teachers perceive as positive characteristics of effective leaders. Participants in this study shared that school leaders who were visible and active in the school setting were more responsive to conflicts between students and teachers. Teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders who are effective communicators and exemplify desired leadership behaviors.

Sub-Question One

What experiences, if any, with school leaders have promoted workplace motivation? The themes of values staff and supports teachers answered sub-question one. Participants expressed that school leaders who model observable behaviors like valuing staff and demonstrating support promote the workplace motivation of teachers. Participants described several ways in which they experienced feelings of value from their school leader.

School leaders who recognized teachers professionally demonstrated personal care and concern for teachers and were helpful. Those who utilize the teachers' strengths promote workplace motivation for teachers. Faith stated, "Somebody who can support you and your coworkers and tries to make the environment like a family or a team." In her journal prompt, she

summarized her experience when a school leader showed care and concern on a personal level while valuing teachers professionally. She noted, "I feel blessed to teach in an environment where school leadership values teachers, where we each have a name, and we are allowed to be human."

Participants shared experiences that promoted workplace motivation when school leaders demonstrated support for teachers. Supporting teachers was a theme discovered from data analysis and encompassed prioritizing teachers' perspectives, valuing teachers' input, and trusting teachers professionally to teach. Faith shared in her journal prompt, "School leadership who trusts the capabilities of his/her qualified teacher know that curriculum standards will be taught, and children will learn."

Teachers feel motivated when their school leader trusts them to teach without being micromanaged. Workplace motivation was also promoted when school leaders listened to the concerns brought forth by teachers. The participants expressed that school leaders who try to hear their teachers' concerns and value their input increase the workplace motivation of the teaching staff. When teachers feel the school leader supports them, workplace motivation increases.

Sub-Question Two

What experiences, if any, with school leaders have decreased workplace motivation? Participants expressed that their motivation decreased when they negatively interacted with school leaders. The theme of negative interactions with school leaders answered sub-question two of this study. Negative interactions encompassed behaviors in which the leader avoided conflict, made unilateral decisions, displayed favoritism to certain staff, and belittled staff.

Participants shared that these specific negative experiences with school leaders decreased their workplace motivation.

Negative interactions were described as experiences where the school leader does not take appropriate actions to address issues perceived as important to the teacher and avoid conflict. Deborah described an instance of decreased workplace motivation when the school leader failed to provide direction to staff when preparing for school accreditation. However, she noted that despite the lack of communication, the staff believed in the school's mission and vision statement. She reflected on this experience and shared the following:

What I learned from that experience is that when a mission statement is communicated clearly and firmly believed, even when there is a leadership vacuum, others will step in and backfill the voids if they also firmly believe in the mission and philosophy of the school.

Abigail also shared an experience when she was placed in a leadership position with no guidance from the school leader. This unilateral decision to place her in this position decreased her motivation. She said, "I was given almost no guidance as to what the position was. The person who held the position before me left nothing in terms of expectations, and I never received a job description from the principal."

Negative interactions were also described as leaders who do not treat all teachers the same professionally. Participants noticed that their school leader did not treat all teachers with the same professional regard and displayed favoritism for certain individuals. Jodie described an interaction where the school leader displayed favoritism to the same few teachers. She stated, "If there's favoritism from the administration to certain teachers that can sometimes suck the wind out of your sails, and that can be lack of motivation."

The theme of negative interactions with school leaders revealed experiences that decreased the workplace motivation of teachers. Teachers experience a decrease in workplace motivation when their school leaders make unilateral decisions that directly impact teachers, avoid conflict, display favoritism, and belittle staff. These interactions directly influence how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders.

Summary

This chapter presented a narrative of the lived experiences of 10 classroom teachers who have worked for more than two school leaders in their teaching careers. This transcendental qualitative phenomenological study explored how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The information from individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts revealed five major themes from their experiences with school leaders. One significant finding that emerged from the participants was how the tone and attitude of the school leaders influenced the teachers. Another significant finding that was discovered was professional recognition by the school leader and its influence on the workplace motivation of teachers.

These findings answered the central research question of how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The sub questions were also answered as a result of this research. Sub-question one involved experiences with school leaders that increased the workplace motivation of teachers. Participants in this study shared that effective communication between school leaders and teachers, supporting and valuing teachers, and demonstrating active leadership behaviors promote teachers' workplace motivation.

Sub-question two was addressed when teachers shared their experiences with school leaders that decreased workplace motivation. Negative interactions with school leaders emerged as a theme pertaining to experiences that decreased the workplace motivation of teachers.

Negative interactions were described as the school leaders who avoid conflict, leaders who make unilateral decisions, leaders who belittle staff, and those who display favoritism towards certain staff members. How teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders can best be summarized by Jodie when she said, "There's an emotional component between the administration and the teacher." Teachers are more motivated when school leaders engage in behaviors that directly influence them and their school community.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study was to understand how schoolteachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. This chapter consists of five discussion subsections that interpret the findings of this study. This chapter begins with the interpretation of the findings relevant to this study. Next, implications for policy and practice are described. Following this section are the theoretical and methodological implications which connect this research to the body of research on workplace motivation for classroom teachers. Limitations and delimitations of this study are discussed and describe how environmental factors and decisions made by the researcher may have impacted the findings of this research. The final section of chapter five includes recommendations for future research on the topic. This chapter ends with a summary of the final conclusions.

Discussion

This section discusses the study's findings through the lens of the developed themes. The themes that emerged from this study include effective communication of school leaders, leaders who value teachers, leaders who support teachers personally and professionally, leaders who model leadership behaviors, and negative interactions between the teacher and the school leader. Empirical and theoretical connections to the major themes are identified to support the interpretations of the findings of this study.

Interpretation of Findings

This study found that teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders in various ways. Common themes emerged from participant interviews, focus groups, and journal entries. The themes discovered among participants include effective communication by the

school leader, valuing staff, supporting staff, modeling leadership behaviors, and negative interactions with school leaders. These identified themes comprise the collective experiences that influence how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders.

