

TEACHER MOTIVATION AND STUDENT BEHAVIORAL DEFIANCE:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Gwendolyn Robinson

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia. The research question was, “What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Hampton Roads, Virginia, having experienced student behavioral defiance?” Bandura’s self-efficacy theory guided this study. It analyzed subjective changes affecting teachers and their motivation by applying four significant sources of self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. The primary source of data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with 10 participants, in addition to a focus group and journal prompt. Transcendental phenomenology aided in analyzing semi-structured interviews with classroom educators. Using Clark Moustakas' phenomenological research model: epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and composite textural and composite structural descriptions, examining data unearthed how the phenomenon was experienced by each participant as well as uncovered essential themes and essences of the phenomenon.

Keywords: teacher motivation, self-efficacy, student behavioral defiance

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the late Pearlie and Merceda Gause, who –

Gracefully led through servitude.

Instilled in me the pricelessness of hard work and education.

Undenounced to me, sacrificed more than I could have ever imagined, ensuring I
had the means to achieve any goal.

Believed in all I would become.

I love you, Daddy-O and Momma.

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List of Abbreviations

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Conduct Disorder (CD)

Disruptive Behavior Disorder (DBD)

Disruptive Behavior Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (DBD-NOS)

Education Advisory Board (EAB)

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD)

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP)

School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Teach Self-Efficacy (TSE)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Teaching ranks as a highly stressful profession (Buettner et al., 2016; Richards, 2018; Wright, 2020). As national teacher shortages escalate, teacher motivation and efficacy plague the educational realm (García & Weiss, 2019; Glazer, 2018). In Virginia, teacher shortages surpass the national average, yet the number of individuals entering and completing teacher preparation programs increases (Sorensen et al., 2018). Researchers have sought to identify and understand the breakdown occurring as teachers leave the profession in droves during all phases of the work, with attention given to several factors (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Glazer, 2018; Sutcher et al., 2019; Trent, 2019). I conducted qualitative research to understand the influence of behavioral defiance on the motivation and self-efficacy of teachers. This study aimed to extend the knowledge base of factors influencing teacher motivation, specifically student behavioral defiance. Under an ontological assumption, the study sought to understand the phenomenon of teachers' experiences with student behavioral defiance from various perspectives of classroom educators, seeking an understanding of the complexity of multiple viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Chapter one includes a summary of relevant literature providing classroom educators' historical, social, and theoretical concepts regarding student behavioral defiance. An articulation of my motivation for conducting the study, addressing philosophical assumptions guiding the study is included followed by the research questions, definitions, abbreviations, and a summary briefly restating the problem and purpose of the study.

Background

Teacher shortages are not new to the United States (Sutcher et al., 2019). Since the

release of *A Nation at Risk, The Imperative for Education Reform* (1983), education has received public recognition to impart standardized accountability measures to create ways to show evident growth of students in the classroom (Wright, 2020). In addition to highlighting teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019), the report also opened the door for public recognition of less-than-favorable working conditions endured by classroom educators (Wright, 2020). As the public eye turned towards the teaching profession, placing it under the microscope, inefficiencies surfaced from the perspective of all stakeholders. As teacher shortages began to receive recognition, so did the possible reasons behind the scarcity, progression, and revitalization of behavior management strategies to assist teachers in the classroom.

Historical Context

Dating back to the progressive era and the mid-1930s, complications for staffing public school classrooms have persisted for years (Sutcher et al., 2019; Wright, 2020). The release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) brought significant recognition to the public education system (Sutcher et al., 2019). Heavy reliance on scientific data proving the value of the public education system surfaced. Teachers faced accusations of producing products of public education not being equipped with the necessary skills to be productive in the workforce (Wright, 2020). An argument manifested to hold classroom educators responsible for the shortcomings of student learning.

While behavior management is a relatively new concept (Özen & Yildirim, 2020), student behavioral defiance inadvertently received documentation throughout history from the contextual appearances of suggestions for teachers to combat classroom disruptions and student behavioral defiance. From the beginning of traditional schooling during the early national period in the United States, students' misbehavior within the educational setting spawned from students

left to their own devices as schoolmasters called on individual or small groups of students to recite rote lessons (Butchart, 1995). Teachers were permitted to use corporal punishment. John Dewey advocated for humaneness in how teachers disciplined student behavioral defiance; however, this reform was bittersweet. It highlighted what not to do without clarity on what to do (Conte, 1994).

Frameworks for promoting and maintaining positive behavior in the classroom did not begin to receive recognition until the 1960s (Conte, 1994). During the 1970s, behavioral defiance received acknowledgment from theorists such as Bandura and Vygotsky, who suggested teachers understand the needs of children to exert control over themselves and others (Keat, 2008). Progressing through the 1980s, the focal point of research moved to effortful, attentional, and inhibitory control (Crockett et al., 2018; Keat, 2008). The importance of educators recognizing the capacity of children to put forth effort in learning to control themselves for their benefit surfaced (Keat, 2008). Through the 1990s and 2000s, neuroscience served as the research base for understanding self-regulatory development in children (Keat, 2008).

As behavioral theorists such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Skinner, Glasser, and the like imparted strategies to create classroom settings conducive to learning, emphasis began to be placed on the importance of positive relationships between students and teachers (Conte, 1994). New strategies continue to surface in combating behavioral defiance as harsh consequences such as student suspensions have been linked to future lives of crime or prison time, better known as the school-to-prison pipeline (Scully, 2015). Organizations have begun emphasizing the negative effect of disciplinary measures, including suspensions and expulsions imparted on students. Virginia legislatures introduced a bill prohibiting students in grades prekindergarten through five from being suspended or expelled, apart from drug offenses, specific criminal acts, or firearm offenses

(McKinney, 2017).

Social Context

Teaching ranks as a highly stressful profession (Buettner et al., 2016; Richards, 2018). Researchers continue to investigate factors affecting teacher attrition and motivation; however, teacher turnover rates continue to increase (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Understanding the decrease in qualified teaching professionals is critical in sustaining healthy school organizations and attracting and retaining qualified professionals (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Moreover, the increase or inability to decrease the turnover rate creates inefficiencies in the classroom, including classroom effectiveness, emotional and social engagement, and lowered academic achievement, especially in schools serving historically underserved students (Buettner et al., 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

Within studies, multiple factors influencing teacher turnover exist: school climate, classroom disruptions, school leadership, lack of autonomy, workload, and time pressures (Börü, 2018; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Attracting and retaining educators requires understanding the value of education held by prospective teachers, their beliefs regarding their abilities to teach effectively and successfully, and their motivation to seek a career in teaching (Frazier et al., 2019). Several factors influence teacher motivation in the classroom; however, classroom disruptions continually appear as factors influencing teacher motivation in research studies (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Perceptions of student classroom behaviors from the perspective of educators are important (Bugler et al., 2016). Teacher attributions for student behavior impact students' emotional and outward responses (Nemer et al., 2019). While teachers generally hold autonomy in creating classroom rules and expectations, general and widely used expectations include being respectful,

using materials appropriately, remaining in a seat, and staying on task (Owens et al., 2018).

Buettner et al. (2016) researched the causes of reductions in the professional commitment of educators by completing randomized surveys from 7,500 schools. The researchers used teacher surveys to collect, analyze, and review the social-emotional capacity of teachers compared to their professional commitment. Psychological burdens impacted professional commitment, but more importantly, teacher stress held the most significant correlation to professional responsibility and psychological limitations imposed by occurrences staining the social-emotional capacity of teachers. Teachers attribute challenging behavior to factors within themselves as the teachers are inclined to seek solutions (Nemer et al., 2019).

Theoretical Context

Understanding student behavioral defiance requires a look at the development of young children. According to Vygotsky (1978), children need social competence to develop their knowledge. Transformations progress from elementary to higher mental functioning due to gradual shifts in cognitive reasoning (Keefer, 2005). These new psychological systems, or higher cognitive functioning abilities, are adaptative to tasks children face. Because historical conditions and factors impacting opportunities for human experiences are indefinite and constantly changing, the functional learning systems of children are unique (Vygotsky, 1978).

As speech increases, so does the ability of children to master their behavior (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of learning through play as, in these instances, children can acquire rules of conduct through imaginative measures through play that are otherwise unnoticed in real life (Vygotsky, 2016). With this comes the desire for children to exert control over themselves and those around them (Vygotsky, 1978). The myriad of experiences impacting these developmental processes of children create areas for potential

conflict. While some children begin school with foundational skills required for success, many do not. These students are candidates for displaying behavioral defiance (Nemer et al., 2019).

The Education Advisory Board (EAB) surveyed forty-one public schools across the United States, revealing an alarming increase in behavioral disruptions within elementary classrooms, including tantrums and emotional disconnects (Wigfall, 2019). According to Wigfall (2019), administrators identified trauma to family units as an apparent cause, while teachers pointed to an increased usage of technological devices and changes in parenting. With increases in occurrences of student behavioral defiance and factors including lack of sufficient training, the perceived ability of teachers to exhibit effective classroom management strategies has begun to diminish (Conte, 1994).

Theory and measurement of teacher self-efficacy (TSE) started its foundation with the two stools of locus of control, external and internal (Rotter, 1966), and the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Rooted in the basis of human agency, TSE acts as one of the most potent psychological resources for classroom educators (Zee et al., 2017). According to the social cognitive theory, TSE involves teachers' belief and capability to carry out duties required to achieve educational goals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). TSE increases when educators believe they can positively influence their students' academic ability and outcome. On the other hand, when educators feel students' home environments influence students more than they are capable of, self-efficacy decreases (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Problem Statement

The problem is student behavioral defiance reduces engagement and attentiveness within classrooms with an ability to place a strain on the teacher-student relationship. With a push for

inclusivity increasing in classrooms, teachers are seeing increased situations of student behavioral defiance, which also brings about an expectation of teachers to teach all students within the classroom, including those with challenging behavior and special needs (Wienen et al., 2019). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), nearly 34% of classroom educators reported disruptive behavior as an interference with instruction and a key reason for leaving the teaching profession (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). Increased teacher turnover negatively affects student achievement and creates additional concerns in hard-to-staff schools (Aldrup et al., 2018; Eckstein, 2019; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Virginia Board of Education, 2018). Teachers influenced by student behavioral defiance lacking appropriate coping mechanisms and support systems experience stress and, without intervention, experience burnout (Herman et al., 2018). Poorly supported and underprepared teachers are likely to leave the profession within the first five years (Virginia Board of Education, 2018).

The teacher turnover rate continues to escalate (García & Weiss, 2019). Many school districts function under a teacher deficit or experience high turnover rates. With districts experiencing an average 15% turnover rate, teachers are coming into the profession but are not staying (Jupp, 2018). While shortages are reported in states across the United States, they tend to be more severe in the Southern and Western states and have been the case for some time now (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Howard, 2003). Virginia's teacher turnover rate is increasing compared to the national average. The teacher shortage in Virginia escalated from 760 unfilled positions to 1080, a figure representing 1.1% of the teaching positions in the state (Sorensen, 2018). Twenty-two percent of teachers in Virginia do not return to the classroom after the first year, and 50% leave the profession after the fourth year (Quarni & Pianta, 2018). The constant influx of teachers leaving the teaching profession after less than five years of service to

a district costs a notable amount, especially when hiring a new teacher to fill the position (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). As the shortage of qualified teachers continues to exist, teacher shortages threaten the ability of students to learn. Moreover, teacher shortages lower teacher effectiveness and the quality of education provided to the students (García & Weiss, 2019).

For the past six years, the turnover rate for Virginia educators has been over ten percent (Virginia Board of Education, 2018). Consistent with previously conducted studies (Aldrup et al., 2018; Buettner et al., 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Haydon et al., 2018), the Virginia Board of Education acknowledged no specific reasons for the departure of teachers; however, the board recognized national causes including the lack of teacher support on an administrative level, poor teaching conditions, and accountability pressures (Virginia Board of Education, 2018). As instances of behavioral defiance escalate, specific consideration of the effects and influence upon those in the teaching profession has yet to receive adequate research and is often grouped into administrative support deficiencies (Buettner et al., 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). It was not known what the lived experiences are of teachers in Virginia who have experienced student behavioral defiance. Future studies would benefit from an increased investigation of the teacher perspective to optimize teacher education and intervention efforts (Aldrup et al., 2018; Anglim et al., 2018). Understanding the effects of an ever-growing occurrence is vital to better equip educators for longevity in the education field.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia. Student behavioral defiance was generally defined as combinations of deliberate attempts to annoy people, excessive arguing with people in authoritative positions, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, frequent anger and

resentment, and questioning rules (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [AACAP], 2019). The theory guiding this study was Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977), as it recognizes the diversities in human capacities and the power to enhance or undermine a person's performance. Personal efficacy is the foundation of human activity (Bandura, 1999). Self-efficacy addresses the question, Can I do it? (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

Significance of the Study

While an abundance of information exists about teacher motivation, attrition, and turnover (Böru, 2018; Buettner et al., 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Cowan et al., 2016; Dupriez, 2016; Glazer, 2018; Howard, 2003; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018) there is limited research about the experiences of elementary educators exposed to student behavioral defiance. Moreover, there is a narrow focus on how elementary educators perceive the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance and how it relates to their commitment to the education profession. This study provides awareness about the implications classroom educators associated with their experiences of student behavioral defiance. The findings may prove valuable to school districts in Virginia and nationwide as they consider teacher recruitment, development, and retention factors. This study involved interviews, focus groups, and written responses from classroom educators in Virginia who have experienced student behavioral defiance.

Little empirical evidence exists examining the interactions between students and teachers regarding student behavioral defiance (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Eckstein, 2019; de Ruiter et al., 2020.) According to de Ruiter et al. (2020), teacher praise and reprimand correlate with student engagement. In addition to their professional commitment, the responsiveness of teachers influences their ability to be socially and emotionally prepared for the students in their classes

(Buettner et al., 2016). Students exhibiting behavioral defiance possess a deficit of social and emotional development (Archambault et al., 2017). An adequate social and emotional capacity is necessary for carrying out the daily tasks required of teachers (Buettner et al., 2016).

Teachers faced with challenging behaviors hold attributions whether the behavior is controllable or not, resulting in the response given to the student (Frohlich et al., 2020). Often, teachers feel unprepared to handle student behavioral defiance (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Miller et al., 2017), and continued occurrences of student behavioral defiance negatively impact teachers' enthusiasm towards the teaching profession (Aldrup et al., 2018). With evidence of rising circumstances of challenging behaviors in school settings (Holmes et al., 2019), understanding the phenomenon's influence on classroom educators can provide insight into understanding teacher retention. Furthermore, self-efficacy impacts behavior (Lane et al., 2019). It mediates teachers' schematic views for interpreting their experiences (Lane et al., 2019; Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014). Within schools, there is an unmistakable influence of people within the social environment, and understanding these interactions is crucial to identifying the ways educators experience work (Richards et al., 2018). According to Lambersky (2016), low self-efficacy negatively affects performance. My study furthered these theoretical views by seeing how self-efficacy is viewed through the lens of student behavioral defiance and the influence, if any, it has on classroom educators.

Inclusive education is relative to the premise that teachers have the capability to teach all students, including those with challenging behavior (Wienen et al., 2019). Many teachers attest to being largely unaware of appropriate classroom strategies to assist with student behavioral defiance (Frohlich et al., 2020), leading to an exodus from the profession. High teacher turnover rates impact student achievement by increasing class sizes, limiting class offerings, and

ultimately causing districts to respond by hiring substitutes or underqualified, inexperienced teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Most at stake are schools serving students in high-poverty areas (García & Weiss, 2019). The Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides federal funds to schools in efforts to help students reach academic standards (Carver-Thompson & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Title I schools have substantial amounts of low-income students. With the high percentage of Title I schools in Virginia, understanding the perception of student behavioral defiance among classroom educators is imperative to promote positive student-teacher relationships and create and maintain positive school climates.

Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia. This study was a phenomenological inquiry to understand the lived experiences of these teachers as it relates to their commitment to the teaching profession. The research question guiding this study was:

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators within Hampton Road having experienced student behavioral defiance?

Sub Question One

What are elementary educators' perceptions of student behavioral defiance?

Sub Question Two

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Virginia following occurrences of student behavioral defiance in relation to professional commitment to the profession?

Definitions

1. *Behavioral Defiance*- acts such as deliberate attempts to annoy people, excessive arguing with people in authority positions, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, frequent anger and resentment, and questioning rules (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [AACAP], 2019).
2. *Burnout*- three interrelated dimensions including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Richards et al., 2018)
3. *Coping*- constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984)
4. *Depersonalization*- developing negative, unsympathetic attitudes towards others (Richards et al., 2018)
5. *Emotion-focused coping*- interpreting or changing the meaning of stress and expressing and regulating emotions aroused by challenges (Buettner et al., 2016)
6. *Emotional exhaustion*- feeling emotionally and physically drained by one's work; the archetype of feeling burned out (Richards et al., 2018)
7. *Perceived self-efficacy* – beliefs about one's capabilities to organize and implement actions necessary to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels (Schunk, 2016)
8. *Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports* – a framework or approach comprised of intervention practices and organizational systems for establishing the social culture, learning, and teaching environment, and individual behavior supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students (Horner & Sugai, 2010)

9. *Proactive aggression*- the belief that positive outcomes result from aggressive acts, making the acts of aggression more deliberate in nature (Pederson & Fite, 2016)
10. *Problem-focused coping*- taking active steps, planning coping strategies, and seeking support from others to directly manage challenging demands (Buettner et al., 2016)
11. *Reduced sense of personal accomplishment*- the development of critical attitudes towards one's work (Richards et al., 2018)
12. *Social, emotional capacity*- responsiveness and professional commitment primarily influenced by the ability to perform socially and emotionally to provide positive social-emotional learning environments (Buettner et al., 2016)
13. *Self-efficacy*- people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance (Bandura, 1986, p.391)
14. *Teacher motivation* - the internal and external stimulation causing changes in behavior to make an effort to sustain endeavors (Börü, 2018).
15. *Teacher resilience* – the capacity to adapt, developed or learned, using strategies to overcome adversity (Mullen et al., 2021)

Summary

Teaching, crowned as a highly stressful occupation, is experiencing high turnover rates, especially within Virginia Public Schools (Buettner et al., 2016; Sorensen et al., 2018). Multiple factors have been linked to the teacher shortage. The National Center for Education Statistics (2003) affirmed such factors as responsible for the exodus of 621,000 elementary and secondary educators from teaching into other professions, with a follow-up survey noting an exodus of 25.5% of novice teachers leaving the profession after three years. As instances of student behavioral defiance increase, specific consideration of the influence upon those in the teaching

profession has yet to receive adequate research (Buettner et al., 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), making student behavioral defiance a topic of interest (de Ruiter et al., 2020; Dupriez et al., 2016; Lanas & Brunila, 2019; Nemer et al., 2016). As teacher shortages continue to escalate, particularly in low socioeconomic and poverty-stricken areas, the effects on classrooms surface into consideration (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Understanding the influence of an ever-growing occurrence is vital to equipping educators with the success of creating and maintaining healthy school climates.

I conducted qualitative research to understand the influence of behavioral defiance on the motivation and self-efficacy of teachers. This phenomenological study aimed to extend the knowledge base of factors influencing teacher motivation, specifically student behavioral defiance. Under an ontological assumption, the study sought to understand the phenomenon of teachers' experiences with student behavioral defiance from various perspectives of classroom educators, seeking an understanding of the complexity of multiple viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study included ten elementary educators with various years of experience having experienced student behavioral defiance. Through this study, I investigated the perceptions of classroom educators having experienced student behavioral defiance. The problem is student behavioral defiance reduces engagement and attentiveness within classrooms with an ability to place a strain on the teacher-student relationship.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review presents the current literature about student behavioral defiance regarding classroom educators. This body of knowledge highlights the literature gap concerning teachers experiencing the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance. The theory framing this inquiry included Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977). Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) analyzes how psychological procedures modify the level and strength of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the psychological process that creates personal effectiveness expectations (Bandura & Adams, 1977). This review of the literature demonstrates how behavioral defiance influences classroom educators as well as classroom climates, academic achievement, and relationships throughout the educational system. Behavioral defiance is discussed and considered regarding the teacher-student relationship, student-student relationship, student-parent relationship, teacher-parent relationship, and the relationship among administration. Teacher responsiveness to behavioral defiance is reviewed concerning coping strategies and student outcomes. The pandemic is discussed accordingly as a factor in the earlier topics. Lastly, teacher attrition regarding student behavioral defiance is discussed. The literature review concludes with a summary.

Theoretical Framework

Influencing the research process, the inclusion of a theoretical framework within a qualitative inquiry is a significant component (Galvan & Galvan, 2017). This literature review examines how details of the self-efficacy theory pertain to the motivation of teachers and the needs of teachers to cope to avoid burnout within the educational setting when student behavioral defiance intervenes within the classroom environment. Bandura's self-efficacy theory recognizes the diversity of human capabilities. Efficacy possesses the power to enhance or undermine a

person's performance (Bandura, 1977). The self-efficacy theory presumes that psychological procedures act as a gauge to create and reinforce self-efficacy expectations. When teachers feel they are achieving their general sense of self-efficacy, the likelihood increases of implementing preemptive approaches to managing behavioral defiance, providing high-quality instruction, and delivering reinforcement to stimulate student motivation and engagement (Zee & Koomen, 2016; Zee et al., 2017). Bandura further argues that generalized expectancies influence individuals' behaviors for control and perceived capability (self-efficacy) to perform in specific domains (Bandura, 1977).

Personal efficacy serves as the foundation of human activity and the person's confidence, promoting beliefs that desired effects can be produced (Bandura, 1999). These efficacy expectations are based on four primary sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states. Mastery experience refers to the prowess a person has experienced. Success increases mastery expectations, while failures lower mastery expectations, mainly when a failure occurs at the onset of an event or task (Bandura, 1977). Teachers need to experience success in their efforts and abilities within the classroom to develop high self-efficacy in terms of mastery experience (Snyder & Fisk, 2016).

Vicarious experience is imparted when an individual witnesses another person triumphantly succeed in threatening or seemingly difficult activities. When the observer witnesses the individual successfully completing the activity with little to no adversity, the observer generates an expectation that promotes his or her successful completion of the task when the efforts persistently continue (Bandura, 1977). This becomes even more relevant when the person can find common traits to the successful person (Chan et al., 2021; Snyder & Fisk,

2016). Preservice and in-service educators need vicarious experiences on behalf of colleagues and administrators in the involvement of families (Garcia, 2004).

In continuation, verbal persuasion entails the attempt to influence behavior through suggestions to encourage continued efforts toward the success of a task that may have been difficult or overwhelming (Bandura, 1977). Encouragement increases self-efficacy, whereas discouragement decreases it (Snyder & Fisk, 2016). Of the sources of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion is the weakest. When imparted in solidarity, it must compete with disconfirming experiences as an authentic practical source does not exist within verbal persuasion.

Psychological states consist of emotional arousal and physiological arousal. Emotional arousal activates avoidant behavior. When a person attempts to cope with a negative situation, emotional arousal negatively impacts perceived self-efficacy. Contrarily, psychological arousal impacts perceived self-efficacy when dealing with threatening situations. Self-efficacy expectations are raised by eliminating the drive, which instigates defensive power. As a result, performance is improved (Bandura, 1997). When interpreting psychological states, nervousness must be construed as normative instead of an inability to perform within the classroom to promote positive self-efficacy (Snyder & Fisk, 2016).

Outcome expectancy and efficacy expectancy exist as two additional constructs within the self-efficacy theory. Efficacy expectancy is the conviction that a person can successfully execute the behavior required to produce specific outcomes. Efficacy expectancy motivation results from considering whether a task is achievable (Bandura, 1999). Outcome expectancy refers to a person's beliefs concerning the probability of a particular behavior yielding specific results.

Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) informed and guided the study by aligning the teachers' lived experiences under the realms of various efficacy expectations. As the theory recognizes diversities within human capacities, relating the efficacy expectations to how the phenomenon influenced educators and their outlook toward the teaching profession became evident. Furthermore, the study added to the theory by associating performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological states with perceived outcomes according to the lived experiences of classroom educators.

Identifying the relationship evident between the person, their environment, and behavior when considering students displaying behavioral defiance as it influences the motivation and self-efficacy of teachers may enable educational leaders to recognize and assist educators with effective coping mechanisms. As a result, educational leaders may impart opportunities for professional growth and support to raise self-efficacy, resiliency, and motivation and ultimately decrease voluntary attrition within the profession.

Related Literature

Ranking as a highly stressful profession, the teaching profession is in a continual spiral of teacher shortages as current educators leave the job and districts seek to fulfill openings with career switchers and new teacher induction programs (Buettner et al., 2016; Carothers et al., 2019; Cowan et al., 2016; Glazer, 2018; Howard, 2003; Trent, 2019). Teacher attrition accumulates national costs to school districts, ranging from \$2.1 billion to over \$7 billion annually (Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Glazer, 2018). With every teacher leaving the profession costing approximately \$20,000 to rehire and certify new teachers, a vicious cycle continues, consuming funds more advantageously used for instructional improvements (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). This hefty price tag comes when teachers leave the profession after

less than five years in the classroom (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Researchers continue to investigate factors affecting teacher attrition and motivation, but teacher turnover rates continue to increase. Understanding the factors contributing to decreases in teacher motivation is critical in sustaining healthy school organizations and attracting and retaining qualified teaching professionals (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Moreover, the increase or inability to decrease the turnover rate creates inefficiencies in the classroom, impacting classroom effectiveness, emotional and social engagement among students, and academic achievement, especially in schools serving historically underserved students (Buettner et al., 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

As instances of behavioral defiance increase in school environments, specific consideration of the effects and influence imposed upon classroom teachers requires investigation. Understanding teacher perspectives regarding situational occurrences such as behavioral defiance stands as a relevant topic (Buettner et al., 2016; Corbin et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Trent, 2019). Studies worldwide research why the teaching profession has decreased in popularity (Carothers et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2019). Researchers identified the need to address school culture and teacher motivation to impart effective change to the school system (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018) as disruptive behaviors of students disturb and compromise school cultures (Holmes et al., 2019). Motivation, the driving factor in succeeding, excelling, and meeting the tasks and demands performed, is necessary for teachers and students (Gut et al., 2012).

Teacher Motivation

Motivation reflects a teacher's developmental level (Liu et al., 2019) and is a critical component of the sustainability of strong school systems (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Self-efficacy depends upon the individual, but factors within the educational system affect teachers

differently, impacting their motivation. Changes in teacher motivation result in teachers leaving the profession and serve as the most significant predictor for teachers leaving education harnessed within the teachers' perceptions (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Multiple factors influencing teacher motivation have been identified in studies, including school climate, classroom disruptions, school leadership, lack of autonomy, workload, and time pressures (Börü, 2018; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). As several factors influence teacher motivation in the classroom, classroom disruptions continually appear as factors influencing teacher motivation in research studies (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).

In understanding the contextual antecedent of teacher burnout, intervention can take place to support the social-emotional capacity of teachers, as formulated by Buettner et al. (2016). Buettner et al. (2016) conducted research to examine the causes associated with reductions in professional commitment through the completion of randomized surveys from 7,500 schools. The teacher surveys collected, analyzed and reviewed the social-emotional capacity of teachers compared to their professional commitment. Psychological burdens were found to impact professional commitment, but more importantly, teacher stress held the greatest correlation to professional commitment, along with psychological burdens imposed by occurrences staining the social-emotional capacity of teachers.

Motivation is a predictor of self-efficacy (Zee et al., 2017). A teacher's motivation is counted as the most ubiquitous resource for resilience and influences an educator's ability to persevere, be effective, and show improvement in the classroom (Mullen et al., 2021). The motivation of teachers has been found to produce consequences evident in the effectiveness of the classroom educator (Parr et al., 2021). Motivation can take on various values, such as intrinsic (internal), external, social, prior teaching and learning experiences, perceived teaching

ability, and personal utility (Parr et al., 2021). Of those listed, internal and external will be the primary focus.

Internal and External Motivation

Various aspects within the educational setting influence the attitudes of teachers (Nemer et al., 2019). According to Liu et al. (2019), intrinsic motivation is the manifestation of development within teachers. It holds an inner desire to teach (Parr et al., 2021). Intrinsic factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, give way to teacher resiliency (Mullen et al., 2021). An educator's passion for teaching can serve as intrinsic motivation, acting as grounds for a teacher to stay in the profession (Holmes et al., 2019). Likewise, administrator support, including support for teachers and their inclusion in the decision-making process when possible, has an influence on the intrinsic motivation of teachers, especially when considering remaining in the profession (Holmes et al., 2019).

Extrinsic requirements can morph into intrinsic demands arising from the process of optimizing and developing teaching practices. Internal motivation from this perspective benefits the teachers at the beginning of their career and those in the latter stages (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). With teacher attrition following a figure similar to a U-shaped curve, educators at stages outside the early and later points of their employment have questionable attrition.

The internal desire for success and reaching ultimate goals are intrinsic motivational factors for many teachers (Börü, 2018). The intrinsic rewards of watching students grow, develop, and learn while working with children are valued by a number of educators (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). When teachers hold a high level of intrinsic motivation, teaching itself is revered as a reward (Deci et al., 2017, as cited by Salleh et al., 2022). On the other hand, staff acknowledgment can serve as a solid motivational method to include measures such as short

personal notes recognizing positive observances, literal pats on the back, mentionable moments shared, or recognition during meetings (Cancio et al., 2014).

As previously stated, intrinsic motivation can promote extrinsic motivation within teachers (Liu et al., 2018). Extrinsic motivation develops outwardly and results in the attainment of external rewards (Yasmeen et al., 2019). Examples of extrinsic rewards include elevated change in status, pay, rewards, or positive recognition. Motivation is an integral factor within the classroom educator. Internalized motivation brings about a commitment to define values and achieve goals within the educational organization (Conley & You, 2021). Commitment taps into the internalized motivation of teachers to remain within the profession, holding goals and attachments to the organization (Conley & You, 2021).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy assumes a crucial role when considering changes reached in fearful and avoidant behavior (Bandura, 1977). From Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), self-efficacy identifies people as being self-reflective contributors to their environments (Cardullo et al., 2021). Self-reflection is one of the most unique human capabilities because it harnesses the power for people to evaluate their own performance, altering their thinking and behavior as necessary (Bandura, 1986). As a result of personal beliefs derived from reflection, individuals alter their actions and choices (Pajares, 1996). Efficacy exhibited by individuals is not a passive activity. It acts in tandem with the individual's environment and motivational mechanisms (Frazier et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy has been defined for numerous occupations (Kavgaci, 2022). The self-efficacy of teachers is associated with teacher autonomy and job satisfaction (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021). It is defined as the judgment of a person's capabilities to organize and execute courses of

action required to attain designated types of performance (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Self-efficacy and autonomy are both determined by one's perceptions of oneself within an organization (Bandura, 1982). As a result, judgments made in conjunction with self-efficacy tend to be “task and situation-specific” (Pajares, 1996, p. 56).

Teacher self-efficacy is dependent upon the types of students in a classroom (Frohlich et al., 2020) and necessitates a belief in being capable and having a sense of value within an organization (Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021). High teacher self-efficacy enables educators to meet demands, manage responsibilities, and significantly impact the teaching profession (Orakci et al., 2023). Perceived self-efficacy can directly influence the activities a person chooses; however, through expectations of eventual success, a person can develop coping mechanisms while waiting for success (Bandura, 1977). Experienced success increases the feeling of effectiveness. When teachers feel increasingly confident during situations, the amount of emotional exhaustion decreases within a workday (de Ruiter et al., 2020).

Resilience

Resilience, a complex and multifaceted quality, is developed through a myriad of developmental processes, including learning from challenging circumstances and adapting to different environments (Mullen et al., 2021). Interactions between people and their environment over time, coupled with how they respond to challenges, make the composition of resilience (Mansfield et al., 2012). It serves as a variable with the capability to sustain the development of positive attitudes towards phenomena (Kavgaci, 2022). Increased teacher resilience is critical to improving teacher retention (Mullen et al., 2021).

Resiliency promotes thriving rather than merely surviving (Richards et al., 2018). While student behavior defiance causes stress among teachers, the stress incurred by the behaviors

influences the resilience of teachers to interact with other students in the class (Wienen et al., 2019). Mansfield et al. (2012) identified four dimensions of teacher resiliency: professional, social, motivational, and emotional. Within the factors demonstrating positive teacher resiliency lie self-efficacy, optimism, intrinsic motivation, perseverance through challenges, motivated students, and clear administrative goals (Mullen et al., 2021).

The Pandemic

March 2020 marked a monumental time for schools across the globe. Physical schools closed with little warning to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus in mid-March. Seventy-seven percent of public schools moved classroom instruction to online learning in hopes of reducing the risk of transmission among students, faculty, and staff (Berger et al., 2022; Herbert & Hickey, 2022). Due to the short notice in the decision to transition from brick-and-mortar schools, some schools required teachers to assemble work packets to send home with students in an effort to continue learning (Klosky et al., 2022).

Significant changes to daily life arose not only in the classroom but also in day-to-day life as the concern for public health prompted the use of masks and social distancing (Hebert & Hickey, 2022). At the time, the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the necessity of encouraging teacher resilience (Mullen, 2021) while highlighting the necessity to address the social-emotional needs of students (Hebert & Hickey, 2022). Pressley (2021) conducted research examining teacher self-efficacy scores after the start of the pandemic. The study indicated lower self-efficacy scores compared to studies completed prior to the pandemic.

The pandemic placed a strain on the motivation of teachers in areas other than student behavior including the complications of teaching while supporting their own children during the time of virtual learning (Pressley, 2020), personally contracting the virus, the resurgence of the

virus with continual disruption of daily life tasks (Hebert & Hickey, 2022), and stressors of disseminating content on a virtual platform given concerns regarding connectivity issues and the like (Leech et al., 2022). Some schools had difficulty acquiring enough technology to issue devices to each student (Klosky et al., 2022). Teachers were not able to provide hands-on instruction, and this required additional help from families to assist children at home. This was especially true regarding younger students, such as kindergarteners, who were altogether new to the classroom setting (Klosky et al., 2022). Stakeholders within the educational systems were upheaved into unforeseen challenges as they lived through the crisis rather than finding resolution after a disruption, as systems do with a natural disaster (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

Behavioral Defiance

Several terms in research have been used in overlapping ways to label behavioral defiance; however, a diverse variety of issues and concerns are included under its umbrella (Lanas & Brunila, 2019). In educational settings, the perceived causes of difficulties of students with exceptionalities, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and learning disabilities, are as numerous as the number of children they affect (Frohlich et al., 2020). Behavioral defiance places significant strain on educational systems and the people immediately involved with caring for the child (Christenson et al., 2016). Behavioral disruptions are recognized as both the lack of control displayed by youth and the teacher's difficulty with management and control and pose consequences to classroom educators (Lanas & Brunila, 2019). Furthermore, students with disabilities impacting their attention are easily distracted, appear disengaged, require repeated directions, and make careless errors in their work (Savina, 2020).

Occurrences of behavioral defiance continue to rise steadily, befalling approximately two to sixteen percent of people (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

[AACAP], 2019). Of these people, approximately 50% of those affected are children (Christenson et al., 2016). Behavioral defiance includes actions such as deliberate attempts to annoy people, excessive arguing with people in authoritative positions, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, frequent anger and resentment, and questioning rules (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [AACAP], 2019). Adolescents can exhibit behavioral defiance with a formal diagnosis. Formal diagnoses of exceptionalities that commonly display behavioral defiance include disruptive behavior disorder (DBD), oppositional defiance disorder (ODD), attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), conduct disorder (CD), and disruptive behavior disorder not otherwise specified (DBD-NOS) (Sayal et al., 2015).

Teachers integrate themselves into the lives of their students, consistently displaying behavioral defiance, spending approximately a third of each day together during the school year. The time students spend with teachers is often greater than the waking time they spend at home (Berchiatti et al., 2021). As the occurrences increase among adolescents, behavioral defiance impacts the general learning environment, the learning of the student exhibiting behavioral defiance, others in the classroom, and the teacher (Christenson et al., 2016). Defiance reduces the participation and concentration of the class (Archambault et al., 2017). A survey of nearly 2,000 school stakeholders, including general education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and support specialists, conducted by the Education Advisory Board (2019) created a platform for teachers to reveal a loss of two and a half hours of instruction weekly due to student disruptions. Disruptions of this magnitude, coupled with limited resources, give way to burnout and stress among teachers (Reddy et al., 2019).

Dealing with student behavioral defiance is a challenge many teachers face (de Ruiter et al., 2020). When teachers lack the appropriate coping mechanisms and support systems, stress

increases, and without intervention, burnout begins to take place (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2014). Even with classroom management skills capable of regulating classrooms impacted by constant disruptions, teachers express the amount of energy required to attend to maintaining an acceptable classroom climate to be exhaustive (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Acceptable classroom climates are subjective postulates and may be disrupted by merely failing to meet a teacher's expectations (Lanas & Brunila, 2019).

Berchiatti et al. (2022) postulated that teacher relationships with students with ADHD are characterized by raised levels of conflict and lower levels of warmth when compared to the relationships held with other students. In recognizing the correlation of student defiance to teacher stress, preventative measures can possibly reduce a portion of stress resulting from behaviorally defiant activity in classrooms (Buettner et al., 2016). Preventive measures must be verified periodically to ensure their continued effectiveness (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Through the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura (1986), an awareness of the environment and behavior helps to analyze the connection between the sociological factors within the environment and the child's behavior.

Disasters and Student Behavior

Traumatic stressors brought about by natural disasters and, most recently, the coronavirus pandemic can impact students greatly with disruptions to their everyday lives and routines. Catastrophic events seize children as the most vulnerable targets as they are seldomly shielded from environmental stressors that their parents endure, and they are inadequately skilled to transform the realities they face to be advantageous (Bhadra, 2022). The underserved population suffers the most during unforeseen and unfortunate occurrences (tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, pandemics, etc.) (Amjadi, 2021). COVID-19 drastically impacted the poverty rates

among children worldwide. According to UNICEF (2020), the number of children falling within the poverty range increased from 582 million worldwide in 2019 to 715 million worldwide in 2020. Moreover, in 2020-2021, 1.1 million children worldwide lost a parent or their primary care provider as a result of the pandemic (Bhadra, 2022). Such a loss creates lasting effects among children, including anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and depression, as deaths of this magnitude are considered extraordinarily debilitating and have a direct impact on the child (Bhadra, 2022).

Research conducted on the behavior of students concluding traumatic events has shed light on the likelihood of behavioral disruptions in the classroom following the diaspora of the aftermath. Tian and Guan (2015) investigated the impact of Hurricane Katrina on students with behavioral disorders. They found that the likelihood of discipline infractions for students previously identified with behavioral disorders increased by 7.3%. After facing a considerable earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, administrators recognized three facets to move towards normalcy. To understand the impact of the earthquake on all stakeholders, teachers, students, and their families, the vulnerability of each group had to be acknowledged, measures had to be developed to lessen further traumatic stress, and there had to be an understanding that the correlation of increased misbehavior was a result of trauma-induced stress brought about by the earthquake (Martinez & Broemel, 2021). The pandemic brought about and continues to bring about disruptions in the lives of adolescents, particularly in the realm of education.

Klosky et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative exploratory study to investigate the effects of remote education on young school-aged children during the pandemic. Noted within the study were specific populations of students impacted by the pandemic facing unique challenges. Students within this population included students with disabilities, students who were English Language Learners, and those from homes with an unpartnered guardian deemed an essential

worker during the pandemic. They all had an increased likelihood of suffering even more than their counterparts. Remote learning already posed several complications for all students; however, for this group of pupils, not only did they have to contend with the challenges of distance learning coupled with their own unique challenges, but some were also unable to receive educational adaptations typically received throughout the school year.

Positive Behavior Support

School places many demands on the behavior of students and self-regulation with the need for learners to sit for intervals during the day, refrain from shouting out, and meet other behavioral expectations existent in the classroom and school-wide (Savina, 2020). With thirty-four percent of teachers acknowledging interference with instruction from student behavioral defiance, schools have begun addressing behavior issues through the implementation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) or Positive Behavioral Implementation Support (PBIS) programs (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016). PBIS programs take training and intentional awareness to implement correctly. Staff resistance can decrease building morale, cause a lack of cohesion, and lead to subpar student outcomes (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021).

Prevention programs used schoolwide take time to implement; however, the outcomes are positive and numerous for all stakeholders and are an approach to support inclusivity (Macy & Wheeler, 2020). School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) systems have been found to be beneficial to marginalized groups such as students from low socioeconomic populations, students with disabilities, and African American students when implemented appropriately (Keyes, 2022). SWPBIS requires consistency from all faculty and staff within the school (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). Moreover, success and sustainability rest in teacher buy-in (Macy & Wheeler, 2020; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021).

PBS comes to life in supportive environments and focuses on preventative, evidence-based practices with early interventions for all individuals, including those with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) (George, 2018). Teachers and staff members identify the needs of students based on observations and data to target, plan, and implement interventions to support students (Haley & Allsopp, 2019). Additionally, PBS focuses on preventing problematic behaviors, drawing on behavioral and social sciences to create supportive environments (Kincaid et al., 2016; Simonsen et al., 2022). Its benefits rest in over two decades of research (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021).

As classroom disruptions increased, systems were made to combat the changes within classroom and school climates. The 1997 amendment of IDEA brought about changes to PBS approaches and made an application of the system strictly applicable to schools. PBIS programs support over 12 million students and are typically a schoolwide practice (George, 2018). Teachers and school staff work to identify students needing preventative behavioral support to decrease disruptive behaviors that interfere with classroom instruction (George, 2018; Ryoo et al., 2017).