Summary of Thematic Findings

From the common themes discovered in this study, thematic findings were deduced. The thematic findings were related to the major themes discovered in this research. The thematic findings based on the major themes reflect teachers' experiences with school leaders. Thematic findings include the following: frequent interactions with teachers, supporting teachers professionally, demonstrating personal care and concern for teachers, interpersonal skills of the school leader, equitable treatment amongst teaching staff, response to conflict, leaders who provide explanations for decisions, leaders who work alongside teaching staff, recognizing the achievements and efforts of the teachers, and demeaning treatment of teaching staff. The findings of this research were shown to have a positive and negative influence on the workplace motivation of teachers.

Frequent Interactions with Teachers. Participants in this study indicated that frequent interactions with school leaders influenced their workplace motivation in the school setting. This finding shares the themes of effective communication and modeling behavior which teachers perceive as effective leadership. In this research, participants shared that daily morning meetings set the tone for the day. During this time, the school leader serves as the leader who unifies the staff. Teaching staff with classrooms physically located in different parts of the school building felt connected by daily interactions with the school leader and the other teachers. Most participants also noted that the school leader's mood, energy, and demeanor influenced the teachers' behavior.

Prioritizing frequent interactions with teaching staff allows teachers to feel connected to the school community. It also shows teachers that the school leader values a designated time each day to connect with teachers. This thematic finding supports the existing body of research on teacher perceptions of school leadership when school leaders interact with teachers, specifically when principals interact positively with teachers (Da'as, 2020). The morning meetings described by teachers in this study allowed the school leader to communicate expectations with staff, remind teachers of the common mission and vision for the school, and address any issue that may be occurring in this school community. This also supports the findings that teachers benefit from learning skills beyond the classroom such as group decision-making processes, interpersonal skills with colleagues, and responding to difficult social situations in the school community context (Friedman & Kass, 2002). Frequent interactions provide school leaders with the vehicle to interact with teachers and communicate the same message to all teaching staff on a personal and professional level.

Supporting Teachers Professionally. School leaders who support teachers on a professional level contribute to the workplace motivation of teachers. Dickhäuser et al. (2021) discussed how leaders who encourage teachers to find their own solutions to problems have undesirable motivational impacts. Teachers experience motivation when the school leader supports their teaching practices. This study's findings indicate that teachers are motivated when treated as experts in their field. School leaders who micromanage lesson delivery and do not support classroom teaching can diminish teachers' workplace motivation. This finding supports how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. Participants who experienced leaders who exhibited trust in them felt empowered to perform their job to the best of their ability.

School leaders who support teachers' professional decisions increase teachers' workplace motivation. School leaders seeking to understand all sides of a conflict before addressing a concern were noted as positive experiences influencing teacher motivation. Negative experiences that influenced teacher motivation revolved around school leaders who quickly judged or took the parent's side without hearing the teacher's perspective. According to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, negative experiences support how leadership practices can be a hygiene factor that influences workplace motivation (2008). Lack of leader support in the absence of other satisfiers in the educational setting leads to diminished teacher workplace motivation. According to the theory, supporting teachers professionally is a leadership practice that serves as a hygiene factor and a satisfier that supports workplace motivation. Participants in this study who experienced professional trust from school leaders in the form of public support during conflict and served as content experts in the classroom had increased workplace motivation in the school setting.

Demonstrating Personal Care and Concern for Teachers. In addition to supporting teachers professionally, teachers experience workplace motivation when the school leader shows care and concern for teachers on a personal level. The diverse needs of the teaching staff in a school building can be compared to the diverse needs of the students in a classroom. Like students, each staff member has personal circumstances that can influence job performance and attitude. When teachers feel that school leaders care about them on a personal level, workplace motivation increases. This finding supports the existing research on leaders who are cognizant of the well-being of their staff and provide support to manage work-related stress (Embse et al., 2019). School leaders who encourage teachers to maintain a work-life balance and communicate this sentiment to teachers influence workplace motivation among teaching staff. Teachers who

experience personal compassion and understanding from school leaders, especially due to individual circumstances, are more willing to take on extra responsibilities.

Connecting with teachers on a personal level and ensuring that the well-being of the staff is prioritized are motivating experiences for teachers. Vermeulen et al. (2020) discussed how school leaders must provide individualized consideration to teachers by attending to individual employees' feelings, needs, and demands. Teachers shared that leaders who genuinely demonstrate care and concern for teachers and create an environment where all staff looks out for each other positively increase workplace motivation. Regarding this research site, teachers work in an environment where all teachers support each other to enhance CTE. School leaders who value the family life of their teachers and demonstrate care through interactions with teachers positively influence employees' attitudes toward work (Vermeulen et al., 2020).

Interpersonal Skills of the School Leader. This study found that the teacher's interpersonal skills were a critical factor in workplace motivation. Teachers expressed that they rose to the expectations set forth by the school leader if they liked the leader they were working for. According to Kongcharoen et al. (2019), the relationship between teacher and supervisor contributes to workplace stress. Qualities that were noted as positive by the teaching staff at this research site include mood, humor, and a positive outlook when interacting with teachers. Runde (2016) described the behavior of leaders as contagious when their attitudes impact everyone around them, especially their followers. The mood of the school leader was noted as an important indicator of the school environment. Teachers in this study expressed that the mood of the school leader had a trickle-down effect on the rest of the school staff. Teachers indicated that the morale of the teachers was linked to the interpersonal skills of the school leader. This finding supports research by Cohen (2019), which found that teachers were motivated by positive,

enthusiastic principals who demonstrate care for their teachers. Specifically, humor and a positive outlook was a quality of the school leader that teachers found to directly influence the teaching staff. Humor, positive outlook, and mood were noted as interpersonal skills that directly influenced teacher motivation.

School leaders who maintain open lines of communication with teaching staff were also noted as a positive interpersonal trait that motivates teachers. Abu Nasra and Arar (2019) stressed how school leaders' behavior could develop and foster the positive feelings of teachers. School leaders who demonstrate welcoming behavior by having an open-door policy were found to be motivating for staff. Staff knowing that they can approach the school leader to share ideas or discuss an issue was of notable value to the teaching staff at this research site.