The multitiered approach may be applied within various systems such as families, schools, and community organizations. PBIS frameworks are comprised of three tiers. As described by Simonsen et al. (2022), Tier 1 acts as the primary level. Universal in nature, it supports all students. Tier 2 targets a smaller population of students. These students display social, emotional, or behavioral risk within the educational setting. Tier 3 provides support for students with intensive needs. While PBIS frameworks are structured to operate as three-tiered continuums of support, many schools function with only the primary tier, Tier 1 (Simonsen et al., 2022). With the primary tier, teachers are encouraged to work together, capitalize on the

opportunities to learn together, and ultimately develop a united structure of socio-emotional support (Michael et al., 2023).

Effective PBIS systems can prevent students from entering the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP). STPP includes various policies that remove students from school due to behavioral infractions and typically impact children with disabilities and young black males (NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 2018). Exclusionary discipline is an opposition to PBIS as the framework of PBIS has an inclusive orientation (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). It is a positive problem-solving framework to push for benefits for all students, including those with disabilities (Simonsen et al., 2022).

Teacher-Student Relationship

Challenging behavior early in a child's academic career can predict later problems between the child, peers, and teacher; therefore, addressing concerns early on can be beneficial (Miller et al., 2017). According to Archambault et al. (2017), appropriately enacted close relationships between students and teachers can promote student engagement. Behavior regulation requires children to acquire social and academic competence developed through social interactions (Acar et al., 2018). Good self-regulation is associated with positive development outcomes later in life. In contrast, weak self-regulation, existing at the beginning of a child's school career, can likely lead to maladaptive outcomes, including behavioral problems in the classroom as well as difficulty in grasping academic skills (Savina, 2020). Students displaying behavioral defiance in classroom settings often have lower behavioral, social, emotional, and academic engagement experiences than their peers (Archambault et al., 2017). The behavioral challenges imposed upon the classroom result in challenges within the educational setting for teachers and students (Frohlich et al., 2020). Such challenges distract and annoy teachers and

students; however, the intensity of the disturbance can be dependent on contextual conditions within the classroom (Eckstein, 2019).

Externalizing behavior is directly impacted by the relationship between the teacher and the child (Rautamies et al., 2016). It is beneficial for teachers to work through barriers that may exist with students exhibiting behavioral defiance because of the positive outcomes resonating from connections to students in the classroom. According to Corbin et al. (2019), relational closeness between student and teacher contributes to feelings of competence and achievement on behalf of the teacher; however, relational conflict is directly linked to emotional exhaustion. Without intervention, it can lead to burnout, negative emotions in the teacher, depression, and contribute to a teacher's feeling of a desire to leave the profession (Corbin et al., 2019).

Student-Parent Relationship

Behavioral defiance impacts homes and families, significantly manifesting through caregiver strain, depression, and parental stress (Christenson et al., 2016). The exact cause of behavioral defiance remains unclear; however, psychological impediments, biological irregularities, and social factors can contribute to the manifestation of behavioral defiance (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [AACAP], 2019). Contributions of parents, such as inconsistent discipline, minimal involvement, and corporal punishment, can precipitate the development of behavioral defiance (Pederson & Fite, 2014). Children often match such actions with increased noncompliance and hostility (Tung & Lee, 2014). A negative synchrony occurs between the child and adults within an unhealthy relationship. As children develop these new behaviors, they are often reflected onto adults or other children (Fenesy et al., 2019). According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2019), poverty, living within a chaotic environment, factors contributing to an unstable home such as

frequent moves or people consistently in and out, neglect, abuse, poor nutrition, brain-chemical imbalance, and parents with substance abuse problems can further play a role in the development of behavioral defiance. Parental behavior and involvement have efficacy, impacting student behavior and achievement with admirable behavior enhancing appropriate student behavior (Lumadi, 2019).

Families can choose the option to medicate or participate in therapy; however, many families waive this path. Medication does not treat defiant behavior. The use of medication only assists in regulating specific behaviors and treating coexisting conditions. Therapeutic intervention can be completed in solidarity or as a family (Christenson et al., 2016). Children who are regularly behaviorally defiant benefit from strategic intervention, more so with medical and psychological assistance. Specific to the needs of the child, strategic intervention can be school-based or parent-based and is most effective with all people actively involved with the child to provide consistency (Miller-Slough et al., 2015). Parent-child synchrony, a predictor of the emotional liability of children, is vital in identifying the progression of behavioral defiance. Positive synchrony makes goals between parent and child attainable. In continuation, increasing levels of parent-child synchrony before participating in treatment may yield stronger relationships and communication between the parent and child (Miller-Slough et al., 2016). Such actions also make the incorporation of medicinal resources more effective (Miller-Slough et al., 2016).

Student-Student Relationship

The interactions teachers have with students play a role in the relationships students form with each other. Berchiatti et al. (2022) conducted a study to investigate the quality of relationships within the educational setting and how they impact the ability of children with

ADHD to adjust at school and found that the interactions between children with ADHD and their peers were affected. Students with ADHD were rejected more frequently by their peers when compared to students of typical development.

Teachers use their judgment when considering student behavior (Wood-Groves et al., 2021). When conflict is present in students' relationships with their teachers, teachers often unknowingly play a critical role in how the student adjusts to school (Berchiatti et al., 2022). Students consistently displaying off-task behavior can find themselves liked less by their friends and classmates due to behavior viewed as annoying (Saripah & Widiastuti, 2019). Behavioral distractions and disruptions can create additional stimuli that learners have to contend with (Savina, 2020).

Parent-Teacher Relationship

Conflicts within educational settings will undoubtedly arise. Parent-teacher relations can suffer increased complications when the child in the triad exhibits behavioral defiance within the classroom. Given the aggregate systems of teachers, faculty, administrators, parents, and students within an educational body, the individualized role of each must intertwine harmoniously to perpetuate success for the student as parental involvement in education increases the academic success of students (Mautone et al., 2015). On the other hand, when the parent-teacher relationship is not good, the ability of the teacher to maintain learner discipline is compromised (Lumadi, 2019). Of all of these relationships, parent-teacher relationships are of particular importance because their effectual establishment and consistent nurturance are imperative for cooperation (Leenders et al., 2019). The relationship also influences teaching and learning, with parents needing particular knowledge and ability to achieve their roles as disciplinarians (Lumadi, 2019).

Factoring behavioral defiance into parent-teacher relationships can create conflict between teachers and parents because of the inability of the child to self-regulate behavior. Parents possessing preconceived notions of educational systems can inherit a heightened negative perception of the educational system when conflict flourishes between the child and teacher due to behavioral defiance (Rautamies et al., 2016). Attitudes toward schoolwork, behavioral functioning, self-efficacy, and social competence can be impacted as teachers, students, and parents navigate how to coexist throughout the school year (Mautone et al., 2015).

One-way communication is another problematic feature of the parent-teacher relationship (Leenders et al., 2019). When information flows one-sided from the teacher only, the teacher becomes regarded as an expert, only sending down information to the parent and not receiving any feedback, resulting in frustration or avoidance on behalf of the parents (Garbacz et al., 2015). The gap widens between the teacher and the parent, and with the distance increasing, the longer miscommunication persists. When parents provide communicative feedback on opinions about their children's experiences, families assist teachers in fostering better learning experiences (Yoo-Seon Bang, 2018).

The pursuit of collaboration between family and school is a modification of home and school as separate, independent goals (Garcia, 2004). Positive relationships occur between teachers and home when one or both parties feel positively concerning one another and they can effectively communicate with one another (Sheridan et al., 2012). Research conducted by Lumadi (2019) suggests that parental involvement acts as a dimensional construct. Parental involvement in home life positively impacts academic performance. Home is also where parents can instill competencies for social development.

Communication strengthens the parent-teacher relationship between teachers and students (Pham et al., 2018). In situations with children from low-income or low socio-economic backgrounds without adequate resources to advance development continually, the parent-teacher relationship can reduce risk factors and facilitate positive relationships between the teacher and student (Acar et al., 2018). After interviewing parents of students with learning and behavior challenges, Haley and Allsopp (2019) transcribed the desire expressed by parents for a meaningful education to be available to all students regardless of their age or needs. When these barriers are eliminated, breakdowns can be avoided in the collaborative efforts of the child, the parents, and the educator.

Teacher Responsiveness to Behavioral Defiance

In the United States, classrooms are increasingly becoming inclusive, mainly because of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and with this, students with ADHD and LD are increasing in regular education classrooms (Frohlich et al., 2020). Under IDEIA, parents of children with disabilities hold participation rights in the education of their students. The overreaching goal is for parents and the school to work collaboratively, identifying meaningful services to maximize the educational potential of the student (Haley & Allsopp, 2019). Teachers are faced with responding to behavioral concerns that they may not be prepared to handle as the constructs of classrooms are altered (Bornstein, 2017). IDEIA requires educators within the classrooms serving students within inclusive settings to have suitable training (Alperin et al., 2020); however, on-the-job training takes time to implement. Meanwhile, teachers are left to navigate classroom occurrences of behavioral defiance the best way they can (Stormont & Yong-Walker, 2017).

The responsiveness of teachers, in addition to their professional commitment, influences their ability to be socially and emotionally prepared for the students in their classes (Buettner et al., 2016). With the ability to address and minimize disruptive behaviors comes better opportunities for students to learn and the likelihood of longevity of a teacher within a school (Holmes et al., 2019). An adequate social and emotional capacity is necessary for carrying out the daily tasks required of teachers (Buettner et al., 2016). Lack of self-efficacy and motivation hinder the very duties educators are expected to carry out daily. Often, teachers feel overwhelmed and overloaded with an insurmountable number of responsibilities to account for throughout the school day (Richards et al., 2018). External factors also impact the responsiveness of teachers. A deficit between home and work-life balance can impede how teachers respond to classroom situations (Richards et al., 2018). It is important to note that IDEIA mandates Individualized Education Plans, and placement decisions are constructed on student needs, not available resources (Haley & Allsopp, 2019).

A primary goal within the teaching profession is to build relationships with students, and when behavioral defiance impedes this goal, feelings of inadequacy can occur. According to Aldrup et al. (2018), student behavior causes emotional exhaustion, feelings of strain, and a depletion of emotional resources. Teachers are human and feel emotions, including frustration, anger, and disappointment when faced with challenging situations in the classroom. De Ruiter et al. (2020) investigated the role of teachers' perceptions of students' past disruptive behaviors in relation to the current situation and their emotional well-being and found when teachers reported higher levels of frustration and anger in light of recent events of behavioral defiance; they also reported lower levels of dedication within the workday. With increased emotional exhaustion comes reductions in school satisfaction and student engagement. On the other hand, work

enthusiasm, the enjoyment, excitement, and pleasure towards the profession experienced by teachers are directly correlated to student motivation (Aldrup et al., 2018).

Coping Strategies

Coping, by definition, is the use of realistic and flexible acts and thoughts to solve problems and reduce stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Possibly perceived as synonymous with stress, coping is a less considerable aspect of teacher functioning (Herman et al., 2018). Richards et al. (2018) sought to understand the connection between contextual features and burnout by investigating personal and contextual structures influencing the stress of classroom educators, describing teachers' perceived levels of burnout as low or high. Teachers with both high and low burnout acknowledged the occupation as stressful. In addition to classroom stressors, the teachers considered external factors, including their own children, significant others, and commitments outside of work. Also identified was the unmistakable influence of others in school relationships.

Coping is closely tied to the emotional dimension of resiliency (Mansfield et al., 2012). Coping serves as a means to address stress and can be functional or dysfunctional (Klapproth et al., 2020). After interviewing teachers to explore their fears and trace features and sources, Oplatka and Oren (2020) identified passive and active strategies for coping with stress. Passive strategies avoid facing the source of fear, resulting in measures such as emotional disconnections, detaching them from the source of the fear. Active strategies included finding humor in situations or discussing them with the principal or colleagues.

Burnout and emotional exhaustion directly correlate with teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Also playing a role in burnout and emotional exhaustion is the perception of the school community, according to the teacher.

Teachers feeling marginalized or demoralized often perceive their environment as combative and constraining (Richards et al., 2018). When teachers in the classroom are subjected to managing chronic challenging behaviors, self-efficacy and job satisfaction decrease, bringing about feelings of ineffectiveness as if the teacher is not making a difference (Haydon et al., 2018). Coping strategies can possibly assist in curbing feelings of defeat. The amount of support received by teachers can positively impact their self-efficacy, serving as a functional coping mechanism (Anglim et al., 2018; Klapproth et al., 2020). Moreover, self-efficacy is a highly influential factor in coping strategies used by classroom educators (Samfira & Palos, 2021).

Administrative Supports

Ever-changing social viewpoints have brought about the reconsideration and importance of school administrators in terms of their goals, assigned tasks, and assumed leadership roles (Cansoy et al., 2022). Concerns about teacher shortages have further propelled the role of building administrators forward. Wright (2020) identified how policymakers and reformers aim to adjust teacher characteristics when a more suitable area is the teaching environment. In order to attract and keep valuable classroom educators, it is imperative for building leadership to identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges to derive a better plan to address concerns (Holmes et al., 2019). Researchers currently propose changes to mitigate teacher attrition need to come from solid school leadership (Holmes et al., 2019). Solid school leadership that is engaged and attentive can evoke feelings of community in educational establishments (Richards et al., 2018).

While the forms of support vary, teachers need to feel supported by school principals (Pressley & Ha, 2022). Being visible to teaching staff and available for short conversations has the potential to evade headaches in the future, for teachers capable of reaching out to leadership

early on can prevent problems and concerns from escalating into larger ones (Colley, 2002). With this, school leadership must be made aware of existing or potential concerns involving student behavioral defiance and teacher motivation on the horizon. In a case study conducted by Ramos and Hughes (2020), the researchers sought to uncover whether a more holistic approach to addressing classroom discipline could help in efforts to lower teacher attrition. Through the interviews conducted with school principals, several comments presented an insufficient knowledge of classroom disciplinary struggles. Although some of the schools within the study employed behavior specialists to monitor and respond to intermediate occurrences of student behavioral defiance, the presence of such a person created a level of detachment from the building administrator and student discipline.

Workplace conditions can be predictive of teacher turnover as teachers citing low administrative support are twice as likely to leave the profession with the support, including matters such as the ability to acknowledge and encourage staff, communicate a clear vision, and the general ability to run the building (Cancion et al., 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). As an external variable, administrative support can positively impact teacher satisfaction along with appropriate student behavior (Wright, 2020). Holmes et al. (2019) went as far as to acknowledge the power of operational leadership to increase student achievement through the retention of effective teachers. Cansoy et al. (2022) examined the mediating role of efficacy in relation to the leadership of building principals and teacher commitment to the school. They noted that principals play a vital role in the initiative of teachers to solve problems within the school. Administrators set the tone with the capability to cause teachers to feel empowered or demoralized (Richards et al., 2018).

Student Outcomes

Student behavioral defiance is exacerbated when unqualified teachers are placed in classrooms due to a shortage of qualified personnel. In such situations, underqualified personnel are not randomly placed, nor are they assigned to the student population that excels in independent learning. They are instead placed with the most disadvantaged student population (Carothers et al., 2019). High-poverty and high-minority schools are not the only schools affected by the shortage; they are the most affected (Howard, 2003; Sutchter et al., 2019). Students within this realm are often educated by underprepared, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers (Sutchter et al., 2019). Supporting teachers to remain in the classroom and improve their expertise in the field of education will help students have quality educational opportunities (Pressley & Ha, 2022).

Wood-Groves et al. (2021) examined the relationship between teachers' judgments of students' 21st-century skills (persistence, curiosity, social, emotional, and cognitive behaviors) and their behavioral and academic outcomes. They posited that midyear judgments by teachers of these skills were significantly predictive of students' academic and behavioral outcomes at the end of the school year. Notably, students rated positively displayed persistence and regulation of externalizing behaviors. These children had fewer occurrences of behavioral conduct problems. Children who are consistently behaviorally defiant in the classroom, particularly those with ADHD and DBD, have decreased academic success when compared to their peers (Gut et al., 2012). According to Hong et al. (2022), not only do student behavioral problems negatively influence the academic outcomes of students displaying behavioral defiance, but the influence is significant. Also impacting student outcomes are interruptions to student learning. Behavioral problems within the classroom result in a loss of time dedicated to education (Lanas & Brunila, 2019).

Positive relationships between teachers and students displaying behavioral defiance increase social development within the classroom, a skill necessary for the foundational skills required for academic and social success (Nemer et al., 2019). As we continue to progress through the 21st century, students are being encouraged to develop 21st-century skills with teachers at the helm (Woods-Groves, 2021). Student behavior poses a relevant risk to the acquisition of these skills. A sizable correlation exists between the temperament of students, their academic achievement, and school adjustments (Berchiatti et al., 2022).

Teacher Attrition

In various parts of the world, educational systems experience the same problem of high turnover rates and inflated teacher attrition (Dupriez et al., 2016). Teachers leave the profession for several reasons, including retirement (Sutcher et al., 2019); however, put into perspective, retirement represents less than a third of the attrition rate, while the majority of teacher turnover is made up of preretirement leaving and moving (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019). With the number of educators leaving the profession before retirement, the focus shifts toward novice teachers striving to make it through the “survival period” (Glazer, 2018). The pool of teachers willing to enter or remain in the profession is unsteady, and a reduction in attrition could eliminate teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019). Such a concern must be addressed sooner rather than later, as more than 40 states reported teacher shortages in various subject matters and grades, including special education (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2017, as cited by Sutcher et al., 2019). Moreover, teacher preparation enrollment has decreased sharply by 35% nationally (Ramos & Hughes, 2020).

The decline in the number of teacher preparation programs has sparked conversations of possible solutions, one being the acclimation of prospective teachers to the classroom to receive

exposure to field experiences (Alsarawi & Sukonthaman, 2021). Such a change will give prospective teachers insight into the realities of teaching early on, bringing together theory and practice. More importantly, when prospective teachers witness a current teacher navigating the occurrences of student behavioral defiance and the like, it can create feelings similar to a vicarious experience. Comparable to a medical residency, teachers could complete year-long residencies as co-teachers alongside experienced mentor teachers (Brody, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

As locations strive to retain and attract highly qualified teachers, efforts are made to provide supportive measures to hold on to current teachers (Trent, 2019). Investigated means to attract and retain educators include understanding prospective teachers' values on education, beliefs about their abilities to teach effectively and successfully, and uncovering their motivation to seek a career in teaching (Frazier et al., 2019). Constructing the professional identities of hopeful teachers requires acknowledging preconceived notions, perceptions, and implicit beliefs regarding the classroom that can be addressed (Trent, 2019). Glazer (2018) labeled educators no longer in the teaching profession after obtaining a master's degree and teaching for at least three years as invested leavers. Teachers must continually and systematically develop past teacher education programs (Trent, 2019). Lowering teacher attrition will take a comprehensive approach and is necessary as it causes school management to be increasingly particular since it brings about a loss in human capital (Dupriez et al., 2016). Changes need to be intentional in order to prepare future educators for the challenges of teaching and providing environments that support their growth and effectiveness (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Summary

Teacher motivation and efficacy plague the educational realm now more than ever (García & Weiss, 2019). As teacher shortages continue to escalate, particularly in low socioeconomic and poverty-stricken areas, the effects on classrooms surface into consideration (Corbin et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Trent, 2019). Schools in low-income areas tend to hurt the most (Carothers et al., 2019; Sutchter et al., 2019). Researchers have sought to identify and understand the breakdown occurring as teachers leave the profession in droves (Conley & You, 2021; Corbin et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Trent, 2019). Behavioral defiance and classroom disruptions reoccur consistently as investigative causes (Buettner et al., 2016). It is a phenomenon that has come to the forefront of investigation in schools across the globe (Lanas & Brunila, 2019). As instances of behavioral defiance escalate, specific consideration of the effects and influence imposed upon those in the teaching profession has yet to receive adequate research. Understanding the influence of an ever-growing occurrence is vital to better equip educators for success and career longevity.

March 2020 marked an unprecedented shift in normalcy for the public school system across the globe. Parents and teachers were forced to master challenges neither were prepared for (Klapproth et al., 2020). The pandemic spilled into both teacher self-efficacy and motivation as COVID-19 shook the educational world to its core. Teacher self-efficacy, a previous topic of discussion by researchers (Frazier et al., 2019; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Samfira & Palos, 2021), has diminished since the onset of the pandemic (Pressley, 2021; Pressley & Ha, 2022). Likewise, in light of social changes in educational settings, the importance of school leadership has been examined to identify its role in the motivation and self-efficacy of teachers in regard to student behavioral defiance as well. The behaviors of leadership influence teachers' perceptions

about schools, and appropriate school climates aided by principals equip teachers to take responsibility for solving problems (Cansoy et al., 2022).

Additional research is necessary to determine the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation of elementary educators. Teacher motivation has been studied and researched (Boru, 2018; Chan, 2021; Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Kavgaci, 2022; Lui et al., 2019; Parr, 2021; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018; Samfira & Palos, 2021; Yasmeen et al., 2018). The effects on teachers according to the specific stressors have yet to be investigated thoroughly. With behavioral defiance identified as a significant stressor in studies on teacher motivation across content areas, grade levels, and various countries and localities, research particularly on the influence of behavioral defiance on teacher motivation is a relevant topic (Corbin et al., 2019; Dupriez et al., 2016; Trent, 2019). Gaining perspectives from teachers currently in the profession and teachers who have left the profession can uncover understandings to equip better professional development opportunities, school leadership, and stakeholders to fill schools with qualified, motivated, resilient educators.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in the Hampton Roads Area of Virginia. This chapter depicts the suitability of the phenomenological research approach and articulates the ontological approach, the research questions, the setting and participants, the researcher positionality, procedures, and data collection plan. Likewise, the chapter describes research credibility, trustworthiness, and efforts to ensure research ethics. A concise summary concludes the chapter.