These open lines of communication between the teaching staff and the school leader were highly motivating for the staff. Ingsih et al. (2021) found that the better the communication in an organization, the better the teachers perform. Staff shared that school leaders who separate themselves from the school community by remaining in their offices all day were not a preferred quality of a school leader. Knowing that the teacher can access the school leader if the need should arise was motivating for the teaching staff. School leaders must be keenly aware of the emotional component between the school leader and the teacher. This finding supports research by Haas (2020), who found that employees who receive attention and information from their leader influence employee perception and performance.

Equitable Treatment Amongst Teaching Staff. Teachers notice when the school leader favors certain teachers or groups of teachers over others. Favoritism displayed unknowingly or knowingly on the part of the school leader can lead to feelings of not belonging on the part of the teachers. The research demonstrates that the lack of a sense of belonging leads to a lack of

motivation. This finding supports the theory of workplace motivation as it relates to the hygiene factor of fair treatment practices (Herzberg, 2008). Teachers who feel they are not treated as equals amongst their peers feel less motivated to do their job because their efforts and opinions do not matter to the school leader. Unequitable treatment by the school leader is a finding that most teachers reported when talking about collective experiences throughout a teaching career.

Conversely, teachers experience workplace motivation when school leaders value the thoughts of the teaching faculty as a whole. School leaders who acknowledge the teachers' individual strengths and use them to better the school community are valued by teachers. Lambersky (2016) found that teachers are more willing to engage in school if their principals acknowledge their efforts and avoid favoring some teachers over others. Teachers in this study expressed that they feel valued when their talents are recognized and utilized by the school leader. When the school leader constantly recognizes a specific group of teachers or individual teachers, it can impact their motivation. Over time, these teachers who put forth effort without recognition for their ideas and efforts are less productive and contribute minimally to the school community.

Response to Conflict. School leaders who respond to conflict were perceived favorably by the teaching staff. Teachers expect school leaders to respond to conflict. This study described conflict as issues between students and teachers, disagreements between parents and teachers, and issues between teachers and teachers. Research shows that teachers who are school protected from threatening behavior feel relieved and supported (Lambersky, 2016). In this study, school leaders who deliberately avoided confrontation decreased the workplace motivation of the teaching staff. Teachers who bring issues to the attention of the school leader expect action as a result. Teachers do not expect the action to be unilaterally favorable to the teacher who brings

the issue to the school leader. However, teachers expect the conflict to be addressed. When school leaders do not address conflicts that arise in the school community, fewer problems are brought to the attention of the school leader. When teachers experience school leaders who do not take action on issues in the school setting, workplace motivation decreases due to this inaction.

How a school leader responds to conflict also influences teacher workplace motivation. Teachers who bring reoccurring issues to the attention of the school leader without action or progressive action can impact the workplace motivation of the teachers. Research by Ford et al. (2019) showed that school leaders need to make an effort to improve the quality and frequency of supportive interactions to influence teacher behaviors positively. Teachers feel their concerns are not validated when school leaders take no action or repeat ineffective actions when addressing issues. School leaders who take swift actions to extinguish conflict influence teacher motivation when school leaders only consider one party involved. Participants reported that when school leaders considered a parent's complaint without consulting the teacher involved in the conflict, it made them feel less professional and influenced workplace motivation.

School leaders who respond to conflict after listening to all parties involved increase feelings of motivation. In addition, school leaders who support the decisions of teachers publicly in front of parents also promote feelings of workplace motivation. This public support of teachers' decisions, even if the action on the part of the teacher was not an ideal outcome, promoted teacher motivation. School leaders who counsel teachers in private after a conflict is valued by teaching staff. Debriefing the conflict with the school leader provides the teacher with opportunities to understand the outcome of the conflict and alternate approaches to prevent

future conflicts. Teachers valued the opportunity for mentorship and growth as professionals in a private context.

Provide Explanations for Decisions. Teachers specific to this research site understood that not all decisions made in a school district or school setting could have teacher input. Teachers value when they are provided with the reasoning behind decisions. This shared understanding between the school leader and the teachers is essential for the teachers to carry out the mission and vision of the school. Including teachers in decision-making can change how teachers perceive school leaders (Daniëls et al., 2020). Holding a leadership position in the school setting translates to making decisions daily. Teachers in this study acknowledged that not all decisions warrant an explanation. However, when teachers are not included in the decision-making process on issues that directly impact them, they at least expect the professional courtesy of understanding the rationale behind the decision.

Decisions involving switching grade levels and salary are notable issues for teachers that require explanations. Understanding the pay scale and the reasoning why credit is or is not given for specific experiences helps teachers to accept decisions. When school leaders make decisions about placing teachers into different positions or grade levels without notice or explanation, teachers do not feel valued or treated as professionals. Research on Herzberg's theory found that poor relationships between the supervisor and the employee influence the willingness of an employee to voice ideas (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). These specific experiences with unilateral decision-making without relaying the information to the teachers led to decreased workplace motivation. Teachers that understand the decision-making process of school leaders can accept the decision when it is explained. Even if the decision is not in the teacher's favor, teachers can execute the changes when provided an explanation.

Leaders who Work Alongside Teaching Staff. School leaders who are actively engaged and involved in the school community increase the workplace motivation of teaching staff. Teachers experience workplace motivation when they see the school leader interacting with teachers and students. This finding supports Lambersky's (2016) research, where visible principals engage in social interactions with teachers and set a positive tone with staff and students. Teachers also noted that when school leaders assist with tasks or volunteer to complete tasks for teachers, this also increases teachers' workplace motivation. When school leaders work alongside the teachers, both the school leader and teachers share can share common experiences. These common experiences build rapport with teaching staff while motivating teachers to continue, even when there are days when being in the teaching profession can be difficult.

Formal and Informal Recognition of Staff Achievements. Teachers appreciate and value recognition from school leaders. Formal and informal recognition were valued as experiences that increase workplace motivation. In this study, teaching staff with more than 10 years of experience in the classroom indicated that informal recognition was motivating for them. This statement supports research by Daniëls et al. regarding teachers in the senior phase of their career and their appreciation for recognition and support (2020). Teachers expressed that words of affirmation on difficult days or non-verbal gestures by the school leader were informal methods of recognition that provided motivation. Informal recognition was described as waves and a head nod. Teachers with 10 years or more experience also noted that formal recognition methods were unnecessary. Formal awards like the teacher of the year or teacher of the month were considered inaccurate representations of a teacher's effort because all teachers put forth some degree of effort. Furthermore, formal recognition awards were found to favor specific teachers or groups from year to year.