Research Design

In qualitative research, a human problem is explored and is a medium for understanding individuals' meanings attached to the human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Due to the subjectivity of qualitative research, multiple paradigms are present, and philosophical ideas influence the research practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers use qualitative research to understand people in relation to a phenomenon they have endured. Using Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research model, I sought to understand the lived experiences of elementary classroom educators who have experienced student behavioral defiance. Moreover, I strived to learn how those experiences influence their motivation and commitment to the profession while providing a thorough account of the structures underlying their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological model of Moustakas is comprised of four steps: (a) Epoche, (b) Phenomenological Reduction, (c) Imaginative Variation, and (d) Synthesis of Composite Textural and Composite Structural Descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Data will be collected, analyzed, and synthesized according to these steps.

Significant statements were collected and transcribed with interviews used to gather data,

known as horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Statements of significant meaning were grouped into clusters according to specific meaning and phenomenological concepts. Both clustering and horizontalization are components of phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Initially, each statement was treated with equal value. Subsequently, repetitive, irrelevant, and overlapping messages regarding the topic and questions were removed, leaving only Horizons. Horizons are statements with textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Following this, the horizons were clustered into themes. General descriptions of participants' experiences were conceptualized through textual descriptions, noting what was experienced, and structural descriptions, examining how it was shared. This approach assisted in classifying the phenomena aligning with the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977).

Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia. This study was a phenomenological inquiry to understand the lived experiences of these teachers as it relates to their commitment to the teaching profession. The research question guiding this study was:

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Hampton Roads, Virginia having experienced student behavioral defiance? Answering the central research question required a look into the lives of elementary educators having experienced student behavioral defiance in the classroom and then, as the researcher, describing their perceptions to understand their commitment to the profession of teaching. In order to participate in the study, participants had to be at least 18 years of age, currently employed within a Virginia Public School District as a general education teacher (grades PreK – 6), or three years removed from the classroom, and have experienced student behavioral defiance.

Sub Question One

What are elementary educators' perceptions of student behavioral defiance?

Sub Question Two

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators within Hampton Roads, Virginia, following occurrences of student behavioral defiance in relation to professional commitment to the profession?

Setting and Participants

Across the United States, school districts are experiencing teacher shortages as the number of students increases while educators decrease (Sorensen et al., 2018). In Virginia, a bit of irony exists. As the number of potential teacher candidates continues to rise, the teacher shortage in Virginia exceeds that of the national average, especially in high-demand areas such as special education and elementary education (Sorenson et al., 2018). As a result, the study took place amongst teachers employed in Virginia Public Schools serving students in grades kindergarten through six.

Site (or Setting)

Rockport, a pseudonym for the actual city, is a locality in Virginia within Hampton Roads. While the population of surrounding cities has experienced steady increases, Rockport has experienced a slight population decline. Fifty-two percent female, the current population of 94,632, results from a 0.9% decrease. The population's educational attainment within the city is lower than that of the surrounding areas in Virginia (Juday & Lombard, 2015). Only 7% have a graduate degree compared to the 18% with less than a high school diploma. According to Juday & Lombard (2015), the educational attainment percentage impacts the area's poverty rate. This

is also a testament to the housing market, with the average cost of a house being \$169,400 and the cost of rent \$988 (United States Census).

At the peak of the recession of 2007, unemployment reached 10% in Rockport. This unemployment rate was based on those residents who continually sought employment, not those who gave up looking. Since the recession, the employment rate has lowered to 7%. Rockport holds the highest unemployment rate in the surrounding area (Juday & Lombard, 2015). Residents of the area have an array of occupations. Thirty-seven percent are employed in managerial roles, twenty-five percent in sales and administrative positions, and eighteen percent in service positions (Juday & Lombard, 2015).

According to the Virginia Department of Education (2021), Rockport Public Schools educates 13,395 students in three high schools, three middle schools, thirteen elementary schools, three preschool centers, and three alternative education centers. The school district is predominately black (72.7%), with 17.5% white students. Over half the student population, 63.6%, is classified as economically disadvantaged, and 12.2% of students have documented disabilities (Virginia Department of Education, 2021). Of the student population, 6,566 students are in grades PreK through 6. Twelve facilities are Title I schools, all of which are elementary schools.

This school district was chosen to be included in the study because it was where I experienced my first encounter with student behavioral defiance during my first year of teaching. Oak Wood Elementary School, a pseudonym for the actual site, lies in the middle of Rockport in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Settled in an affluent neighborhood, The Oak Wood School Complex offers desirable schools from the primary level through the high school level. Oak Wood currently educates 524 students in grades kindergarten through six. More than half of

the student population, 66.8%, receive free or reduced lunch. This makes the facility a Title I school (Virginia Department of Education, 2020). As a Title I school fully accredited, a marginally diversified student body consists of 84.5% black and 8.8% white students. A minimal fraction of students, 7.7%, are classified as students with disabilities. The school is unique as it is a predominately black, Title I, fully accredited school. Sixty-five teachers are employed within the school. The administrative staff includes a principal overseeing grades 3-6 and an assistant principal managing grades K-3.

In 2008, the school received significant renovations, creating a gymnasium. Apart from three enclosed sixth-grade classrooms, the current layout of the building has open pods for classrooms. The Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Operating Budget allotted the addition of wall enclosures to the school. One of two schools of this building type, the combined total for wall enclosures is \$1,653,636 (Portsmouth Public Schools, 2020). The teacher quality trails behind that of the state average. Three percent of teachers lack the proper license or endorsement, 12.1% are provisionally licensed, and 9.1% are inexperienced, having less than one year of teaching experience. This signals a possible high turnover rate at this school.

As I seek to advance in the profession of education, I need to develop an understanding of the phenomena educators endure daily. Conducting research within Rockport Public Schools takes me back to where it all began. Searches for relevant previous studies examining the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation and self-efficacy of elementary teachers identified limited literature. Examining the extent to which student behavioral defiance influences elementary classroom educators' motivation and career commitment may enhance knowledge of factors and traits relating to reasons and intentions of teachers remaining or leaving their positions. The study findings are relevant to school principals and district

administrators, providing an empirical basis for teacher recruitment, professional development opportunities, and support strategies to implement within schools to promote the success of classroom educators.

Participants

Participants in this study were elementary teachers of core content areas with varying years of experience as teachers. Participants with differing ranges of employment time within the school were sought. Participants may be currently employed within a Virginia Public School or previously employed within the past three years. According to the literature, each phase in the teaching career provides meaningful details to understand the profession (Glazer, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Trent, 2019). The participants must have experienced student behavioral defiance in the classroom while employed at the school. The research began with ten participants, falling between the recommended sample size (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The minimum sample of this phenomenological study was 10 participants. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants and sites capable of purposefully informing an understanding of the research problem and phenomenon stated in the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants were selected based on their ability to describe the experienced phenomenon.

Researcher Positionality

The organized approach of phenomenology attempts to eliminate instances of prejudice to reach a transcendental state, unimpacted by customs or beliefs of normal science or knowledge of everyday experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study was a transcendental phenomenological study; therefore, prejudgments regarding the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance were set aside. I was a teacher at Oak Wood Elementary in 2015 while my husband was stationed there for three years. In addition, I consider Virginia home. I hold no

relationship with the participants, as the teachers I associated with while employed at the school no longer teach there. I acted as a human instrument to gain insight from the participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

While employed as a classroom teacher, I witnessed teacher turnover year after year as teachers discontinued employment in education. On the contrary, I have seen teachers returning to the job daily, seemingly unhinged by the day's occurrences. Through conversations and interactions with teachers, a persisting commonality included the behavior of students and the influence it posed upon classroom teachers, their motivation, attrition, and stress levels. Through travel as a military spouse, conversations involving student behavioral defiance related to teachers' self-efficacy appeared in schools throughout the continental United States.

Interpretive Framework

Paradigms are beliefs a researcher holds and may be classified as post-positivism, social constructivism, transformation, or postmodernism (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), through social constructivism, individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences within their surroundings to better understand their work environment. Rather than narrowing meanings into a small number of categories, constructivist researchers search for the complexity of views, relying as much as possible on the participants' views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Instead of starting research with a theory, as with post-positivism, patterns of meanings are developed inductively (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Constructivism maintains that learning is an active experience and constructs new ideas based on existing knowledge (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). As the goal of constructivist research is to rely on the participants' experiences as much as possible, this study included interviews with teachers having experienced the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance. Inductive

reasoning allowed me as the researcher to work towards generalizations and theories from information gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and journals.

Interviewing classroom teachers allowed me to garner a narrative perspective of the phenomena from teachers having experienced the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance.

Philosophical Assumptions

Researchers can present philosophical beliefs and influence research through various philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ontological assumptions focus on the nature of reality (Cuthbertson et al., 2020; Klenke, 2014). Reality is subjective and is illuminated by “our specific historical, cultural, ideological, gender-based, and linguistic understanding of reality” (Sandberg, 2005, p. 45). Contrary to quantitative research, where the researcher assumes the central role of the generator of newfound knowledge, epistemological assumptions acknowledge the position the researcher takes within qualitative studies relative to the participants. Epistemology views the participants’ voices as viable and knowledgeable instruments contributing to the creation of knowledge (Klenke, 2014). Axiological assumptions unearth potential biases possibly present within research due to values held by the researcher, while methodological assumptions provide boundaries for the enhancement of theoretical frameworks (Klenke, 2014).

Ontological Assumption

The philosophical assumption informing this research was ontology. Just as different researchers embrace different realities, the same is true with the participants within a study. As qualitative research explores the understanding of a human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the proposed research question considered the lived accounts of classroom educators experiencing student behavioral defiance. The research aimed to focus on how people act in

situations to capture the multiple realities of the participants. The research question, exploratory in nature, focused on human subjectivity to analyze experiences (Check & Schutt, 2012).

Epistemological Assumption

Philosophical ideas within the researcher influence research and can exude through four worldviews or epistemologies: Post-positivism, Constructivism, Advocacy/Participatory, and Pragmatism (Creswell, 2009). The epistemology informing this study was Constructivism. According to Creswell (2009), social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals aspire to gain an understanding of the world in which they live and work. With this, subjective meanings of experiences can be derived from individuals, creating multiple and diverse implications of experienced accounts (Creswell, 2009). The constructivist approach is relevant to a phenomenological investigation such as this because it provides a lens through which elementary classroom educators can make meaning of their experiences in the classroom with student behavioral defiance.

Axiological Assumption

I am currently an elementary school educator within the public school system. For most of my time within the field of education, I have worked in Title I schools. I can see past student behavioral defiance in that during my first year of teaching, my principal at the time presented me with the perspective of not leaving my job because of a ten-year-old child. Her words caused me to look at student behavioral defiance in a different light. I am a second-generation teacher, as my mother was also a teacher. I believe that for classrooms to be optimally effective, teachers must be provided various supports within the school. I am enthralled with understanding why teachers are leaving the profession so that these reasons can be counteracted to lower teacher attrition, increase students' academic experiences, and create pleasurable working environments

for classroom educators.

Researcher's Role

The organized approach of phenomenology attempts to eliminate instances of prejudgment to reach a transcendental state, unimpacted by customs or beliefs of normal science or knowledge of unreflected everyday experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This study was a transcendental phenomenological study; therefore, prejudgments regarding the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance were set aside. I was a teacher at Oak Wood Elementary in 2015 while my husband was stationed there for three years. In addition, I consider Virginia home. I hold no relationship with the participants, as the teachers I associated with while employed at the school are no longer teaching there. I acted as a human instrument to gain insight from the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I carried out primary data collection through in-depth interviews. I did not allow my experiences or perceptions as a classroom educator to influence or lead participants, a strategy called bracketing (Moustakas, 1994).

Procedures

Phenomenologists follow a systematized method to answer their research questions. Transcendental phenomenology challenges the researcher to eliminate prejudgments and set aside presuppositions (Moustakas, 1994). Using Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological model, I began by detailing my experiences with student behavioral defiance. Epoche, Moustakas' first analytic step in his phenomenological model, requires the researcher to suspend judgments until sufficient evidence is accumulated (Moustakas, 1994). I accomplished this by bracketing and setting aside as much of my experiences as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To further assist with bracketing, interviews recorded were reviewed in a timely fashion, within the same day, so as not to rationalize information from my perspective.

The second phase of the phenomenological method is phenomenological reduction. After conducting interviews and focus groups with participants, key statements were identified to enable phenomenological reduction, considering each experience in its singularity (Moustakas, 1994). A structural definition of the phenomenon was established. Significant statements from participants were horizontalized, giving them all equal value (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Within the third step of the process, imaginative variation, I sought to understand how the phenomenon evolved into what it is (Moustakas, 1994). In this phase, I considered all possible meanings of the information received from the participants. Here, it was essential to understand that the path to the truth does not lie in a single path. Instead, countless possibilities can emerge, connecting the essences of an experience (Moustakas, 1994). Focusing on the various perspectives of the participants, I constructed descriptions of how the phenomenon was experienced.

During the last phase of Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological method, the synthesis of composite textural/structural descriptions, meanings, and essences is synthesized. Essence refers to that which is common or universal (Husserl, 1931). A composite description was derived, depicting the implications and outcomes of the study. To conclude the study, I related findings to findings in the literature and possible future studies.

Permissions

Qualitative research requires the purposeful selection of participants based on their ability to contribute knowledge toward making sense of the phenomena as they influence them (Creswell, 2014). The following procedures were used to select participants and collect data. Permission was asked of the district superintendent (Appendix A). After receiving IRB approval (Appendix B), the recruitment of participants began. Possible participants were emailed a

recruitment email (Appendix C). Time and locations for interviews were arranged. To ensure participants understood the nature of the study, the informed consent form (Appendix E) was reviewed with the participants.

Recruitment Plan

Criterion sampling encompasses choosing participants that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). Criterion sampling can be helpful in identifying and understanding cases that are abundant in knowledge (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This phenomenological study was dependent upon the rich descriptions of participants, making criterion sampling appropriate for the study. Emails were sent to possible candidates using the school directory to recruit participants. To participate, teachers must be at least 18 years of age, currently employed within a Virginia Public School District as a general education teacher (grades PreK – 6), or three years removed from the classroom, and have experienced student behavioral defiance. Participants had varying years of experience. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit qualified participants meeting the specified criteria. I contacted applicable candidates to schedule an interview date and time.

Data Collection Plan

Data collection commenced after IRB approval from Liberty University. Introductory emails were distributed acknowledging the researcher and the purpose of the study. Preliminary emails indicated the voluntary nature of the participation in the study. Individual participants were not be identified in any part of the reporting of the findings. By contacting the researcher and returning the consent form, participants provided their consent to participate in this study. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and a reflective essay completed by willing participants. The interviews were used to probe significant encounters with

student behavioral defiance. Focus group questions were asked in the focus group setting where the ten teachers within the study were able to talk to others within the sample. Reflective essays allowed the participants to transcribe instances of behavioral defiance that occurred to be shared.

Individual Interviews

Semi-structured interviews consist of key questions to explore a particular area to expose the human characteristics of a story (Gill et al., 2008; Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are flexible when communicating with participants, as the researcher can ask for clarification or additional questions (Gill et al., 2008). Consisting of many key questions, semi-structured interviews shape areas to be explored while allowing both the interviewer and the interviewee to deviate from prescribed questions to examine an idea in more detail (Gill et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews were appropriate for the study as phenomenologically qualitative research possesses the need to understand the experiences of individuals (Snow, 2009). This method of data collection assisted in describing the lived experience of the participants.

Individual Interview Questions

1. What is your full (first and last) name? CRQ
2. What is your current age? CRQ
3. How do you describe your gender identity? CRQ
4. What is your race/ethnicity? CRQ
5. What is the grade level you currently teach? CRQ
6. Describe your educational background and time in the teaching profession. CRQ
7. In your own words, describe behavioral defiance. SQ1

8. During your most recent school year, how often did you experience student behavioral defiance in your classroom? SQ1
9. How effective are you at managing student behavioral defiance within the classroom?
10. If needed, what could increase your effectiveness? SQ1
11. Recall, retell, and describe an instance involving student behavioral defiance within your classroom. SQ1
12. What was the outcome? SQ1
13. How does student behavioral defiance influence interactions among you and your students? SQ1
14. What emotions do you feel during instances of displayed student behavioral defiance? SQ2
15. How have these emotions influenced your teaching and perspective of teaching as a career? SQ2
16. Describe the value of the professional development and assistance practices currently in place regarding coping mechanisms and support within the classroom. SQ2
17. Describe the expectations you initially had regarding classroom management. SQ2
18. How is this similar to or different from your actual experiences? SQ2

The first six questions are knowledge questions intended to be straightforward (Patton, 2015). It initiates the conversation with the participant. The participants were able to answer this question in a minimalistic manner if desired. Questions were be adjusted according to each participant.

Teachers' perspectives of behavioral defiance are subjective and rely on preconceived notions of students' characteristics (Eckstein, 2019; Lanas & Brunila, 2019). Questions two

through eight align with SQ1. These questions create specificity to the subjective perception of student behavioral defiance. Participants reflected on the phenomenon and process the influence it has on them. Likewise, in correlation with the self-efficacy theory, questions two through seven account for the individuals' perceptions of their own abilities.

Questions nine through thirteen align with SQ2. These questions stem from Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Participants described the influence of student behavioral defiance on their commitment to the teaching profession. Self-efficacy impacts how decisions affect future courses of action. In addition, it is a likely gauge of a person's future accomplishments and motivations.

An interview was held with all 10 participants. Interviews were held virtually. Each participant participated in a 1:1 interview over Google Meet for 45-60 minutes using an audio/visual recording.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not assign numerical values to a phenomenon. Within qualitative research, data analysis provides an interpretation and meaning for the data received through research, using written statements to interpret what gathered material means and represents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological research model was applied to conduct the study and analyze the data. The core processes of the model were put in place to derive knowledge. Data analysis included a cross-analysis of question responses with transcribed interviews.

Epoche, Moustakas' first analytic step in his phenomenological model, requires the researcher to suspend judgments until sufficient evidence is accumulated (Moustakas, 1994). I accomplished this by bracketing and setting aside as much of my experiences as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An open mind was kept in the listening to and grouping of statements

(Moustakas, 1994). Interviews were listened to openly, not clouding responses with my own thinking.

Following the epoche phase, horizontalization took place. According to Moustakas (1994), horizons are the grounding of a phenomenon that gives it a distinct character. This phase in the research can also be labeled as open coding (Patton, 2001). With permission, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcribing, a critical procedural element within qualitative research, aids in the data analysis process (Bailey, 2008). Transcriptions were completed within a week of the interview. Significant statements from participants were horizontalized, giving them all equal value (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The detailed statements presented a range of perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Next, in analyzing the data, I located emergent themes. Significant statements were carefully examined and then clustered into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Likewise, irrelevant, repeated, or overlapping statements were deleted, leaving the remaining statements as horizons. Horizons were verified by reading and rereading transcriptions and reviewing interviews several times. During this phase, also known as axial coding (Patton, 2001), the theoretical framework and literature review was consulted.

Lastly, textual descriptions were examined and pulled out to unearth additional meanings from perspectives, roles, and functions (Moustakas, 1994). Essence refers to that which is common or universal (Husserl, 1931). A composite description was derived, depicting the implications and outcomes of the study. To conclude the study, I related findings to findings in the literature and to possible future studies.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are group discussions on a particular topic guided by the researcher (Gill et

al., 2008). Questions are proposed to participants, highlighting meanings behind the views their views (Gill et al., 2008). During focus groups, the researcher can pose multiple questions and gather broad information, with participants debating, disagreeing, or expanding upon shared ideas in the setting (Katz-Buonincontro, 2022). According to Katz-Buonincontro (2022), having an effective focus group is contingent on two factors. First, a homogeneous grouping, consisting of the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance experienced by all participants, creates a commonality among the group. Secondly, heterogeneity of thought occurs with the various perceptions and experiences of multiple educators with varying years of experience.

Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to the group, sharing your grade level taught and how many years you have been teaching. CRQ
2. For this study, behavioral defiance will be defined as acts such as excessive arguing with people in positions of authority, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, frequent anger and resentment, and questioning rules. Describe any instances of student behavior defiance in your classroom. SQ1
3. What influence, if any, does the behavioral defiance have on these students, academically or socially? SQ1
4. How does student behavioral defiance influence the other students in the classroom? SQ1
5. What strategies, tips, trainings, etc. have been helpful in you managing student behavioral defiance? How did you come about them? SQ1
6. Describe situations of student behavioral defiance in which you find it necessary to seek assistance in the classroom. SQ1

7. What supports are available to you when you have instances of behavioral defiance exceeding your ability to manage them? SQ1
8. Describe your initial feelings when entering the teaching profession. SQ2
9. What are your perceptions towards your career after experiencing student behavior defiance in the classroom? SQ2
10. How do you cope with student behavioral defiance? SQ2
11. Who or what has influenced you to remain in the teaching profession up to this point? SQ2

The first question is a knowledge question intended to be straightforward (Patton, 2015). It initiated conversations with the participants. The participants were able to answer this question in a minimalistic manner.