Informal methods of recognition are valued by teachers and increase workplace motivation for teachers. Teacher motivation is maximized when leaders recognize teacher achievement while providing access to affiliation and friendship groups (Ingsih et al., 2021). When administrators notice and comment on a teacher's effort or lesson, teachers find this to be very motivating. Recognizing staff during meetings was also found to be motivating by teaching staff. Moreover, sharing good news as a teaching community, including results from accreditation visits, family events of staff, and school accomplishments can boost the CTE of teaching staff.

Demeaning Treatment of Teaching Staff. Teachers commented on experiences that had negative effects on motivation. Teachers in this study shared a combined 77 years of teaching experience. Not all experiences with school leaders had a positive influence on teaching motivation. This finding aligns with research on leadership practices and counterproductive leadership practices (Sam, 2021). Teachers noted that their motivation decreases when they are not treated as professionals through words and actions by their school leaders. When this occurs, teachers feel they are coming to school to do a job and disconnect from the school community. Teachers provided specific experiences of being yelled at in front of parents and receiving negative emails from school leaders. Teachers also experience isolation from school leaders when they voice ideas that the school leader opposes. When teachers have announced their intentions to leave the school community, they have experienced an unfavorable change in attitude from the school leader and also exclusion from certain events. These specific experiences regarding teaching staff treatment can influence teachers' workplace motivation and the CTE of the teaching staff. Furthermore, negative experiences may be felt more in school communities that are smaller in size.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Leading kindergarten through 12th-grade schools requires leaders to be versed in more than staff supervision, school budgetary needs, and curriculum delivery to learners. Leaders must also be aware of the interpersonal skills contributing to effective leadership to motivate their teaching staff properly. Currently, leadership preparation programs and standards do not emphasize the needs of the teachers in terms of interpersonal interactions with school leaders. Current and future school leaders must alter their current practice to integrate interpersonal skills influencing teacher motivation. This section discusses the implications for policy and practice regarding preparing future and current school leaders to effectively influence teacher workplace motivation.

Implications for Policy

School leaders step into highly relational roles. Interacting with parents, community members, faculty, and teaching staff require interpersonal skills that are not emphasized in leader preparation programs or national standards. Understanding what motivates teachers by adding to professional leadership standards will bring awareness to the emotional intelligence a school leader needs when leading teachers. Adding an emotional competence or interpersonal skills domain to the National Policy Board for Educational Administration will prioritize interpersonal skills essential to enhance and maintain the workplace motivation of teaching staff.

Implications for Practice

For current and future school leaders, practitioners need to understand how interactions between the school leader and teacher influence the workplace motivation of teaching staff. When a school leader is in a position to lead a school, being aware of how specific actions of the school leader directly influence teachers' workplace motivation. School leaders need to

understand that many factors can influence the workplace motivation of staff. A safe and secure environment and monetary benefits alone do not sustain the workplace environment of teaching staff. Instead, these hygiene factors, paired with effective leadership experiences, create a school environment where the teaching staff is motivated to work above and beyond what is expected. School leaders who prioritize communication by frequently meeting with staff help teachers with feeling connected to the school environment. Teachers also experience motivation when they can communicate formally and informally with their leaders. School leaders who are transparent when communicating issues that may be of interest or importance may also be of value to teaching staff in other school communities. School leaders who openly communicate with staff and are accessible engage in leadership characteristics that teachers value.

School leaders who support their staff by acknowledging their efforts and behaviors assist with workplace motivation. Teachers are also motivated when their school leaders demonstrate care and concern for them on a personal level. School leaders who recognize their staff's efforts and utilize the teaching team's strengths for the greater school community are behaviors teachers at this site found motivating. School leaders who display support for their teaching staff in formal and informal ways may be of interest to school leaders in other school communities.

Teachers who observed their leaders actively engaging in the school community found those behaviors motivational. Workplace motivation is strengthened when teachers observe their school leader interacting with students and teachers, assisting in classrooms, and frequently seen outside their administrative offices. School leaders who are an active and visible part of the school community may be of interest to leaders in other communities when knowing how this behavior influences teacher workplace motivation.

Theoretical Implications

This study enhances the contributions to the literature on the topic of teacher workplace motivation and addresses the gap in the literature on examining how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. Despite the existing body of research on leadership theories and teacher attitudes, new studies need to examine how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. However, this study confirmed the influence transformational leaders have on teachers. Teachers who know that their leaders support them tend to connect emotionally with them. This connection between school leaders and the teacher leads to increased perspective-taking, affecting teachers' work, organizational processes, and outcomes (Da'as, 2020).

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory stresses the importance of having both motivators and satisfiers in the work environment to motivate workers. Workplace motivation is increased if factors leading to dissatisfaction are neutralized or enhanced (Herzberg et al., 2017). This study examined both motivator and hygiene factors in the school environment as well as the behavior of the school leader as described through teachers' lived experiences. Self-determination theory (SDT) was also considered as the theoretical framework for this study. SDT focuses on the interactions between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators that are part of human nature (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT also considers that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation varies depending on the individual and requires constant support. While this theory addresses individual motivation, it does not specify a supervisor's role in workplace motivation. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory was more fitting for this study as it outlines supervision as a hygiene component that influences workplace motivation in the school setting.

School leaders have many responsibilities when leading a school. Just as leaders must know how to supervise instruction and the business aspects of the school setting, leaders must learn how to interact with teachers before leading them effectively. Herzberg et al. (2017) stressed the importance of supervisory training in human relations as essential to maintaining hygiene factors in the workplace. Herzberg emphasized the balance of motivator and hygiene factors to optimize workplace motivation. The management of hygiene and motivation and the relationship between these complex factors have many implications for practice. This study contributes to the body of research on workplace motivation and the influence that leadership practices, specifically interpersonal relationships, have on the workplace motivation of teachers.