Questions two through seven align with SQ1. These questions create specificity to the subjective perception of student behavioral defiance. Teachers' perspectives of behavioral defiance are subjective and rely on preconceived notions of students' characteristics (Eckstein, 2019; Lanas & Brunila, 2019). Self-reporting on subjective interpretations of social environments plays a vital role in the process of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress can impede a teacher's tolerance for coping and managing the behavior of the remaining students (Wienen et al., 2019). Behavioral expectations differ among schools and locations within the schools (cafeteria, playground, classroom, etc.) (Lanas & Brunila, 2019). According to Wienen et al. (2019), students causing behavioral disruptions can encourage their classmates to act likewise. In turn, the behavior of these students can be judged more negatively as the number of students displaying behavioral defiance increases. Participants reflected on the phenomenon and

processed the influence it has on them. Likewise, in correlation with the self-efficacy theory, questions two through seven account for the individuals' perceptions of their own abilities.

Questions eight through eleven align with SQ2. According to Kavgaci (2022), when teachers have a positive attitude toward the teaching profession, they have optimism regarding their professional motivation.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of thematic coding. As the researcher, I familiarized myself with the data gathered from the virtual focus groups, transcribing and reading over the data. From there, initial codes were generated, requiring the coding of interesting and systematically occurring features across the entire data set. Thirdly, codes were collated to search for themes. After the themes were determined and reviewed, the themes were also checked to see if a relationship to the coded extracts was evident, forming a thematic map of the analysis. As it was an ongoing process, the themes were defined and named to refine each specific theme. Lastly, a final report was produced to provide a final chance for analysis.

Document Analysis

While interviews are the most frequently employed in phenomenology, it is also valuable for participants to write about their experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2017). De Ruiter et al. (2020) noted that the use of written accounts allowed the researchers to examine associations between events and teachers' emotions. Participants were encouraged to complete reflective essays and write a letter to their former self. The prompt guiding the reflective essay was "As an elementary educator having experienced student behavioral defiance, what would you tell your

younger self to be better prepared for your experiences in the classroom.” Participants had two weeks to complete the essay.

Document Analysis Data Analysis Plan

Essays were analyzed similarly to the individual interviews and transcripts from the focus group. Because the essays were written, transcription was not needed. Data analysis included a cross-analysis of responses from the essays. Data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six steps of thematic coding. I familiarized myself with the data transcribed in the essay responses. Initial codes were generated, requiring coding interesting and systematically occurring features across the entire data set. Thirdly, codes were collated to search for themes. After the themes were determined and reviewed, the themes were also checked to see if a relationship to the coded extracts was evident, forming a thematic map of the analysis. As it was an ongoing process, the themes were defined and named to refine each specific theme. Lastly, a final report was produced to provide a final chance for analysis.

Data Synthesis

The final step in the phenomenological research model requires constructing an inclusive description of the essence and meaning of the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl related the concept of essence to include what is common, the condition without it, and their modes of being (Qutoshi, 2018). The essence of an experience is never exhausted; therefore, the information gleaned represents the essence of a particular time and place (Moustakas, 1994). The essence comes from the vantage point of the researcher. Emergent themes from all participant sources, interviews, focus group, and documents, were further analyzed to generate central themes. The entire body generated a single set of themes.

The data from the interviews, focus groups, and essays was reviewed multiple times and compared to information within the literature review. Significant statements from participants were horizontalized, giving them all equal value (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The detailed statements presented a range of perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Significant statements were carefully examined and then clustered into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Likewise, irrelevant, repeated, or overlapping statements were deleted, leaving the remaining statements as horizons. Horizons were verified by reading and rereading the documents several times. The theoretical framework and literature review was consulted.

Textual descriptions were used to locate additional meanings from perspectives, roles, and functions (Moustakas, 1994). A composite description was derived, depicting the implications and outcomes of the study. To conclude the study, I related findings to findings in the literature and to possible future studies.

Trustworthiness

A measure of rigor is required for research to be perceived as worthwhile (Amankwaa, 2016). Rigor is encompassed in trustworthiness and includes additional measures such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Within each aspect are specific methodologies to increase rigor within the qualitative study. Such measures include triangulation, member checks, peer debriefing, and thick descriptions (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McInnes et al., 2017). Interpreting data requires creative and critical talents to carefully judge the meaningful portions of patterns and themes through analysis (Patton, 2015).

Credibility

Credibility determines whether the findings presented on behalf of the participants are believable and truthfully interpreted (McInnes et al., 2017). In qualitative research, the researcher

is often the data collector and data analyst, resulting in potential bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To achieve credibility within qualitative studies, rigorous analysis methods must be used to yield high-quality data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McInnes et al., 2017). Peer debriefing was used to achieve credibility within the study. As defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing offers an external inspection of the inquiry process by exploring portions of the analysis that may have otherwise only been implicit in the researcher's mind. Likewise, I conducted member checks, testing the received information with those for which the data were originally collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also known as respondent validation, member checking occurs when analyzed data is returned to participants to confirm the results (Birt et al., 2016). Credibility was established in the study through member checking with select participants to confirm data and clarify meaning.

Transferability

Transferability shows that the findings may have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), primarily achieved through thick descriptions when describing research findings (Geertz, 2008). Transferability refers to the ability for findings from the context of your study to be applied to another context or within the same context at another time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While transferability cannot be guaranteed, it can be promoted. The researcher's goal is to provide enough information and detail so that others may determine whether the finding applies to their own situation (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019).

Dependability

The likelihood of dependability comes with the establishment of creditability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability refers to the sound collection of qualitative data (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). Sound research is comprised of data that has been analyzed coherently,

accurately reflecting the information provided by the participants (McInnes et al., 2017). Dependability is increased in qualitative research through inquiry audits and audit trials (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Inquiry audits and audit trials are conducted by a third party to confirm the accuracy of the statements within a study (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). To perform such an audit, the auditor has to be familiar with the qualitative research and its methodology (Carcary, 2009). Peer debriefing was utilized. Peer debriefing, a process in which a researcher is exposed to an unbiased person to aspects of the inquiry, can provide an opportunity for researchers to defend emergent hypotheses and enable the researcher to become aware of her stance towards data and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability

Confirmability regards how the data was analyzed (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019) and the extent to which research findings correspond to the reality of participants (Urban & van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). Confirmability was established through successful review and synthesis of the acquired data from interviews and letters. Dependability and confirmability was maintained in this study through peer debriefing, incorporating an objective peer to parallel the data analysis, highlighting overlooked biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability can be obtained in several ways, including journaling, memos, and audit trials. Confirmability was achieved in this study through the use of peer debriefing and by maintaining an audit trail.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations and measures were taken throughout the study to avoid the misconception that ethical considerations are only a factor during data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such measures included confidentiality, informed consent with voluntary participation, usage of site and participant pseudonyms, and respect for participants' privacy

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Approval was secured through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The risk present within the study was minimal, consistent with those encountered ordinarily during everyday work routines. Participation in the study did not inhibit nor advance the status within their work environment. All information obtained was kept confidential and not shared with leadership within their educational organization. Participant interview data was stored in a private place. Hard copies and computer data were secured in the researcher's personal home office. All information, including uniquely coded transcripts, was destroyed upon completion of the study.

Summary

Researchers use qualitative research to understand people in relation to a phenomenon endured. In doing so, a human problem is explored and is a medium for understanding an individual's meaning attached to a problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon of student behavioral defiance. The phenomenological model of Clark Moustakas (1994) was applied to carry out the study and analyze the data. The core processes of the model were put in place to derive knowledge. Data analysis included a cross-analysis of question responses with transcribed interviews, focus groups, and essay responses.

Epoche, Moustakas's first analytic step, requires the researcher to suspend judgments until sufficient evidence is accumulated, which was accomplished through bracketing. An open mind was kept in listening to and grouping statements (Moustakas, 1994). Following the epoche, horizontalization took place. With permission, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were completed within a week of the interview. Significant statements from

participants were horizontalized, giving them all equal value (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The detailed statements presented a range of perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Emergent themes were located and clustered (Moustakas, 1994). Irrelevant, repeated, or overlapping statements were deleted, leaving the remaining statements as horizons. Horizons were verified by reading and rereading transcriptions and reviewing interviews several times. During this phase, also known as axial coding (Patton, 2001), the theoretical framework and literature review was consulted.

Lastly, textual descriptions were examined and pulled out to unearth additional meanings from perspectives, roles, and functions (Moustakas, 1994). A composite description was derived, depicting the implications and outcomes of the study. To conclude the study, I related findings to findings in the literature and possible future studies.

Data gathered from individual interviews, focus groups, and reflective essays were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of thematic coding. As the researcher, I familiarized myself with the data gathered, transcribing and reading over the data. From there, initial codes were generated, requiring the coding of interesting and systematically occurring features across the entire set of data. Codes were collated to search for themes, after which the themes were checked to see if a relationship to the coded extracts was evident, forming a thematic map of the analysis. To refine each specific theme, the themes were defined and named. A final report was produced to provide a final chance for analysis.

This transcendental phenomenological study was designed to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary classroom educators in Virginia. Such an approach shed light on understanding the life experiences of elementary educators. Chapter three outlined the research design and methodology to disaggregate data provided by participants to identify the

influence of student behavioral defiance on teachers. Chapter three also gave an overview of qualitative research and phenomenology; design, procedures, and data collection processes; and information regarding trustworthiness. A broader understanding of the phenomenon upon classroom educators adds to the literature and provides teachers, principals, and administrators with information about teacher self-efficacy.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Specifically, this study examined the lived experiences of teachers who had encountered student behavioral defiance in the classroom and the influence it had on their commitment to the teaching profession. The question shaping the study was, “What are the lived experiences of elementary educators within Hampton Roads having experienced student behavioral defiance?” Further, the study sought to understand behavioral defiance from the perception of the classroom educators by asking, “What are elementary educators’ perceptions of student behavioral defiance?” in addition to “What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Hampton Roads, Virginia following occurrences of student behavioral defiance in relation to professional commitment to the profession?”

This chapter gives a brief description of the participants of the study as well as present themes that developed through data analysis. The current study examined the lived experiences of ten participants, all licensed elementary educators. Key findings obtained through semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and reflective essays will be included. The participants were recruited from Virginia Public Schools in Hampton Roads. Results from this study are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter will conclude with the data in the form of narrative themes, tables, and research question responses.

Participants

This study on the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation of classroom educators rendered information about ten Virginia Public Schools educators in the Hampton

Roads area of Virginia. The participants varied in age, race, gender, and experience level. The teachers had various years of experience, ranging from two to 27 years within the classroom. All had experienced student behavioral defiance in a PreK-6 classroom, qualifying them to participate in this study. Explicitly, participants recounted instances of student behavioral defiance occurring in grades two through six. One participant currently teaches seventh-grade mathematics; however, she was a fifth-grade general education teacher two years prior. Two teachers were career switchers, one previously working in nursing and the other a military veteran. Each participant answered questions during the interview to provide more information about their experiences and time in the profession (see Table 1).

Ashley

Ashley is from Virginia and teaches in the same district where she attended grade school. Her third-grade teacher sparked the light that brought her to teaching; moreover, she was humbled by the opportunity to work alongside some of the teachers who taught when she was a student. Ashley attended college locally and taught full-time following her graduating semester. Completing all three years of her teaching career in a second-grade classroom, Ashley loves creating remarkable experiences for her students. She balances her free time between spending time with her husband and newborn daughter.

Brian

Brian did not desire to be a teacher even though his mother was a teacher throughout his childhood and still teaches now. He was surprised by how well he connected with young people. This sparked his descent into the classroom. Brian is in his second year as a sixth-grade teacher. Initially, Brian hoped to teach younger students; however, since being in the classroom with sixth-grade students, he feels this is where he is needed. With two young sons at home, Brian

only has a little free time but makes it a point to visit his students' sports games throughout the week and weekends.

Charlotte

Charlotte has been a third-grade teacher at her current school for fourteen years. She started as a teacher's assistant with an associate degree. While working alongside a former teacher at the current school, Charlotte was encouraged to continue her education to have a more significant impact on young minds. A strong relationship with Christ ignites Charlotte in all aspects of her life. She looks forward to being an empty nester, as her last son of four is in his senior year of high school. While she is rewarded by the relationships she has built with her students and their families, she is encouraging her son to pursue other professions.

Chris

Chris is a military veteran and has been a teacher for ten years. After serving nine years, Chris traded his uniform for dry-erase markers and sticky notes in his jacket pockets. The fond memories of his time as a young student brought him into the classroom as a fifth-grade teacher. He has taught at two different schools, with experience in kindergarten and fourth grade. The military has given Chris insight into dealing with his students and their families.

Clarissa

Clarissa is a ninth-year teacher who recently relocated to teach in a new city. It has been a difficult adjustment with the fourth-grade team she is a part of. In addition, she is also in the process of a divorce. As a white woman teaching in a predominantly black Title I school, Clarissa recognizes some of her students and their families' reservations regarding partnering with her in the classroom. In her first year at her new school, she came in knowing it would be essential to pick the battles worthy of her attention. She came from a home with an authoritative

father. This made her feel she never had a voice, and she vowed to avoid this at all costs within her classroom. Clarissa has come to find that within the Title I school where she works, many students are dealing with various struggles capable of distracting them from learning in the classroom.

Felicia

This school year marks Felicia's first year back after leaving the profession for a year after four years of prior teaching. She has been an elementary school teacher for five years, all in third grade. She is a wife and mother to three young children under eight. Originally, Felicia left the profession to give birth to her third child and be a stay-at-home mother. After much consideration, she returned to the classroom to add income to their household. One thing that kept Felicia going and encouraged her to return to the classroom was the team she would rejoin. She admires, respects, and loves working with them.

Heather

Heather has a bachelor's degree in business and two master's degrees in education, one in elementary education PreK-eight and the other in curriculum studies. She started her career at 17 through a co-op program where high schoolers went to school half the day for high school courses and completed teacher preparation classes and training for the remainder of the day. While none of the scholars in the program were guaranteed employment within the district after the program ended, Heather was immediately offered employment. Thus, her teaching career began in Texas; however, the military brought her to Virginia due to her husband's military service. In addition to being a military spouse, Heather is the proud mother of four children.

Michelle

Michelle is a third-grade teacher and has been an elementary educator for 27 years. She comes from a family of educators and loves being a beacon of light and hope for new teachers. Relationships are at the foundation of the interactions she has with her students. One of the best feelings in the world has been the privilege of teaching the children of her former students. Specifically, this school year, she showed her current student a picture of his mother from when she was her teacher! She would not trade any of her experiences. Over the years, Michelle has been blessed and feels God has placed people in her path that have helped her grow spiritually, mentally, and professionally. With no children of her own, teaching has allowed her to impact the lives of many children and their families.

Patricia

Patricia has worked in public schools for 19 years, of which five years have been as a classroom teacher. She has served in other roles, such as office manager and teaching assistant. Patricia became a teacher because of her mother and feels this deepens their connection because her mother passed away. Her faith plays a huge role in her life, and she exhibits this with her weekly attendance of bible study mid-week and Sunday service. She started her formal educational journey at the local community college, earning an associate degree. From there, Patricia earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and a master's in special education.

Sasha

Sasha comes from a family of educators and advocates for academics. She is a career switcher, formally a part of the healthcare industry. With a bachelor's in sociology and nursing certifications, Sasha thought she would try teaching and fell in love. With six years of teaching under her belt, Sasha is passionate about serving young people. She hopes to believe in them just

as others have believed in her, for this took her a long way. For Sasha, having a part in young people maturing is an incredible thing to be a part of.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Content Area	Grade Level
Ashley	3	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	2nd
Brian	2	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	6th
Charlotte	14	Bachelor	Special Education - All Content Areas	3rd
Chris	10	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	5th
Clarissa	8	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	4th
Felicia	5	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	3rd
Heather	21	Masters	English Language Arts	5th
Michelle	27	Bachelor	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	3rd
Patricia	5	Masters	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	6th
Sasha	6	Bachelor	Elementary Education -All Content Areas	3rd

Results

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Data collected from the semi-structured interviews, focus group, and reflective essay was analyzed using Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research model. This section will discuss steps for

data analysis leading to the development of themes and discussion of the participants' responses to the research questions.

Theme Development

A unique attribute of qualitative research includes data analysis. Information collected from semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, and reflective essays were analyzed. From this, themes were developed to describe how the participants' experiences of student behavioral defiance influenced their commitment to the profession. The steps used to analyze the data and various themes are presented below.

Epoche

According to Moustakas (1994), Epoche is "a process of setting aside predilections, prejudices, predispositions, and allowing things, events, and people to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time" (p.85). Transcendental phenomenology presents the necessity of the researcher to bracket self-experiences relating to the phenomenon of the study. Setting aside my personal opinions before collecting data was essential to focus clearly on the participants' experiences. In doing so, I reflected on the interview questions and reflective essay prompt before collecting data. I recalled experiences within the classroom during my time as an elementary educator in Virginia. Bracketing in such a manner induced emotions from when I was in the classroom and encountered student behavioral defiance. I could recount influences, thoughts, and programs that provided me support, or the lack thereof, in situations involving the phenomenon. Most importantly, it allowed me to consider those still in the classrooms of Virginia Public Schools who continue to face instances of student behavioral defiance. Following this procedure, I conducted interviews without bias

based on my experiences and listened intently without inflicting my thinking and feelings onto their messages.

Horizontalization and Clustering

Succeeding epoche is the process of establishing horizons, the grounding of a phenomenon that gives it distinct character (Moustakas, 1994). Specific statements were identified from the transcripts. Identifying these statements gave information about the participants and gave various perspectives on the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). After reading and rereading the transcripts, significant statements from participants were horizontalized, giving them all equal value (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I created a table displaying significant statements from the transcripts. The table was reviewed to remove overlapping statements, revealing various perspectives about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The significant statements were then carefully examined and clustered into themes. Table 2 displays sample statements extracted from interviews. The sample statements are individual verbatim statements shared by the classroom educators.

Table 2

Selected Significant Statements

Significant Statements	Participant
“Nowhere did they tell us that we were getting ready to go to war. When I walked through the doors, they didn't tell us that I was going to be broken within the first three months.”	Heather
“I liken this to somebody who’s working in an office setting, and you have an employee next to you... that could go off at any time and start throwing things at you, start screaming at you, start hitting you.”	Michelle
“Being given the opportunity some years ago by the principal that was at the school at the time, she’s not there anymore, but she saw something... I didn’t think this was something that I just looked at	Sasha

as, oh, ... I've got x, y, and z degrees. I don't need this, you know. But I actually have a passion and desire to be of service and help these little kids."

"Never did I think that I would go in a room where I'm ducking and dodging a child throwing pencils or glue sticks, you know? And I understand if I'm in an inclusion room, then I can prepare myself for those things because that's expected in inclusion. But if I'm in a room where it's, I would say regular instead of inclusion; I wouldn't expect that type of behavior."

Ashley

Themes

Completing the process of horizontalization brought about the clustering of significant statements from participants. After significant statements were clustered, themes that answered the central research question were developed. A total of four themes emerged. This study answered the following research question: What are the lived experiences of elementary educators within Hampton Roads having experienced student behavioral defiance? The following themes emerged: relationship, stress/frustration, support, and impact on family.

Stress/Frustration

This was an important theme and was expressed by eight of the ten participants. Feelings of stress and frustration became evident throughout participant interviews, the focus group, and reflective essays by direct statements made by the participants and during the recollection of their lived experiences. Charlotte voiced, "Not being able to teach effectively is... very stressful, very depressing." When asked what student behavioral defiance feels like in the classroom, Sasha shared a list of feelings evoked during the encounter, such as "stress, agitated, annoyed." She said, "But I think most of mine is frustration because having to be interrupted several times to stop and have to deal with the behavior issue takes away from others... and everything just gets all crumbled." Felicia echoed these same sentiments, expressing:

I think at some point of it, you feel the immediate response is frustration, but at the same time, you can feel discouraged because you want to be able to reach every single student. And then sometimes those behavioral issues they're harder to reach.

Others shared reflections on what they thought teaching entailed compared to the reality they found themselves in. Clarissa expressed naively thinking that being a teacher meant decorating bulletin boards but found that there is so much more that comes with being an educator. In her written response, "Fighting for control with young humans that are less developed than yourself can take you to a stressful place." When asked, Brian merely responded with one word and nothing more. "Frustration." Ashley shared the results of her stress during the focus group while recounting an instance of student behavioral defiance.

I felt like ... I was at the end of my rope. I came in stressed and left stressed. I noticed my appearance changing, my patience waning until I snapped. I knew I had to get out. I was tired of being a punching bag.