Empirical Implications

A review of existing literature showed a gap in information on how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. Unlike existing studies that focused on teacher perception of school leaders and climate (Abu Nasra & Arar, 2019; Cheung et al., 2018; Saint et al., 2021; Vrhovnik et al., 2018), this study explored the lived experiences of current classroom teachers who have worked under at least two school leaders. This study also addressed the gaps in the literature on how teachers experience workplace motivation from their school leaders, unlike the existing literature that focused on how school leaders impact morale, climate, motivation, or commitment (Banjarnahor et al., 2018; Cohen, 2019; Holme et al., 2016; Ingsih et al., 2021; Lambersky, 2016; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Vermeulen et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018).

Teacher Perceptions of School Climate

This study confirms the research on teacher perceptions of school climate. Previous studies identified that the quality of the relationships between school leaders and teachers is

essential for teachers' social-emotional needs and practices (Vermeulen et al., 2020). This study extends the existing research on school leaders and how teachers perceive the school climate. Teacher motivation is directly influenced based on the behavior of the school leader. When school leaders demonstrate desired behaviors that teachers perceive as positive, teacher workplace motivation increases. Cohen (2019) found that teacher behavior is influenced when school leaders are not enthusiastic about modeling new skills learned. This study supports Cohen's (2019) research and found that school leaders who demonstrate a positive attitude and outlook increase teacher motivation.

Leadership Styles

This study also found that school leaders who provide recognition for teachers increased the workplace motivation of teachers. This finding partly supports previous research on rewards and recognition. This study found that teacher motivation increased when school leaders valued staff by providing teachers with professional recognition. One notable difference between current research and this study is the feelings of trust between teachers and school leaders. Previous research outlined that teachers must be able to trust their leaders through supportive management practices (Kondacki et al., 2016). This study diverges from previous research in that teachers expressed that they find motivation when their school leader trusts them to carry out the vision and expectations in their classrooms.

This finding also supports research on differentiated leadership. Differentiated leadership involves understanding teachers individually and differentiating support according to the teacher (Brezicha et al., 2015). Research on differentiated leadership supports the findings in this study about valuing staff and supporting teachers. Teachers experience workplace motivation when

their school leader shows personal care and concern for teachers and prioritizes teacher perspectives on issues.

Current Leadership Practices

Research on current leadership practices ranges from the implementation of initiatives to the treatment of teachers. While this study did not corroborate existing research on leadership's impact on teachers when implementing initiatives, the findings support how effective communication leads to greater workplace motivation. Findings of this study support research on leadership practices that are positive and based on trust (Bektaş et al., 2020; Cohen, 2019; Vermeulen et al., 2020). In addition, the findings of this study also support research on negative leadership practices due to teachers' mistreatment (Orange, 2018). This study found that negative interactions decreased the workplace motivation of teachers and had an impact on CTE. The participants in this study were current classroom teachers who shared their lived experiences of how they experience workplace motivation from school leaders. Examining teachers' experiences with school leaders sets this study apart from existing literature on school leadership and the relationship between teacher morale and school climate.

Leadership Preparation Practices

This study provides a novel insight into the lived experiences between school leaders and teachers. Previous research did not explore the depth of teachers' experience concerning workplace motivation from school leaders. There is a growing awareness that leadership preparation practices need to shift to be more inclusive of workplace environments and interpersonal skills (Hassan et al., 2017; Heppers, 2018). Through a transcendental phenomenological approach, this research illuminates how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The findings of this study support Herzberg's motivation-

hygiene factor theory in that motivation occurs through both motivators and hygiene factors and cannot exist in isolation (Herzberg et al., 2017). The findings of this study include effective communication, valuing staff, providing support, demonstrating desired behaviors, and negative interactions. These findings can be defined as motivator or hygiene factors influencing teacher workplace motivation. This study can be used by current and future school leaders as well as leadership preparation programs that wish to enhance the interpersonal skills of the school leader to motivate teachers effectively.

Leadership Behavior

The school leader's behavior can increase and decrease teachers' workplace motivation. This study corroborates the body of research on positive relations and meeting the basic needs of teachers (Da'as, 2020; Maran & Begotti, 2020). In this study, teachers who felt valued and supported by their school leader recalled specific experiences that increased their workplace motivation.

Research on toxic leadership leads to decreased teacher motivation (Maran & Begotti, 2020; Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2019). This study found that teachers who experienced negative interactions with school leaders also decreased workplace motivation. Specific experiences involved leaders who avoided conflict, made unilateral decisions, displayed favoritism toward specific teachers, and belittled staff. These findings add to the existing research on leadership behaviors that can lead to feelings of disengagement and exhaustion (Maran & Begotti, 2020).

Teacher Behavior

Teacher leaders provide opportunities for peers to learn from each other (Vrhovnik et al., 2018). Research on teacher empowerment in leadership positions allows teachers to achieve high

levels of job satisfaction (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). Findings of this study show that teachers experience motivation when school leaders share a common vision and the school leader values their input. While this study did not directly address teachers in leadership roles, teachers experienced workplace motivation when included in a shared vision. This finding supports research on organizational self-efficacy and teacher participation in school decision-making (Friedman & Kass, 2002).

Generation Differences

The existing literature discussed primary and secondary teachers' overall motivation and attitudes in the teaching profession (Dickhäuser et al., 2021; Kongcharoen et al., 2019; Şenol & Akdağ, 2018). Increased research on multi-generational work settings is needed to understand how young professionals experience workplace motivation (Nazarian et al., 2017). Participants in this study spanned multi-generations; however, the findings were consistent among all teachers. All participants expressed experiences from school leaders that encompassed effective communication, feelings of value, being supported, demonstrating desired behaviors, and negative experiences. This study provides insight into research on multi-generational workplaces and leadership. Despite the mounting research on different generations, teachers of all experience levels share commonalities when experiencing workplace motivation. This finding supports research on supportive work climates and positive outcomes for teachers (Sabir & Bhutta, 2018). Using a transcendental phenomenological approach for future research on multi-generational school environments would provide school leaders with valuable information on how teachers experience workplace motivation through a different lens.

Limitations and Delimitations

Although this research benefits theory and practice, it does contain limitations. First, the research was limited to 10 teachers teaching kindergarten to eighth grades at SGGCS during the 2021-2022 academic school year. This study can be conducted in larger schools in the diocese, gaining access to more teachers. Another limitation may be respondent bias due to the small nature of the school. Even though participants were assured of confidentiality, they may have felt uncomfortable sharing their experiences. Thirdly, participants were solicited before the school dismissed for Spring Break near the end of the school year. Due to this time in the school year, many teachers declined to participate due to feelings of exhaustion or expressed that they did not want to take on any more projects as the school year ended. The participants who responded and met the inclusion criteria for this study were all female teachers. With more time in the school year, the sample size could have increased along with qualitative analysis.