Consistent interference with student behavioral defiance brought Ashley to a point she never thought she would find herself at in her career. Her love for teaching became questionable. The career she dreamed of did not pan out as she imagined it would.

Amid frustration, however, reigns an effort to improve the situation for some. While Chris immediately responded with feelings of stress during instances of student behavioral defiance, he elaborated upon his response, saying,

Initially, it can be very stressful, but I can't imagine coming to work every day like this, so I sit and try to reflect on what can I do to kind of reach the student... you're digging, trying to figure out what is triggering that behavior.

He uses the stress encountered throughout the day to fuel his mission to reach and teach the young minds in his classroom despite disruptions and setbacks brought about by student behavioral defiance. This skill took much practice and came with wavering moments at times, but overcoming the stressors far outweighed his time in the classroom. He had to adjust his outlook on the situation to make it day-to-day.

Veteran teacher Michelle reflected on moments of stress within the profession; however, she currently finds herself in a new era of her career. “At times, I was pushed... I was pushed beyond my limits and stressed daily.” The transition she has noticed with students throughout her career has been remarkable.

I think I naively thought [behavioral defiance] was mainly going to be talking and things like that. And really, for the beginning of my career, that’s all it was. It wasn’t until, I’d say in the last ten years or so that I’ve seen that escalation in behaviors, bad behaviors. For many of the teachers in the study, stress has fluctuated throughout their careers, but stress has been a factor for most.

Relationships

In addition to stress and frustration, many participants expressed the importance of relationships. The relationships were divided into multiple subthemes and had both positive and negative responses within them. To start, the relationship between student and teacher was of great importance and was mentioned by several of the participants. Also included in relationships are the relationships between teacher and teacher, student and student, and student and parent.

Student-Teacher Relationship

Many teachers responded throughout the interviews and focus group with a strong desire to help all students. For Chris, relationships with him and his students have been a significant focus in the classroom.

In the military, relationships were crucial and could ultimately save your life. It didn't matter if you liked someone or not; we worked together as a team. I understand that I may not be able to connect with everyone, but [I] try to keep it as fair and equal as possible to not increase instances of defiance.

When creating relationships with students, much has to be taken into consideration. As a veteran teacher, Michelle understood teacher-student relationships as essential to navigating student behavioral defiance in the classroom throughout the school year. "I'm definitely a believer in making the relationships ... building those relationships with the students because I do think that helps mitigate some of ... you know, some of the behaviors." Similarly, Heather experienced greater instances of student behavioral defiance in previous school years while teaching at the elementary level that began to dissipate after relationships were formed. She noticed the power of relationships.

I don't experience defiance as often because for me, I build relationships first, the first two weeks [of school]. Eventually, of course, there is always going to be the defiance... but because we have a relationship, I can fuss all day, and they'll go, 'Yes, ma'am.' It's just the relationship is there.

Teacher-Teacher Relationship

The relationship of teacher to teacher was also mentioned in the data, as well as that of the relationship between coworkers. Felicia left the profession and returned. When asked about the driving force behind this decision, she shared, "I have a good team ... I honestly came back

because of that team. The support from that team, knowing that... everybody's going through the same frustrations." Patricia echoed the sentiment. "My team makes things bearable. We eat lunch together every day, and this gives us a chance to reflect and collaborate on the behaviors that we are seeing." Sasha took it further to share the vitality of a great team when dealing with student behavioral defiance. "I have to get other people's and not outside, more teachers, opinions and suggestions. That is one of my big things." Even as a veteran teacher near retirement, Michelle articulated to her former self in her reflective essay that "Your fellow teachers will be your saving grace in the turbulent years ahead."

For Heather, the teacher-teacher relationship means being there for new teachers entering the profession. When student behavioral defiance was at its peak in her career, Heather recognized a trend among the teachers and students that had yet to build a relationship.

Students were so used to getting their way. Moreover, if they had given just enough attitude and just enough negativity, the teachers would pull back [and] even the principals... because they didn't want to have the interactions with them. It would just be like, just get through the day... and you would see it in teacher's faces, just distraught, like you made it. We made it. And then the next morning, everybody would come back, and everybody still looked just broken. I was like we can't keep doing this. It's not going to work.

From this experience, Heather took it upon herself to advise incoming educators to lessen the likelihood of them being blindsided by the occurrences to come into the classroom.

They don't prepare us for reality, and that messes a lot of teachers up. When a teacher gets some of the students I previously had, the ones that need a little extra TLC, I share

simple words of encouragement. This is not to put a bad taste in the teacher's mouth but to give them things to look out for and to let them know some things that worked for me.

Student-Student Relationship

The participants witnessed a variety of implications for students when in classrooms where student behavioral defiance is present. For some educators, situations with student behavioral defiance bear on future classmates before entering the classroom. Some participants, including Charlotte, conveyed,

People do not understand the personality differences children have, and it's hard trying to deal with 46 of those personalities... How am I going to teach and move around about this to make classroom teaching successful for everybody and safe?

As this was acknowledged during the focus group, Ashley added to it, saying, "Some years, the perfect storm is created when different children come together." From Felicia's interview, she noted, "Some of them have been together for so long they've just kind of learned to tune the behaviors out, but then you have some that they can't tune the behaviors out." These defiant behaviors are often inherited by teachers year after year, as stated by Heather. "They are setting us up for failure. If they knew that last year the same crew was together, why would you put the exact same group together ...?"

The presence of student behavioral defiance can strike fear in the hearts of students in the classroom. During instances of behavioral defiance, Heather replied, "The other students are scared. They are afraid." Sasha shared similar thoughts during a reminiscence of an occurrence. "The kids are scared... back to my previous year... a student got agitated and started throwing things at students. He threw books. He threw a case of books. He threw my salad. I had to have help from admin." Instances such as this sometimes have students on edge. They do not know

when it will occur again. It makes it difficult to interact with the behaviorally defiant student in fear of displayed outbursts.

Patricia shared a current situation she faces this year with a particular student. She described him as small in stature; however, he brings a powerful presence into the classroom, sometimes causing his classmates to feel threatened. “The best way that I can describe it is that he acts like a rough man on the streets. The kids never know what to expect from him.” When the environment causes students to question their safety, an added level of responsibility is placed on the classroom teacher. As a result, Felicia created a means to address surrounding students during instances of behavioral defiance by implementing restorative justice circles, a mighty task her third graders have proven capable of handling.

In continuation, participants recognized that student academic outcomes are impacted by students displaying student behavioral defiance in various occurrences. The effects were shared in multiple ways, from classroom assignments to state testing. Brian communicated in his interview, “It makes it harder for them to do their work.” For Charlotte, the effects were even farther reaching. I felt that my scores, which depended on the SOLs, were not as high.” This is a situation taken seriously by Charlotte as the state test, The Virginia Standards of Learning, is a way to show the academic growth of her students. This particular year, she “had a lot of problems delivering instruction to [her] students. The influence of student behavioral defiance on what Charlotte and her students considered the culminating moment of the school year brought about disappointment because of the behavioral actions of students.

Student-Parent Relationship

Among the relationships mentioned throughout the data collection process surfaced conversations of the student-parent relationship from the perspective of the classroom educator.

A look into the home life of students give insight to student behavior in the classroom. Sasha noticed the interactions between child and parent because, in some instances of student behavioral defiance, parents had to be called to come to the school to help resolve the conflict.

I think that a lot of the defiance and things that's going on in the classroom stems from home. It's carried over from home because some kids can't really draw that boundary of, "Okay, I'm leaving home. And what I do at home, I can't do it at school." They're still making it all as one. "Well, I do it at home so I can do it at school," or "You can't tell me what to do. You're not my ... parent," not understanding when they come through those doors, we're the person [that is] here to help you, and in order to be of assistance to you, for you to be successful, you have to follow what we're telling you to do.

Sasha's experience of homelife spilling into the classroom is worthy of recognition. Socially transitioning from a home to a school atmosphere is better suited for help from the parent and the teacher. Working in isolation may not be as effective. Consistency from both parties can carry the expectation from home to school with minimal lapses in understanding.

Building relationships is essential for Heather; however, there is a relationship that supersedes the relationships formed in the classroom with her and the students. It sets the foundation for the mindset many of her students will have once they enter her door.

It starts at home. When you see a parent talk to another, because ... I've seen them talk to other teachers and parents ... just nasty, mean, and rude, the children are picking [it up], and they're reciprocating it right back to the teachers.

Heather often breaks through this barrier within the first two weeks of school. While she prides herself on her ability to accomplish such a task, it takes a lot mentally, spiritually, and physically.

Remaining consistent no matter how many times a correction has to be given allows the student to understand what will and will not be tolerated.

A continuance of less-than-desirable characteristics can impede classroom life when boundaries are not in place. Charlotte echoed these very thoughts as she noted the importance of family. "Pay attention to ...family dynamics of your students." Patricia piggybacked off of this, accounting for situations where she has been able to interact with the parents of her students following instances of student behavioral defiance. "Oftentimes, meeting with the parents explains a lot of what is going on. This isn't true all of the time, but sometimes it's like a missing puzzle piece." The classroom educator is left to take on an additional role to teach life skills outside of learning standards in an attempt to create an acceptable classroom environment.

Over the years, Felica has found that when it comes to student behavioral defiance and the classroom, "Many of your students come from homes and environments that are not like yours and have experienced things that you will never understand." After having her own children, she has sympathized with families in this situation. It has guided her interactions with behaviorally defiant children in the classroom and with their families.

Honestly, it might have been me having children, I think my second child, realizing that honestly, we haven't done much differently with my second child than we [did] with the first child, but she's coming at it from a totally different angle. Some of the defiant behavior that I see from her like I'm just trying to figure it out for myself. So, I kind of [feel] like this. Some of these parents are in the same boat. You know, they're dealing with eight-year-olds who are still defiant. So, they're trying to figure out what's going on with them and getting them in the therapy and stuff they need. But I would say, yeah, I think a lot of it had to do with me having my own children.

Having children allowed Felicia to identify with the challenges parents face when they have a behaviorally defiant child. Understanding what helps in her situation, Felicia uses it as a platform to advocate for getting resources to assist children and families of this population.

Impact on Family

The third emerging theme involved the impact of student behavioral defiance after the school day has ended. The effects of the day weighed on participants differently; however, for Brian, a new father to two sons under the age of three, coming home and assuming responsibilities with his children can be challenging at times, especially when the behavioral defiance is high. “My patience has already been tried, and I have to try to put on a fresh face for my own kids. I hate bringing emotions home, but some days, it’s tough.” Sharing the responsibilities of home life with his wife, Brian is not always able to decompress. On some days, after the school day has ended, he has to switch hats and fulfill his responsibilities as a parent immediately following school.

Ashley, another participant with a young child at home, could relate to Brian’s point of view. “Most days, I feel I have nothing left to give, and [my daughter] doesn’t deserve that.” Brian and Ashley shared how they are adamant about being in tune with their children to avoid contributing to the phenomenon. Brian went as far as to share that one of his sons shares the name of one of his most behaviorally defiant students. He “refused to call him by his name at one point” and referred to him by a nickname instead. The effects of student behavioral defiance in the classroom were far-reaching for him.

On the other hand, Heather has been encouraged to improve the perspective in which her students see the world just as she does in her own home. Within her career, she has found

teaching is not from the time she “clock[s] in [until] the time [she] clock[s] out. It's all day. It's every day.” Education is serious in her household, and the same holds true within her classroom.

I'm ... showing them a different life ... I feel like my life, my children, my four kids, them being excellent in what they're doing and showing them a different life is going to open doors for the students who are listening, you know because they think life is only what they see.

For Heather, the impact of home stretches far beyond the classroom into the life her students will create for themselves in the future as adults. Some students may not be able to dream that far and feel they will always be trapped in the situations they are in, such as living in poverty-stricken environments. Illuminating the possibilities of a better life could mean life or death for these students.

A scale of this response was spoken on by other participants as well. Felicia commented during her one-on-one interview:

I will shut down, and that's not okay. That's not okay. I literally have to separate myself from it and say I've done what I can do; I did everything I'm supposed to do. I need to pass this along to the people that need to have this information. I still would bring some of that stuff home with me on my heart, on my mind, and in my heart, you know, like, oh, I shoulda done this. And I'm trying to figure out why this kid is doing this.

Felicia poured much of herself into her classroom in an effort for her students to achieve success, emotionally and academically. A balance had to be established to avoid burnout. Depleting her emotional bank for her students would tap into her emotional resources for her family and herself. Creating balance in her life did not equate to her not caring about her students; instead, it permitted her to continue her strides in the classroom to impact her students positively.

For others, frequent experiences with student behavioral defiance have allowed them to create a definitive line between home life and work. Charlotte marked this as a period of desensitization sharing:

I try my best to desensitize myself from the classroom behaviors. Now, this year, I don't work from home anymore... I left it in the classroom. I take care of me when I go home... I step back from everything. I'm not answering emails. I'm not answering dojos. I'm not doing anything. And when I get [back at school], I just start back over. And that's how I do it. And I'm no longer... I'm not locked in anymore bringing that stuff home to my family.

Charlotte's integration of balance between work and home was necessary for her to continue in the field of education. Continually addressing student behavioral defiance, even after the school day ends, was not sustainable.

Support

Educators expressed feelings of hopelessness, be it through lack of support during instances of behavioral defiance or after the smoke settled. An absence of concern plagued some participants during reflections on past occurrences. Michelle remembered after an instance of behavioral defiance:

It upsets your whole day. I'd never been attacked by a student before when that boy came at me... I'd never had a kid do that before and then tear up my room! So, I was rattled. I remember getting after admin and saying, you know, nobody came to check on me when that happened.

For Michelle, a check-in by an administrator would have made a big difference in her perception of the incident that occurred in her classroom; however, she was left to navigate it on her own,

both during and after. In her current predicament, the “lack of discipline [is] so disheartening and demoralizing,” and because of it, she has witnessed “teachers leave the profession in droves.” In addition to the absenteeism of support, Michelle also acknowledged the PBIS program in the school as a scapegoat for students rather than a source of interventions for a population of students needing them.

The lack of support Heather felt evolved into a responsibility that requires much of her. I am so happy I can create a safe space for [my students], but that's a lot. It's a lot to do that. It's a lot from the teacher. It's a lot of... buying candy. It's a lot of... trying to build relationships. It's a lot of “How are you doing?” asking it 25 different times in one hour and listening to stories I'm not ready to hear because I'm trying to do math. You know, I'm just trying to teach, but hearing the stories and the different things about them, I have to hear. I have to listen in order to get to the math. And that's now a part of teaching, I guess.

With limited administrative support, Heather turned this negative into a positive to support her students who need her the most. The reward from giving herself to her classroom is motivating. Requiring a lot from her, she does her best to manage a balance to avoid burnout.

When asked about measures in place for coping at her school, Sasha responded saying: I guess that [would] be the program they call themselves hav[ing]. I don't think, and this is me personally stating, I don't think it helps because last year, our coping mechanism for defiance was you sent them to the dean of students, and they'd come back with a lollipop and Pokémon cards. I don't know how that helped them. So, it increased my frustration because, you know, they didn't have a consequence for their actions. And I don't think as far as coping as a teacher or just an adult in the educational system; I don't

think they have anything in place because I go home every day either tired and frustrated and stressed or I am just ready to just scream on the way out the door... It's very stressful. And I don't think again, me personally speaking, that we have anything in place for teachers to just de-stress and be prepared for the next day. It's just constantly forever back-to-back to back-to-back. And it's like, where do we stop and breathe? And I don't think what they have in place is working. In my opinion, it's not working.

The support received by Sasha in situations such as these does not address student behavioral defiance to lessen the possibilities of occurring in the future. If anything, she feels it “opens the door” for more instances to occur.

Ashley yearns for more support for her students in order to facilitate growth and learning. Understanding she cannot do it alone, she is left to find where additional help can come from. In her conversation, the location of services and assistance still needs to be realized.

How can I help? I'm not equipped to help. I'm thinking, am I doing this right? Am I asking the right questions? Am I pushing too much? Do I need to push more? Because the thing is, I don't know what they need. I don't know how to prescribe what they need. And sometimes. I'm thinking it's one thing, but it could be something else.”

Feelings of helplessness swarmed Ashley during the interview. She was brought to tears at the thought of inadequacies in receiving and providing support to her students.

Chris recognizes the supports in place but remarked that they “only work in some instances.” According to Chris, the behavioral defiance trainings are helpful but sometimes not. When it is not helpful, it is up to classroom educators to navigate the best way they can; conversely, if this is not in the desired realm of administration, there could be consequences for the teacher. “The supports we are given only provide a lens you can look through, but that lens

doesn't capture every issue or situation you may encounter. It only provides perspective." Ashley was unfortunate to fall on the bitter side of handling student defiance. After a student in her second-grade class became physical with another student, Ashley "lost [her] cool and threw an empty tissue box at the student being the aggressor." Ashley received written disciplinary action after the incident. Acting in the moment produced a reactionary behavior. No procedures were in place to address the situation. After her reprimand, Ashley was disappointed with the measure of clarification given and the lack of support moving forward.

Patrica recognizes her school's efforts to address student behavioral defiance, but the efforts could be more successful. "They try to have the necessary things in place, but they don't want the suspension rates to be high. There are so many things they won't suspend the kids for." In the classroom, student behavioral defiance can cause a once-calm classroom to disrupt into chaos. Having been in education for some time, Patricia sees the forest through the trees. While some teachers lose control of an entire classroom at the onset of behavioral defiance, making it difficult to pinpoint the root student, Patricia has noticed "there are about seven sixth graders that if they removed them and placed them in an alternative setting, things would get better." For Patricia, it is more than removing those students from the school. It is about getting them in an educational setting that is the "least restrictive" for them. Once this is done, the students will have a better chance at success, according to Patricia. The current setting is not helping them or the innocent students around them.

Outlier Data and Findings

Outlier data is comprised of findings that do not align with the research questions of a study, or the themes presented from the data. Within the study an unaligned finding appeared. Verbal persuasion was previously thought to have the weakest influence on self-efficacy.

Contrarily, one participant in particular spoke of the magnitude verbal persuasion has influenced her commitment to the teaching profession. From the perspective of Charlotte, a previous administrator is the reason she remains in the classroom. “She still encourages me to this day.” When asked why she remains in the teaching profession given thoughts of wanting to leave, she shared this former principal “never forgets to tell me what an amazing teacher I am.” Verbal persuasion has helped persuade Charlotte to continue in the field of education despite continued instances of student behavioral defiance.

Research Question Responses

This section offers direct narratives to the research questions guiding this study. Short and direct narrative answers to each research question will be provided using the themes developed in the previous section. Participants responded to questions about the influence of student behavioral defiance on their commitment to the profession of teaching. Questions were posed during one-on-one interviews and a focus group, and each participant wrote a reflective essay to their former self regarding knowledge they would impart to their former self. Participant quotes to support the research questions are below.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Virginia having experienced student behavioral defiance? To participate in the study, participants must have experienced student behavioral defiance in a Virginia Public School within the Hampton Roads area serving students in PreK through sixth grade, making the result of this study valuable to research within Virginia Public Schools, teacher preparation programs, and associated areas such as teacher retention, motivation, and attrition.

The participants’ perspective is that working in classrooms with student behavioral

defiance is both stressful, rewarding, and worthwhile. For some, the reward is being there for future leaders, an outlook often coupled with feelings of a higher purpose for some. Through the stress, Felicia described that being there for the students keeps her going. She responded, “I just like the student impact.” On the other hand, Heather had spiritual ties to why she continues in the classroom with student behavioral defiance.

I just went ahead and pushed through it. And I kept asking God if you put me here, there’s a reason why, and just show me the reasons. And so slowly things started to get a little bit better. I had to realize, let me start building better relationships, and then it got a little bit easier.

Sasha echoed the same feelings, stating, “I guess, again, it’s the passion for wanting to be of service to the children. I love kids.” Patricia recognizes her position within the classroom as a part of a higher calling. “There is a ministry within me, and I have to get out of the way so that I can be a part of the change some of these children so desperately need.” Fulfilling the spiritual charge on their lives, these educators are pressing to continue in the field of education.

For Charlotte, the benefits of teaching eventually outweighed the influence of student behavioral defiance. “I decided I love teaching. And I don’t want one bad apple to spoil, you know, the situation.” Before reaching this point, Charlotte sometimes wanted to quit, noting, “I almost quit last year. To be honest with you, I was ready to go into a different direction and come out of the classroom. I did not want to teach anymore.” When asked about the change, Charlotte shared that her drive is the product of the encouragement of a former principal. No longer an administrator at Charlotte’s school, this former principal holds a special place in her heart.

My former principal... she still encourages me every year. She's always reached out.

She'll even email me with a prayer and... I laminate [it] every year at the beginning of the school year. She sent me a letter telling me how much of a wonderful teacher I am. And I put it on my cabinet every year. I put them all back out so that I can look at them... She never forgets to tell me what an amazing teacher I am. And that just really pushes me because I feel like... I want to make her proud of how she took the time for me, how she believed in me. And I just feel that that's my giving... giving back to her. So that's my go-to.

A noticeable factor in Charlotte's situation is that there was no mention of subsequent or current administrators after the departure of the principal she spoke of. School leadership is a mighty force capable of propelling educators toward success. It is imperative for the support Charlotte found in the previous administrator to be paralleled or superseded so that Charlotte and other educators like herself can find support and encouragement to increase motivation.

Much like Charlotte, Sasha has also been brought to her breaking point as well. When asked about her feelings towards the teaching profession during her one-on-one interview, Sasha laughed at one point and shared:

Well, if you had asked me that Monday, I was on the I Q.U.I.T. trip. I had gotten so frustrated to the point I just felt like I just I can't. But I love what I do, so I have to go in every year knowing that this group is not the same as the last group. It takes me a minute to warm up to them because I have to observe and see how to come at them. So, there are days where I am deterred, where I'm like, Yeah, I can't do this.

Sasha recognizes a bigger picture. "Overall. It takes a village. I still believe that teachers are needed." Clarissa examined her village upbringing, carrying her to the same realization but from another angle. Being part of the village, it takes a lot to raise children. It is a delicate situation.

Understanding the boundaries she must adhere to because of preconceptions her students and their families have guides her in the interactions of the school year. “Everyone is ‘woke’ now.” By this comment, Clarissa was cognizant that sincere actions could be misconstrued, given the current climate.

For Michelle, the sentiment has been much of the same.

I have enjoyed... the relationships I've made, love the people I've worked with over the years. I've been blessed. I think God's put people in my path, you know, that have helped me grow ... spiritually, mentally, and professionally. I didn't have any [kids] of my own. Watching them grow and, keeping up with them when they graduate, and becoming friends with them on Facebook when they're grown, because I don't let them friend me until they're grown. I don't think I'd trade those... all that to say; I wouldn't recommend somebody going into it now. And I honestly feel bad when I see brand new teachers because I think they have no idea what's in store. But we need good teachers. So, you know, I feel bad for even saying that.

The field of education will always need effective teachers. In the current state of public education, Michelle is unsure of how the profession will continue to replenish the supply of teachers who are preparing to leave, as she is, or the ones who do not stay as a result of student behavioral defiance.

Chris has taken a holistic thought process when considering his own perspective.

The number of issues is increasingly growing. It feels like it's based off of societal issues, things that are happening in society. It has made me understand I have to continuously change. Not because what I'm doing is wrong but ideologies change. I have to keep up with the times.

Using resources available to him creates a cushion to combat student behavioral defiance in the classroom.

For others, the perspective was one of stress and disdain for the teaching profession. Brian concluded that “teaching is not [his] ministry” and is awaiting an opportunity to leave the profession. While Ashley has enjoyed the overall impact on the lives of some of her students, she is also on the way out of the classroom. “I’ve done what I can, and I feel there is nothing left I can do.”

Teaching was an opportunity for most participants to work in their gift despite student behavioral defiance. Making a change for the better starts with the students in front of them. Meeting the needs of students within the population requires intentional effort from all stakeholders. Moreover, attending to the concerns of teachers of behaviorally defiant students is imperative to sustain and increase a supply of educators in the profession.

Sub Question One

What are elementary educators’ perceptions of student behavioral defiance?

Educators perceive student behavioral defiance in a variety of ways. To start, educators recognized instances of student behavioral defiance within their classrooms. Next, the educators examined their understanding of student behavioral defiance by defining it and recalling classroom occurrence. For some teachers, this involved precursor situations and family circumstances of students. For others, they reflected on their own personal situations and upbringings to make sense of student behavioral defiance in the classroom. Educators experiencing consistent instances of student behavioral defiance must make decisions impacting the student, the student’s family, and other students within the classroom.

Educators described student behavioral defiance in their own words according to their experiences. Sasha described student behavioral defiance as “a student not doing what has been asked after several attempts.” For Charlotte, it meant “a child who acts with aggression in the classroom and doesn’t do his work.” Heather simply defined student behavioral defiance as “making a conscious decision to do the opposite of what is being asked.” Michelle noted student behavioral defiance as “when the student refuses to cooperate and wants to do whatever they want to do. And they won’t listen to reason.”

The perceptions of student behavioral defiance from the accounts of classroom educators ranged from dealings with family backgrounds, societal changes, subpar funding in certain schools, and a lack of consequences for behaviorally defiant students. With limited professional development training addressing the myriad of subjective and dependent behavioral incidences within routine school functions, Chris summed up the applicability of professional development, stating, “the [trainings] work in some instances but can be hard to apply. It provides a lens you can look through, but that lens doesn't capture every issue or situation you may encounter. It only provides perspective.” With little knowledge of the underlying causes of student behavioral defiance, teachers are left to develop their own determination as to why things are the way they are.

Four participants' perceptions of student behavioral defiance are embedded in familial and societal influences within the home. Charlotte perceives family home life as an indicator of student behavioral defiance, as stated during the focus group, “In trying to make that connection at home, you learn a lot about the family dynamics.” Similarly, for Brian, a glimpse into a student's home life can shed light on how a student who regularly demonstrates behavioral defiance interacts within the classroom environment.

I thought I'd be met with more students that want to learn. When I was in school, there were maybe two or three behavior problems in the classroom, but now it's like that number has quadrupled. Then, it all becomes clear when I meet the parents. It's hard for me to instill the importance of education when the parent fights against what I work towards on a regular.

Similar to Michelle's view on the progression of student behavior, a shift in student classroom behavior has left teachers searching for ways to reduce student behavioral defiance. In addition to the increase in behavioral defiance, parental involvement and support has declined.

The perceptions are similar yet slightly different for Felicia. She acknowledged the impact of family and society on children but used it as one of life's antecedents that educators have no control over. "I've learned that all these students are coming from different places. You don't know what it's like at home." Felicia's recollection of familial influence on the children within a household became apparent as she raised her second child. As a result, she has implemented routines and procedures in her classroom to address student behavioral defiance from the angle of both the behaviorally defiant student and the classmates affected by the situation.

We have to have things in place, like as a family, because that's what I tell them. It's like a family. You have to have things in place so that everybody can feel safe and everybody can learn. [If] somebody feels unsafe. I encourage them to say they feel unsafe. We do restorative circles to kind of talk out what are some of the possible solutions to the problems that we're having in class without calling names or making anybody feel bad. But, you know, more of saying, this is what's been happening to me. This is how it makes

me feel. And then we come up with some possible solutions. And we all agree at the end and we kind of recap whatever the steps are to solve those problems.

Restorative practices aid the students in recognizing the influence of behavioral defiance on the classroom. Having behaviorally defiant students take part in this practice humanizes them in front of their peers. The classmates are able to see more than the discourse brought about by behavioral defiance but hear also hear the voice of the student and work towards a resolution together.

Relatedly, Clarissa reflected on family hurdles of her own and was able to connect that to a child going through situations at home. In her reflective essay to her former self, she wrote:

During your second year, you will meet a child with a history of abuse and assault against him. Unmentionable things were done to him, and he was forced to do himself. This child has never felt love. He is a foster child when you have him; he has amazing foster parents who keep him and his two siblings together. In addition, he has a plethora of mental health diagnoses. You do nothing but provide love, safety, and compassion for this child. One cannot learn if they do not feel safe. One cannot learn if they do not feel like you care. One cannot learn if they do not feel they belong. This is one of the most important lessons you will learn early in your career.

Family and societal concerns are prevalent when considering student behavioral defiance; however, classroom educators perceive them differently. Taking background knowledge into consideration can better shape the interactions among students displaying behavioral defiance. It is not a pass to get away with negative behaviors but more so a roadmap on how to navigate interactions with the student. The roadmap can assist in avoiding triggers that bring about negative feelings for the child due to past occurrences.

For others, perceptions of student behavioral defiance are engulfed with students not receiving consequences and a lack of accountability for students, setting the stage for repeated occurrences. Michelle reflected upon this during the reflective essay she wrote to her former self. “You'll be unable to give consequences for those behaviors because Future You will be subjected to PBIS which basically negates any form of punishment or accountability for a student's poor behavior.” Furthermore, this perception was also evident with Ashley after PBIS was merely mentioned during the focus group discussion. “They need consequences for behavior like at a school-wide level. If students understand the consequences as much as they understand the good stuff...” PBIS sparked a comparable outlook for Sasha. During her interview, Sasha spoke of PBIS, saying:

We have a PBIS team that they give you suggestions as well. I'm not one big on giving out points and stuff for that. You know, things I think you should normally be doing anyway. And that works up to a certain point.

She went on to share that the incentives offered by the PBIS program only go so far. They are color-coded rubber bracelets that most students care nothing about.

The perception Chris has retrieved from his interactions with student behavioral defiance in the classroom aligns with a lack of consequences coupled with societal weights manipulating the sometimes bizarre behaviors he witnesses in the classroom.

It's more accepting for kids to behave the way they do. Society has changed its view on disciplining children. They are not held accountable and get away with more. This, in my opinion, increases student behavioral defiance. Teachers are being linked to the behavioral deficiencies of their students instead of kids being held accountable for individual actions.

PBIS approaches student behavior through tiers not widely used in the schools of the participants. Professional development could eliminate the misconceptions of the framework and illuminate the process when tier one interventions are no longer successful.

Heather mentioned professional development received annually and the quality found within the training, remarking, “I feel like the PDs are generic. It's not where we are, it's not. It's not enough. So, I don't believe we are taught real-life scenarios, what to do, how to behave.” Teacher training should not be performed to merely check off a box. Instead it should consist of a productive use of time and give tools for a productive school year applicable to the student population of the area.

The final perception of student behavioral defiance shared among educators is a question of funding. Patricia and Heather echoed the need for more funding for schools and a more appropriate use of the funds currently allocated to their respective schools. As per Heather:

We don't have everything we need. We need more curriculum. We need more activities. We need more hands on. We need diversity. We need differentiation. We need smaller classrooms. We need better stuff. We need better materials. We need better tables. My classroom floor is nasty. You know, can we get better? I look at people on TikTok, and they have amazing, beautiful classrooms. Yes, they're putting them together. But what the school gives them initially, the classroom, the tables, the chairs, it's beautiful, it's immaculate. And then I look at what we have. Old desks that look like they have been transferred from the other school district to us because they were getting ready to throw them out. And those are what we're using, old tables. The restrooms look nasty. So how are the kids supposed to perform better, behave better?

Creating an inviting atmosphere could inspire students to want to engage in learning. The environment set the stage for behavioral defiance to occur. For Heather, quality space, furniture, and rooms beget quality curricula, giving way to a more motivated student.

Patricia's position aligned with Heather's call for appropriate funding to reduce classroom sizes, equip all classrooms with paraprofessionals, and pay teachers a respectable pay.

I had a teacher in college that said the thing that affects education the most is money.

After being in education, I wholeheartedly agree with that. Teachers don't get paid enough. We don't get the things in place students really need. Before Chromebooks for every child were a thing, White Oak High School had six computers in the back of the classroom. Meanwhile, at Carver High School, there was only one, and it was the teacher's! Why are there so many disparities? Engineers make this amount of money.

Scientists make that amount of money, but they all are where they are because of teachers.

Being subjected to student behavioral defiance on top of receiving pay incomparable to other professionals is disheartening for Patricia. Education is vital to the sustainment of society.

Attending to the changing needs within it can ensure the longevity of its success.

Sub Question Two

What are the lived experiences of elementary educators in Virginia following occurrences of student behavioral defiance in relation to professional commitment to the profession?

The lived experiences of elementary educators in Virginia following student behavioral defiance in relation to professional commitment to the profession fell between two categories: to stay or to leave, with most participants remaining in the profession for the foreseeable future. Teachers remaining in the profession following consistent interactions with student behavioral

defiance should not be considered a win for the teaching profession. At best, unstable and unpredictable classroom occurrences can influence a pool of teachers to leave. Chris has found vitality through his experiences with student behavioral defiance and is encouraged to continue in the profession. “It has made me understand I have to continuously change. Not because what I am doing is wrong but ideologies change. I have to keep up with the times.”

Family has caused Clarissa and Felicia to renew their commitment to the teaching profession after experiencing student behavioral defiance in the classroom. From the experiences with her own children, Felicia has made a conclusion. “I think over time, I think I've learned a little bit more patience with it. I don't quickly ... I don't get as frustrated as easily because I've learned that all these students are coming from different places.” Similarly, Clarissa's reflections on family interactions with her father have shaped how she views behavioral defiance, its influence on her commitment to the profession, and how she interacts with students displaying behaviors throughout the school day.

I had to ask myself: Do you respond with: a. fear b. anxiety c. an open mind? When I think about it, I can understand all of the emotions that could arise, however, you decide to go in with an open mind. Using fear is not the effective strategy when trying to reach students, especially ones that live in environments where they live in fear of much more. Clarissa's open-mindedness has propelled her continued persistence in teaching. She stays in touch with her “why” and accounts for the reward of being there for behaviorally defiant students, even if she will not see the result in the current school year.

Michelle and Heather have encountered behavioral defiance throughout their careers, causing them to question their longevity within the teaching profession. For Michelle, retirement is within sight and helps to propel her forward when things around her seem bleak. While she

loves teaching and will remain in the classroom for the four years standing between her and retirement, she would not recommend the profession to others. If her family members were considering entering into teaching, “[she] would tell [them] not to go into education.” She said, “If I had daughters or sons and they wanted to go into education, I think I'd probably, you know, caution them. Do you really want to do this?” Heather, at one point in her career, “started rethinking teaching, ... rethinking who [she] was.” She considered leaving altogether and “was ready to go back to a situation where [she] was overworked because [she] did not want to be there.” As a result, she, too, wishes to warn newcomers to the teaching profession. “Part of me want to tell the folks coming in, RUN!” Staying meant Heather “had to change the dynamic ... for it to work.” This required a lot and was not an easy feat. “It took a lot of faith. I didn't feel like it sometimes. By the time I got off, I was just done. I was just. I had been just overly done.”

Charlotte has considered throwing in the towel at moments in her career; however, she remains in the profession and “seem[s] to have a good track record of turning students around.” Relatedly, Sasha is driven to continue as well.

As far as current, I think I'm doing okay. If I were to go back to previous year, which was last year, it started off rocky where I needed admin assistance. But right now, with this current school year, I think everything is pretty good.

Using interactions with student behavioral defiance from previous school years has given Sasha powerful tools and practical experiences to navigate defiant behavior in the current school year.

Brian has realized that teaching does not bring him joy and is actively looking to leave the profession. His expectations were not met in the classroom, and he finds that it is the “absolute opposite” of everything he thought it would be. Likewise, Ashley is seeking to leave the classroom as well and, as of the time of the focus group, is ending her contract and will not

return to the classroom after the conclusion of the winter break. She has accepted a position outside of the field of education. Patricia is still in the classroom but is applying to administrative positions to change the platform where she interacts with students. She “want[s] to remain in education, just not in the classroom.”

Summary

Educators face the reality of student behavioral defiance, many on a daily basis. After identifying educators' personal definitions of student behavioral defiance, an in-depth look into the lived experience of the participants yielded vivid descriptions of daily perceptions experienced firsthand. The participants in this study emphasized feelings of stress during occurrences of student behavioral defiance. The relationships within the school community were discussed from the realms of: teacher-student, teacher-teacher, parent-student, and student-student. In addition to relationships, the following themes emerged: stress/frustration, preparation, support, job demands, health, and depersonalization.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Elementary educators recognized and recalled the phenomena of instances of student behavioral defiance within the classroom and identified the influence of it on their commitment to the profession of teaching. Through Moustakas's (1994) data analysis process, themes and subthemes were revealed, offering awareness of the experience of working with students displaying student behavioral defiance consistently and regularly. This chapter includes an interpretation of findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

In this section, I discuss the study's findings in light of the developed themes and the lens of my theoretical framework. The interpretation of the findings is discussed, followed by implications for policy and practice. Next included are theoretical and empirical implications. Subsequently, limitations and delimitations will be discussed. Lastly, the chapter will conclude with a conclusion and recommendation for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

Based on the themes that emerged from this study through the stories told by classroom educators, it was revealed that their motivation to remain in the teaching profession was multifaceted. I identified four essential elements in sustaining teacher motivation and self-efficacy to promote commitment to the teaching profession. First, I found that schoolwide intervention programs such as PBIS garner a great deal of misconceptions when implemented

haphazardly, becoming an area of contention rather than a measure of assistance for both teachers and students. Secondly, horizontal and vertical collaborative, safe discussion spaces benefit educators in creating a partnership to mitigate experienced instances of student behavioral defiance. Participants' concerns emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between community, school, and home to add much-needed resources to promote social-emotional learning. Lastly, there is an unmet need for systems in place to encourage assistive measures and coping strategies for teachers experiencing student behavioral defiance.

This section begins with a brief Summary of Thematic Findings, as discussed in Chapter Four, followed by a series of interpretations deemed significant by the researcher.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The major themes revealed from the data analysis process were (a) stress and frustration, (b) relationships, (c) impact on family, and (d) support. The theme "relationships" included the subthemes of student-teacher relationship, teacher-teacher relationship, student-student relationship, and student-parent relationship from the perspective of the classroom educator. Educators explained their definition of student behavioral defiance in their own words with keywords and phrases including "aggression," "to do the opposite," and "refusing." By identifying their perceived definition, the participants established stress and frustration as the first major theme. Teachers unveiled the humanistic qualities they possess. Before becoming teachers, they are first human. "The spirit a teacher is currently in can escalate or deescalate an altercation with a student." Participants identified that being forced to assume responsibility for the behavioral actions of students in the classroom brings about stress as it is the students' behavior over which they have no control. An added measure of responsibility atop the myriad of other job responsibilities, duties, and expectations creates stress and frustration.

The second major theme participants spoke about was “relationships.” The influence of student behavioral defiance became apparent in multiple aspects outside of the student. Influencing students in the general common areas, teachers shared that other students “are afraid... they are scared.” Creating relationships among peers would garner resistance from students who are not behaviorally defiant, as students displaying behavioral defiance become further removed socially from their peers. Moreover, some participants witnessed excessive absenteeism due to the unpredictable behavior of behaviorally defiant students, with one student asking his teacher, “Why do you think I miss so many days?” One teacher, however, made conscientious efforts to avoid such pitfalls with the use of restorative justice in her classroom. Another teacher took the opportunity to correct the perspectives of classmates involving students displaying student behavioral defiance. Advocating for students within this population, this teacher elected to tell students weary of interacting with them that “they are really cool kids. You just have to get to know them just like I had to get to know you.”

“Relationships” carried on from student to student through student-parent relationships from the perspective of the classroom educator. Educators discussed the impeccable influence the support or lack thereof has on students regularly displaying behavioral defiance. According to the participants, parental support is monumental in creating consistent expectations for behaviorally defiant students in the classroom. Forming a united front limits less-than-desirable behavioral traits from excessively impeding the classroom. At the very least, a willingness to work together supersedes contradictory forces between home and school. Contrarily, in most instances of students displaying behavioral defiance, support from home is limited. The “family dynamics” often paint a clearer picture of circumstances contributing to student behavioral

defiance in addition to the outlook and regard for education as a whole, acting as a “missing puzzle piece.”

Teachers expressed the importance of relationships between them and students. It acts as the precipice for breaking down barriers constructed from outside sources. Often underestimated, building relationships with students is a powerful component when interacting with students displaying behavioral defiance. Forging relationships holds the power for teachers to be heard when it matters the most to negate academic instruction, constructive criticism, and feedback falling on deaf ears. As a result of teachers having to go through instances of student behavioral defiance, an uprising of the teacher-teacher relationship became evident. Having someone to talk to, collaborate with, and understand proved critical when behaviorally defiant students are in a classroom. Knowing that everyone is “going through the same frustrations” provides a level of comfort.

The third major theme was “impact on family.” For the participants, student behavioral defiance was not something that was merely experienced during the school day and left there. While educators may have eventually held the ability to leave the stressors of interacting with student behavioral defiance within the school walls, at some point in the participants’ careers, the weight of the day carried over into their home lives. The impact on the family left some participants feeling as if they had “nothing left to give” when going home to their own families or feelings of “withdrawal” from their own children and spouses. Taking on responsibility for the students within their classroom requires energy and resources that tap into that of those from the participants’ personal lives at times. Because of the value placed on education for their biological children, these educators cannot help but do what they can to try to instill it in their students. Met

with resistance, continuing to drive home the importance of education can ultimately have an impact on the families of the students displaying student behavioral defiance.

The final major theme was “support.” Teachers discussed the various facets of support received, ranging from professional development to encouragement and follow-ups from administrators. Professional developments, typically presented at the beginning of the school year, provide vague, generalized information that many teachers found unsuitable for the interactions they faced throughout the school year. A stronger sense of support was realized as the teachers who were able to conduct professional development sessions spoke about what worked for them in addition to strategies to be triumphant in instances of student behavioral defiance. Additionally, hearing positive feedback from principals and assistant principals makes a difference for educators.