Delimitations

This study took place in one private Catholic School in northern Virginia. The researcher purposely chose this school because it serves the kindergarten through eighth grades. Using a site with both elementary and middle school grades allows more generalizability for school leaders who have led a school with a wide range of grades and teacher experiences. The investigator also chose kindergarten to eighth-grade teachers from all subject areas; including the experiences from all subject areas increases generalizability.

Another delimitation of this research was to include teachers who have worked with more than one school leader or administrator. This allowed teachers to compare and contrast the qualities of different school leaders despite their teaching experience in the classroom setting. A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study to allow the researcher to capture the

essence of participants' experiences. This approach allowed the researcher to understand how teachers experience workplace motivation from their school leaders.

Recommendations for Future Research

Concerning future research, examining a larger research site may be of value to understanding how experiences with school leaders differ from this small research site. Small schools may lend more opportunities for the school leader to interact with teachers. Therefore, investigating larger school sites may be of interest when understanding the phenomena of this study. Additionally, while half of the participants in this study had previously worked in public schools, it may be of value to examine teachers who have only worked in public schools instead of a combination of both settings. Public and private schools are guided by different governing organizations and often have different supervisory expectations. These differing expectations may influence how teachers experience workplace motivation from their school leaders.

Another consideration for future research would be to examine the experiences of young school leaders and younger-generation teachers. The teaching staff in a typical school often spans multiple generations, with each generation emphasizing different motivation and hygiene factors. Studies on generational differences suggest that Generation Z individuals require leaders who are more responsive to their needs. Understanding these needs based on experiences discovered in a phenomenological study may be of value to school leaders who hire Generation Z teachers from teacher preparation programs. The information gained from this study benefits the existing research on the role of school leaders and teacher motivation. Current research focuses primarily on school leaders from the baby boomer era. These baby boomer leaders may have a different approach to work-life balance, career aspirations, and collaboration than Generation X and Y leaders. Examining how generational differences influence leadership

practices would benefit leadership preparation programs. Understanding how the qualities of Generation X and Y school leaders influence teachers' workplace motivation would be valuable to leadership preparation programs that now cater to this generation of school leadership.

Expanding research to include generational attributes of school leaders would be of value to the body of research on Generation X and Y teacher motivation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand how teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. The central research question and supporting research questions helped capture how teachers experience workplace motivation from their school leaders. The individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts allowed the participants to share their experiences working with school leaders.

This research reinforced that school leaders should prioritize effective communication, valuing staff, supporting staff professionally, and being models for desired leadership behaviors. Furthermore, school leaders should understand the impact that negative interactions have on the motivation of teaching staff. Teachers' experiences of school leader behaviors contribute to the workplace motivation of teachers (Vrhovnik et al., 2018). Understanding the importance of school leaders' influence on teachers' motivation is of great importance for school leaders and leader preparation programs. The participants shared experiences in this study should be considered by current school leaders, future school leaders, and leadership preparation programs. The findings of this study will assist with understanding how interpersonal relationships between the school leader and teaching staff influence workplace motivation.

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Appendix A

Consent

Title of the Project: A Phenomenology of Teachers' Experiences with School Leaders on Workplace Motivation

Principal Investigator: Samantha Hill M.Ed., BCBA, LBA, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years or older and also be currently teaching in grades K-12. You must also have worked for at least two school principals or school administrators in your teaching career. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to understand the lived experiences of K-12 teachers as it relates to experiences with school administrations and the influence that these interactions have on workplace motivation.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a virtual audio- and video-recorded interview (1 hour).
2. Participate in a virtual audio- and video-recorded focus group with other teachers (45 minutes). This focus group will contain 4-5 teachers who will respond to discussion-type questions.
3. Complete a brief journal prompt describing an experience (15 minutes).
4. After the individual and focus group interviews are complete, participants will have the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a greater understanding of the impact that school leaders have on the adult behavior in the staff of the school.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information

that will make it possible to identify a subject. 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 an alphanumeric system. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Since interviews and focus groups will be conducted using video conferencing technology, the participant can participate in the privacy of his or her own home.
- 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 and 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 be compensated for participating in this study. Participants will receive a \$50 Amazon or Visa gift card as compensation for this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as an Instructional Systems Specialist in the Mid-Atlantic District for the Department of Defense Education Activity. I am currently in the field of education and serve as a district-level teacher. I have also served as the interim Assistant Principal for a school in my district. I support teachers in the classroom and often hear about specific experiences and witness changes in teacher behavior. I do not work at the research site described in this study nor do I have any authority over the participants in my research. While I do have opinions about the phenomenon being investigated based on personal experiences, I will not allow my thoughts and bias to infiltrate the semi-structured interviews or focus groups. The semi-structured interviews of this phenomenological study will allow me to ask participants for more information about responses or specific

experiences. If any personal opinions or shared experiences from the participants have an influence on me and cannot be bracketed, these feelings will be stated in the findings of the study. 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 without affecting those relationships.

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 Samantha Hill. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Denise Nixon (xxxxx@liberty.edu) Education Department, at Liberty University.

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 Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

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 and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix B

Interview Questions

The following questions will be conducted in a semi-structured interview format:

1. Please introduce yourself to me, as if we just met one another.
2. Can you please tell me where you live and the grade level you teach?
3. How long have you been a teacher?
4. What grade levels and subjects have you taught over your teaching career?
5. How many school administrators have you had while you have been teaching?
6. Thinking back to before you entered the teaching profession, what were some of the reasons why you entered the field?
7. Have your feelings about the profession changed in any way?
8. How would you describe the climate of your school?
9. What are some reasons that motivate you to remain in the teaching profession?
10. What are some indicators that you look for to gauge the climate of a school?
11. What school administrator practices do you perceive as supportive to your workplace motivation?
12. Describe any interactions with school leaders that have positively impacted your experience as a teacher.
13. Describe any interactions with school leaders that have negatively impacted your experience as a teacher.
14. Have you felt your motivation to continue teaching fade over the years? What are some factors that helped you to overcome this?

15. Think about a school leader whom you most respect. Which of their strengths would you integrate if placed in a leadership position at the school level?

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

The following questions will be asked in a focus group format:

1. Tell me about an experience where you observed an unmotivated co-worker.
2. How would you describe the school leader's influence on the motivation of your colleagues?
3. Describe an experience in which you have been supported by your school leader.
4. How do you experience motivation as it relates to school leaders?
5. How do experiences with school leaders influence your collective job motivation?

Appendix D

Journal Entry

Participants are invited to answer a prompt on a private blog. The researcher will provide the prompt of:

Share a pivotal moment where school leadership made an impact on you. This can either be a personal or professional experience.

Appendix E

Research Site Permission

SGGCS

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

OVER 25 YEARS OF AUTHENTIC CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Dear Samantha Hill:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled *A Phenomenology of Teachers' Experiences with School Leaders on Workplace Motivation*, I have decided to grant you permission to contact our faculty and invite them to participate in your study at SGGCS.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

[I/We] will provide our staff directory to Samantha Hill, and Samantha Hill may use the list to contact our members to **invite** them to participate in her research study.

[I/We] grant permission for Samantha Hill to contact K-8 teachers in employed at SGGCS to invite them to participate in her research study.

[[I/We] will not provide potential participant information to Samantha Hill, but we agree to provide her study information to K-8 teaching staff at SGGCS on her behalf.

[[I/We] are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Principal
SGGCS

[REDACTED]

SGGCS admits students of any race, color, and national origin.

Appendix F

Recruitment Email

[Date]

Educator

Dear Educator:

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 how classroom teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. I am specifically interested in experiences that have promoted or decreased workplace motivation. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, must be currently teaching in grades K-12, and have worked for at least two principals or administrators in their teaching career. If willing, you will be asked to participate in a recorded, virtual semi-structured interview, a recorded virtual focus group with four other teachers, and complete a journal prompt that will only be shared with the researcher. After the individual and focus group interviews are complete, participants will have the opportunity to review their transcript of the interview for accuracy. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. The overall time needed to complete the requested components of this study will be approximately two hours.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED] for more information or to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email and an additional copy will be given to you at the time of your interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document by typing your name and the date and return it to me via email at the time of the interview.

Participants will receive a \$50.00 gift card (either Amazon or Visa) as compensation for their time.

Sincerely,

Samantha Hill
Doctoral Candidate – Liberty University

[REDACTED]

Appendix G

Recruitment Follow-Up

[Date]

(email or verbal)

Dear Educator:

As a doctoral student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is May 15, 2022.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, must be currently teaching in grades K-12, and have worked for at least two school principals or school administrators in their teaching career. If willing, you will be asked to participate in a recorded, virtual, semi-structured interview, a recorded, virtual focus group with four other teachers, and complete a journal prompt that will only be shared with the researcher. After the individual and focus group interviews are complete, participants will have the opportunity to review their transcript of the interview for accuracy. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. The overall time to complete the requested components of this study will be approximately two hours.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED] for more information or to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email and an additional copy will be given to you at the time of your interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document by typing your name and the date and return it to me via email at the time of the interview.

Participants will receive a \$50.00 gift card (either Amazon or Visa) as compensation for their time.

Sincerely,

Samantha Hill
Doctoral Candidate – Liberty University

[REDACTED]

Appendix H

Research Flyer

Research Participants Needed

Teacher Motivation and School Leadership

- Are you currently a K-12 classroom teacher at SGGCS?
 - Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Have you worked with more than one school principal or school administrator during your teaching career?

If you answered **yes** to all of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

The purpose of this research study is to understand how K-12 teachers experience workplace motivation from school leaders. Participants will be asked to participate in a recorded, virtual, semi-structured interview, a recorded, virtual focus group with 4-5 other teachers and complete a private journal prompt. Interviews and focus groups will be scheduled based on the participants' availability. After the individual and focus group interviews are complete, participants will have the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview for accuracy. The journal prompt is an independent task to be completed when it is convenient to the participant. Participants will also receive a \$50 Amazon or Visa gift card for this two-hour time commitment.

Consent information will be provided

Contact Samantha Hill to set up a virtual interview today!

Samantha Hill, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study. **Please contact Samantha Hill at** [REDACTED]

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA
24515

Appendix I

IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 22, 2022

Samantha Hill
Denise Nixon

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-746 A PHENOMENOLOGY OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL LEADERS ON WORKPLACE MOTIVATION

Dear Samantha Hill, Denise Nixon,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix J:

Journal Entry Response

Journal Prompt: 5/16/2021 (Elizabeth)

I once worked at a middle school as a sixth grade teacher. It was my first and only year at this school, as my school district had just moved the sixth grade from the elementary schools to the middle school, and I was getting married the following July and would be moving. The principal of this school was not an easy person to work for – the horror stories were legion. She had her favorite teachers, was inflexible, and was not a leader you could come to help you find solutions to difficulties. However, I knew I only had to endure her for a relatively brief period.

The three-person team I was a part of had our group planning first period. We were often pulled from our planning to cover for other teachers who were absent or tardy. Once I had warned my team I would most likely be a bit late the following day as I had to drop my car off to get an oil change and inspection and would have the dealership give me a ride to school. As I anticipated, I was late. Exactly seventeen minutes late, I found out later. You see, that morning all three of us were needed to cover for other teachers. Apparently, my name had been repeatedly called over the intercom as my team forgot to tell the administrative assistance I was late that day.

During my personal planning period later that day, the principal came to see me. She informed me my pay would be docked the seventeen minutes I was late. I was so angry at this, as often I was forced to cover for other favored teachers who were even later than I had been. But it was pointless to argue so I took the pay loss.

When it came time to apply to schools for the following school year, I made sure to find out the personalities of the principals of the schools I was interested in – what type of environment did they create? Were they good leaders? As a military spouse, I knew I'd be moving on a regular basis, and that middle school principal taught me how important it was to work under a good leader.

And I confess I took a very un-Christian delight in the fact this principal had to find 12 new teachers for the following school year. A neighboring school system raised their teacher salary, so eleven teachers left to get a pay raise and a better work environment. This included the Coach of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and two lead teachers – there was no loyalty to this principal!

Appendix K:

Individual Interview Transcript

Pseudonym: Margaret

Alpha Numeric: (D4)

Date of Interview: 5/16/2021

Q1: Please introduce yourself to me as if we just met one another.

D4: Hi, I'm Margaret and I teach middle schoolers, specifically religion and history for all middle school grades.

Q2: Can you please tell me where you live and the grade level you teach?

D4: I live in Virginia. I teach middle school.

Q3: How long have you been a teacher?

D4: I'm currently in my 4th year as a teacher and 4th year teaching experience total. This school is the only school I have taught at.

Q4: What grade levels and subjects have you taught over your teaching career?

D4: I've been in middle school the entire time. I started doing religion for 6th, 7th and 8th grade and history for 6th and 7th grade. And this year I picked up history for 8th grade as well. In addition to the other five classes.

Q5: How many school administrators have you had while you have been teaching?

D4: I've had two administrators during my teaching time.

Q6: Thinking back to before you entered the teaching profession, what were some of the reasons why you entered the field?

D4: I got into teaching because I enjoy being around the children. And I enjoy seeing them learn new experiences, new concepts and really, I'm just trying to bring out the love of learning that is inside every kid, whether they know they have it inside them or not. I just like seeing them grow in in their educational experiences.

Q7: Have your feelings about the profession changed in any way?

D4: No, I stick with it for this same reason that I started. It's for the kids. It's gotten harder and I think that's a natural progression. They forewarned me in my teacher education programs that you have to stick out for three years because each of those first three years are different. And they're right. But I don't think I actually had my feelings have changed in the profession. I still enjoy for the same reasons I started.

Q8: How would you describe the climate of your school?

D4: I think there is a pretty positive climate. Sometimes it could be a little separated based on your hallways. Sometimes in middle school we feel like we're all by ourselves, over here in middle school land. I really don't know what's going on down in elementary school land. You know, we do have brief morning meetings sometimes it just feels like you're a little distanced from each other, but I see we have a positive climate overall. I think the teachers get along with each other. And for the most part, we're all smiling when we come in the morning. It's a good climate.

Q9: What are some reasons that motivate you to remain in the teaching profession?

D4: The primary reason is the kids. I started in the profession for the kids. And in my down moments, when I think "you know, is this really worth it?" for the stress and all of the endless hours we put into it. I sit there and I think, well, what's the other option for the kids? I know there's a teacher shortage going on and how are they going to fill those holes when teachers are leaving the profession while they'll take anybody that could manage a classroom, whether like it or they are the best fit. I was thinking of the kids because I came into it for the kids with my heart for the kids. So that's my main motivator for staying in their profession. I got other motivators. I'd have no interest in any other professions. I've always been for the for the education world. And I knew we were going to have bumps, COVID was a big bump, but I knew it wasn't going to be smooth sailing the entire time.

Q10: What are some indicators that you look forward to gauge the climate of a school?

D4: I like to see interactive. I guess the teachers. Are they with each other? Do they sit in their rooms during their free periods by themselves? Or do they go into the teacher area and kind of take some downtime? You know, do they share with each other? You know the kids, are the kids for the most part, smiling when they come into school or they come happy? Of course they go through their moments, because they are kids and it's school. For the most part, are the kids happy? And, are there any like parent reactions to the school? You know, how are the parents involved?

Q11: What school administrator practices do you perceive as supportive to your workplace motivation?

D4: Definitely, I like knowing that they have my back right so they don't just take the side of the other party. You have a parent comes to them with a complaint or some issue that their child has. Like they don't just automatically take the parents' side. That they got the teachers side and hear all different sides of it. Also, just knowing that they are there. You know, we could go and talk to them, you know, if we were having any issue or difficulty. To know that the door is open for the most part.

Q12: Describe any interactions with school leaders that have positively impacted your experience as a teacher.

D4: I'd have to say when I first was hired, it was down between an opening for science and an opening for history. And we just, they're talking it out. I said I would be open to either one, you know, like it's just middle school, I can handle both. I could give the middle school math and science a go but the end of it, he tells me that he's leaning more towards the history. Because, he saw the passion that was on the history. I was more comfortable with it. And just knowing how he was able to read me gave me that self confidence that like, hey, I can do this. I have some

really bright kids in my class who love history, but I can still bring something new to the table for them. And just having that that conversation with him at that time, that really helped give me that confidence that I could do this.

Q13: Describe any interactions with school leaders that have negatively impacted your experience as a teacher.

D4: Sometimes, it just doesn't seem like they listen to you, right. You're telling them we have this problem. Whatever it is, behavioral with a kid or whatever. I just feel they keep telling him the same thing and nothing ever happens. Right? They're not listening to the full extent of it. That's a little disheartening to kind of feel like. Yes, I know you have my back or everything right, but then kind of seems like you're falling down a little bit and not listening to when we have a issue that needs to have a further a higher up intervention than what seems to be happening on the hallway.

Q14: Have you felt your motivation to continue teaching fade over the years? What are some factors that helped you to overcome this?

D4: I'd probably say this year is probably a year that I've really felt the most. Feeling their motivation. I feel like things that have helped me push through is just perseverance. I don't generally like to quit anything. Push through like I can't fathom. I've heard from other teachers that at other schools that teachers just walked out of classrooms and never come back. Pack up at the end the school day and don't come back. I can't fathom how could you give up on the kids like that, you know, I know it's difficult system. Everyone the struggling with our motivation to get through, get the grades done. I think it comes back to the kids and the big motivator for me to push through the fading of the motivation. Of course, I look forward to the little tiny breaks to yeah, they all feel spring break coming up.

Q15: Think about a school leader whom you most respect. Which of their strengths would you integrate if placed in a leadership position at the school level?

D4: I think I would integrate their orderliness. To me, order brings some level of comfort to both students, teachers, and parents. You know the expectations because it's all there.

And it's very like laid out and straightforward, but also on the other hand, right, you're able to work in compassion level like yes, we have order, but we know there's individual circumstances as well and being able to read the individual circumstances and take those into account. I think those would be the ones I would take from their leadership that I've experienced.