Positive Intervention Behavior Supports. According to the data, the perception of PBIS is misconstrued by educators when compared to the purpose and goals of the framework. All of the participants sharing insight or responding to the mention of PBIS did so with a level of negativity, questioning the validity of the program. The misconceptions educators shared coincide with those highlighted by Tyre and Feuerborn (2021). While Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) explored PBIS misconceptions among high school teachers, the findings stand relevant to the population of this study. Sharing thoughts of a lack of consequences, yet an abundance of rewards, or even the mere vagueness in describing the effectiveness of PBIS within the school communicates the fallacies thriving regarding PBIS. Schools must implement PBIS in such a way as to garner teacher buy-in, an element that needs to be added to the perspective of the participants. Establishing teacher buy-in through teacher-led PBIS teams, teacher incentives, and ongoing support through meaningful professional developments and technical assistance are

methods to dismantle misconceptions among teachers (Macy & Wheeler, 2020; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021).

Teachers willing to understand the inner workings of PBIS are more inclined to incorporate the three tiers of intervention in the classroom and use the resources provided. This can create buy-in from other teachers. Similar to vicarious experience, having access to educators who successfully incorporate PBIS in everyday interaction with students displaying behavioral defiance acts as a template by which other educators can structure their classrooms, a situation well suited for teachers with less time in the profession. As support from other teachers holds a fierce impact on creating a community of persistent educators, working together, especially through tier one supports, capitalizes the ability of teachers to learn together and develop socio-emotional support for one another (Michael et al., 2023).

As stated by Lui et al. (2019), teachers have unique developmental needs and experiences. Through the data collection, I found that while in school, teachers are told to adhere to the various modalities of students in order to make information relevant and obtainable to them; however, this theory is phased out once a student leaves grade school. Instead of programming, frameworks, and curricula being presented to teachers in a one-size-fits-all manner, trainers, coaches, and specialists can be used to best disseminate professional development in a manner conducive to the teacher's learning style. For some, this could mean auditorily presenting tools and strategies. However, this could require trainers to actively demonstrate strategies or monitor educators during instances of student behavior defiance to provide real-time assistance and feedback. Teachers' work experiences cause internal values to change, transforming extrinsic requirements into intrinsic demands. (Liu et al., 2019).

Optimizing teacher practice increases teacher's intrinsic motivation but only results from sufficient external force.

Collaboration. Collaborations among educators, both vertically and horizontally, were almost taboo among the participants. Bittersweet, it was viewed as an aide, yet a potential hindrance, an asset, and a crutch in forming future relationships with incoming students. Indicated explicitly by one participant, it would have been helpful to know some of the alarming behaviors of the student; however, being unaware of the behaviors created a naive blank slate that would be blindly navigated as the school year progressed. Ironically, coming to the knowledge of the administrator's awareness of the behaviors left the participant with epiphanic revelations developed through her interactions with the students. This process could have been shortened with a mere conversation.

Collaborative spaces can create a platform where educators can not only discuss concerns but also brainstorm solutions, share stories of success, and encourage one another. Structure can be filtered into collaborative spaces by making resources available for teachers to peruse opportunities for self-growth with the use of borrowed materials provided by the school in a lending library, the ongoing use of effective professional development, and the presence of an administrator offering genuine recognition (Cancio et al., 2014). Likewise, inviting a school psychologist into the collaborative space can provide helpful insight. As school psychologists understand teacher factors influencing how behaviors are handled in the classroom, they can effectively join forces with teachers to promote evidence-based strategies to manage student behaviors (McLean et al., 2023; Merle et al., 2022). The availability of time and space for teachers to find support amongst themselves establishes a sense of community outside of what may be known to a teacher.

Coaching is a collaborative tool beneficial to teachers of behaviorally defiant students. One participant acknowledged the value of assistance received by the behavioral coach employed within the school. A form of professional development stemming from best practices of adult learning, coaching enables teachers to receive training in a concept with the ability to then try the skill within their classroom and receive individualized feedback from a professional to further refine the skill (Reddy, 2019). Through feedback, practicing, and modeling, coaching improves the implementation of evidence-based practices to reach the desired outcome in the classroom (Clark et al., 2023). Coaching is an active-implementation approach constructed to invoke proper adoption and sustained implementation of a skill or tool (Merle et al., 2022).

Ramos and Hughes (2020) recognized the presence of a behavior coach in a school having the ability to create a level of detachment from the building administrator and student discipline. To counteract this, coaches can be involved in the collaborative meetings. Being a part of the joint efforts to improve classroom behavior will take buy in from all stakeholders involved with students in the school. Pulling together the resources of teachers, coaches, administrators, and specialist is the ultimate use of professional expertise.

Bridging the SEL gap. There exists an importance of bridging the gap between community, school, and home to add resources to promote social-emotional learning within the school community. Participants' expressions of concern for the use of funding coupled with the need for additional support in the classroom is reminiscent of Cancio et al.'s (2014) acknowledgment of the importance of the availability of resources to retain teachers educating students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Teachers in the earlier stages of their careers need the most support. Not all students consistently displaying behavioral defiance have a disability, legally requiring them to receive services. Suggestions by participants included adding

more counselors to the school staff to provide support. In doing so, the focus of teachers can be placed on teaching. Teachers are held accountable not only for their students' academic success but also for implementing an intensive academic curriculum while managing behavior in the classroom and school (Clark et al., 2023). It takes time to address student behavioral defiance. This becomes time lost from instruction, however.

While not all school districts possess the funding to take on such an undertaking as hiring counseling staff to be present regularly at schools within a district, SEL programs can be implemented into classrooms with fidelity. Implementing SEL programs within a school speaks volumes to the overall school climate, as recognized by both students and teachers (Clark et al., 2023). Students who are not behaviorally defiant have more positive outlooks on school climate as compared to persistently behaviorally defiant students (Fefer & Gordon, 2020). As a result of behaviorally defiant students typically showing social-emotional delays, emphasis on SEL can help alter the outlook this population has toward the learning environment. Working closely with families will allow schools to better understand the needs from multiple perspectives: the needs of the school from the parents, the needs of the parents from the school, and the expectations of the child from all (McQuire & Meadan, 2022). Events uniting the school and the community create a platform to create a partnership. Communicating with families and providing resourceful literacy, tools, and resources can support students with SEL difficulties, both in and out of school (Tussey et al., 2022).

Coping Strategies. There is an unmet need for systems in place to promote assistive measures and coping strategies for teachers experiencing student behavioral defiance. Many participants acknowledged feeling overwhelmed throughout the course of the school day and while experiencing the phenomena of student behavioral defiance. When a need for resolve is

unmet, it can turn into external pressure and be carried home at the end of the day past the occurrence, impacting family life. According to Lui et al. (2019), external pressure is a significant factor for educators who are weak in their own motivation. To stimulate teacher motivation, a teacher's values must be guided and promoted to help them construct their meanings of development. Without this, resistance is built towards the profession in the presence of negative external pressure. Contrarily, the support given by an administrator, for example, will reduce pressure felt from under the influence of the phenomena and heighten their confidence in development.

Implications for Policy and Practice

An analysis of the empirical literature confirms that adequate social and emotional capacity is necessary for teachers to carry out their daily tasks (Buettner et al., 2016). Emotional capacity must be nourished in beginning teachers (Lui et al., 2019); it is a treasure leaving the field of education as veteran teachers prepare to make an exodus due to retirement or other reasons (Sutcher et al., 2019). Teaching is ranked as a highly stressful profession (Buettner et al., 2016; Richards, 2018; Wright, 2020). Commonly, teachers feel unprepared to handle encounters of student behavioral defiance in the classroom (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Miller et al., 2017). In the current state, the profession of education stands to continue to face shortages and unbalanced disparities in schools of socioeconomically challenged and poverty-stricken communities. There will always be a need for public education. It is the very force that drives human capital in the United States. Therefore, the implications for policy and practice have significance for elementary schools.

Implications for Policy

An analysis of the findings reveals that access to support during and after incidences of student behavioral defiance is among the greatest needs of teachers in elementary classrooms. While veteran teachers have acquired strategies throughout their classroom years, many find their encounters unmatched by what was behavioral defiance in the past or are merely holding on as retirement is in sight. On the other hand, novice teachers still require assistance to maintain the sustainability of our elementary schools. Educators need ongoing professional development opportunities and access to experienced coaches within their regular school environment.

Just as schools have professionals in place to meet the daily needs of students, the state should also require elementary schools to have at least one behavioral support specialist. Teacher stress and burnout due to student behavioral defiance require intervention. School administrators deal with the overall behavior problems within a school; however, a behavioral support specialist can support teachers experiencing consistent student behavioral defiance and intervene before the stress escalates and impacts the outside lives of teachers. As educators noted in this study, managing student behavioral defiance is not the job of one because it truly takes a village.

Implications for Practice

The data collected from the participants in this study led me to conclude that while student behavioral defiance can range from situations corresponding to excessive talking through situations resulting in a classroom being physically destroyed, teachers all seek to be supported within all situations of repeated behavioral defiance. Participants were not deterred from the education profession after one isolated instance of student behavioral defiance but through consistent and continual occurrences. A desire to teach and positively impact students was the driving force for them to enter the field of education. Having that drive stifled through an

inability to carry out lessons due to frequent disruptions is a pitfall that can be avoided to sustain healthy schools. The first implication for practice is establishing a positive work climate through administrative support.

The research conducted in this study provided evidence supporting previous literature regarding teacher motivation and commitment to the teaching profession. Teachers need to feel supported by school administrators. Participants with a strong sense of support from building administrators highlighted the positive contributions the support added to their careers. On the other hand, participants without significant support from building-level administrators highlighted the absence of the support and meaningful subsistence to fill their emotional bucket regularly depleted by student behavioral defiance. Not only can impactful administrative support positively influence the school climate, but it can also constructively increase student engagement and success. Building principals are integral to the initiative teachers portray when solving problems and can empower them to persevere in difficult situations. As a result, I recommend an accountability system for administrators to hold a portion of responsibility for the school climate.

The second implication for practice is providing meaningful professional development opportunities for educators to learn how to implement SEL, PBIS, and behavior modification programs, understand coping strategies, and create a work and home life balance. Findings revealed that teachers sought to apply content from professional development sessions to their classrooms and lives; however, in most circumstances, the material did not apply to their situations. Rather than assuming a broad umbrella of possibilities for behaviors to come in a school year, professional development platforms could be used regularly to check in with SEL implementation, PBIS efforts expected to be implemented throughout the school past tier one,

and teacher-led professional development gatherings. Teacher-led professional development enables teachers to affirm strategies and highlight practical methods that are proving to be successful regularly and consistently. Participants confirmed their ability to be a resource to other teachers and renewed their commitment to the profession by affirming their abilities. While it is clear that teacher-led professional development meetings are an important finding for schools in this study, it may also be effective for all school settings and teachers and is applicable to communities where there are educators who are supportive of one another.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

Upon reviewing the existing literature, a gap identified the need to explore the lived experiences of elementary educators and the influence of student behavioral defiance on their commitment to the teaching profession. The findings revealed in this phenomenological study had theoretical and empirical implications. This study further advances the knowledge in the field of education as it pertains to teacher motivation and self-efficacy. Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) created the framework for this study. Educators demonstrated the four constructs within the theory. They expressed evidence of mastery experience, vicarious experience, psychological arousal, and verbal persuasion. According to the implications of this study, recommendations for increasing teacher motivation are presented in this section.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework for this study was Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977). This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of elementary educators having experienced student behavioral defiance in the classroom. Bandura's self-efficacy theory analyzes how psychological procedures modify the degree and intensity of self-efficacy. In turn, personal effectiveness expectations are created or demolished. The findings of this study suggest

that educators may relate to one or more sources found within the self-efficacy theory. Before this study, there was a gap in the theoretical application of the self-efficacy theory to examine elementary educators' level of commitment to the teaching profession after having experienced student behavioral defiance. This study has advanced the literature on self-efficacy by examining how the experiences of elementary educators are perceived and recalled following instances of student behavioral defiance and create perceptions towards the teaching profession.

Empirical Implications

This study confirmed previous research regarding the motivation and self-efficacy of classroom educators regarding what is known about factors within the classroom that conversely impact the learning day. Before this study, it was known that student behavior can cause emotional exhaustion, feelings of strain, and a depletion of emotional resources (Aldrup et al., 2018). However, there was limited research on how student behavioral defiance influences teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. The findings of this study indicated that following sustained instances of student behavioral defiance, elementary educators' commitment to the profession becomes questionable. Factors within the school play a role in the continued commitment to the profession or a diminished one. Factors included work relationships with peers, administrative support, spiritual connectivity, and high regard for student impact. The intrinsic rewards of watching students grow, develop, and learn while working with children are valued by teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). De Ruiter et al. (2020) found that teachers who experienced higher levels of frustration and anger in light of recent events of behavioral defiance also reported lower levels of dedication. Eight of the ten participants confirmed this in their accounts of interactions with student behavioral defiance in the classroom.

This study also confirmed Anglim et al.'s (2018) and Klapproth et al.'s (2020) research, confirming that the support teachers receive positively impacts their self-efficacy. Participants shared how the influence of principals resolves or agitates situations of student behavioral defiance. Notably, according to Herman et al. (2018), teachers experiencing both high and low levels of burnout acknowledged the teaching profession as stressful. In the study, the stress of the profession also considered outside stressors, including children, relationships, and commitments outside of work. The participants in this study gave a view into their lives, sharing the influence of student behavioral defiance on their personal lives and with their families. For many, behavioral defiance brought about a level of withdrawal and detachment. Others were able to continue familial commitments without regard to the school day.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study investigating the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation of elementary educators contained limitations. Due to the small sample size, a significant variety of participants from the seven cities of the Hampton Roads area was not achievable. This study was also limited to a small portion of Virginia. Albeit the current research is based on a small sample of participants within the Hampton Roads area, the findings indicate the importance of gathering further information about elementary educators (e.g., previous experiences before entering the classroom, familial influential factors and obligations, parenting styles of guardians of behaviorally defiant students, and teacher education programs). Initially, I sought to recruit teachers in a specific district of Hampton Roads; however, the district granted access to only one school. Upon sending out the initial recruitment email, only one response was received, and the potential participant did not complete the necessary steps (consent form) to participate in the

study. As a result, the IRB application was revised to request participants from districts outside the initial district requested. All participants were still located within Hampton Roads.

The delimitations within the study were created by parameters I made. To start, participants were only teachers of grade six and below. I selected this parameter because of where I began my educational career; however, student behavioral defiance is also experienced in grades eight through twelve. Secondly, the population was limited to elementary educators in Virginia. As student behavior studies exist across the United States and the world (Aldrup et al., 2018; Berchiatti et al., 2022; de Ruiter et al., 2020), this study may apply to other localities. Lastly, the study relied on semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and a reflective essay. There were not any observable practices implemented within the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are derived from this study's findings, limitations, and delimitations. The participants in the study were selected from public elementary schools within the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Future research may focus on recruiting participants from throughout Virginia. In consideration of the findings within the study, an examination into the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation of elementary educators revealed the possible longevity general educators hold to the profession after encounters with student behavioral defiance. Future research could focus on specific years in the profession, gaining perspective from teachers who have been educators for less than five years, six to fifteen years, and those with over sixteen years of teaching experience. Likewise, future studies could recruit special education teachers. The findings of this study reflected educators' need to be supported. Future research could focus on the support needed from principals to support teachers. Research

involving the direct influence on administrative support and involvement could benefit the school community.

This phenomenological study was qualitative. A quantitative approach could provide data using a scale to gauge to what magnitude student behavioral defiance impacts the commitment of teachers to the profession. Such use of a scale could grant a broader population of participants. Other forms of qualitative research could be explored, including a case study to develop an in-depth look at a smaller population of teachers having experienced student behavioral defiance. The perspective of the child or parent could be investigated and researched as well.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study sought to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Using Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological model, a transcendental approach was taken to examine the lived experiences of teachers having encountered student behavioral defiance in a classroom setting in grades PreK- 6. Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) framed the inquiry and analyzed how psychological procedures modify self-efficacy. Data were collected from individual semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and a reflective essay. The findings of this study indicated that educators recognized student behavioral defiance as stressful and frustrating. After acknowledging the initial feelings associated with student behavioral defiance, the participants shared insight into what keeps them in the field of education regarding student behavioral defiance and the components of student behavioral defiance causing them questionable longevity within the occupation.

Educators having experienced student behavioral defiance questioned their commitment to the teaching profession currently or at some point in their career. To stay or go was riddled

with experiences of handling student behavioral defiance, such as support from team members and administration, relationships, or a drive for student impact. Teachers gave their perspectives on areas of improvement to increase teacher motivation when student behavioral defiance is an influential factor. Educators described receiving funding, support through professional development and school leadership, and the ability to collaborate as areas to strengthen commitment and motivation. The implications of the findings from this study can assist school communities in creating and maintaining healthy school communities when there are regular occurrences of student behavioral defiance.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Site Permission Letter

[Date]

Dear [Director of Research and Evaluation],

My name is Gwendolyn Robinson, and I am a doctoral student at Liberty University. I am conducting a research study on the influence of student behavioral defiance on the motivation and self-efficacy of elementary classroom educators under the supervision of Dr. Justin Necessary and Liberty University.

The study's title is "Teacher Motivation and Student Behavioral Defiance: A Phenomenological Study." The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia. I plan to examine teacher motivation through the lived experiences and influences of student behavioral defiance amongst elementary classroom educators.

Benefits of the Research to School

1. Your participation has the potential to assist schools and districts in understanding the lived experiences of elementary classroom educators regarding student behavioral defiance and how it influences their commitment to the profession.
2. In understanding teacher self-efficacy and motivation as it pertains to student behavioral defiance, professional development, and mentorship opportunities can reflect the needs of classroom educators.

Eligibility

Teachers are able to participate in this study if they meet the following criteria:

1. Are age 18 or older
2. General education teacher
3. Currently employed with the district in a PreK-6 classroom **OR**
4. Previously employed with the district in a PreK-6 classroom within the last three years
5. Have experienced student behavioral defiance

Activities

In this study, participants will:

1. Answer demographic questions about the length of time in position, gender, age, ethnicity, and educational background. These questions are optional and may be skipped at any time.
2. Complete a reflective essay on a provided prompt (10 minutes)
3. Participate in a 1:1 interview over Zoom or Google Meet for 25-30 minutes audio/visual recording

4. Participate in a focus group over Zoom or Google Meet for 25-30 minutes audio/visual recording
5. Review transcriptions over email for 10-20 minutes

Compensation

Participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for participating in this study and completing all tasks.

Confidentiality

The data of this study will be kept confidential and private. Responses from the qualifying questionnaires and reflective essays will be kept confidential and stored in a locked file box. All participants will be given a pseudonym. The list of pseudonyms will be kept locked away and separate from raw data. Information and recordings will be stored on a password locked computer and will only be accessed by the researcher. All information stored electronically will be deleted three years after the completion of the study. Paper documents will be shredded at that time as well.

I am very enthusiastic about teacher motivation and self-efficacy. I am asking for your help in obtaining a list of teachers employed within Portsmouth Public Schools or three or less years separated and permission to conduct interviews with the identified teachers who meet the criteria. Each participant's identity will remain confidential.

I look forward to further discussing my research study with you. If you should need to contact me, please do not hesitate. I can be reached at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Robinson
Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University

Appendix B: IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 26, 2023

Gwendolyn Robinson
Justin Necessary

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1560 Teacher Motivation and Student Behavioral Defiance: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Gwendolyn Robinson, Justin Necessary,

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 [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

[Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

My name is Gwendolyn Robinson. This email serves as an invitation for your participation in a current study I am conducting as a doctoral student at Liberty University in the School of Education. The study is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Justin Necessary, Assistant Professor of Educational Administration [REDACTED]. Your contact information was obtained through the public records of your school division website. This study will reflect the voices of current elementary educators to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on teacher motivation and commitment to the profession. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study. Teachers will be asked to describe their experiences with student behavioral defiance, sharing their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds. I will construct an overall description of the meaning and essences of the experience.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, a general education teacher, a current teacher with Portsmouth Public School District to students in grades Pre-K – six, or less than three years separated, and have experienced student behavioral defiance in the classroom. Participants, if willing, will be asked to write a short reflective essay, participate in an interview and a focus group to discuss insights on the topic of student behavioral defiance and the influence it has had upon you as a classroom educator, and review transcriptions for accuracy.

You will be invited to share your experiences, communicating your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values. I will construct an overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience. I will conduct member checking to increase the credibility of the data. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential. Your interview will be audio and visually recorded for purposes of transcription; however, the transcripts will have a unique code for identification. Your recording will not be used in any presentation or publication. All interview data will be kept in secure locations and will ultimately be destroyed to preserve your confidentiality.


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

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the above email before taking part in any procedures.

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, focus group, journal entry, and transcription review, participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. Any participant who chooses to withdraw from the study after beginning but

before completing all study procedures will receive a prorated amount of \$5 per procedure towards an Amazon gift card.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Robinson
Doctoral Student, Liberty University


Appendix D: Second Follow-up Recruitment Email

[Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

My name is Gwendolyn Robinson. Previously, I sent you an email message inviting you to participate in a current study I am conducting as a doctoral student at Liberty University in the School of Education. The study is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Justin Necessary, Assistant Professor of Educational Administration [REDACTED]. Your contact information was obtained through the public records of your school division website in conjunction with permission from your school's division Research and Evaluation Department. This study will reflect the voices of current elementary educators to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on teacher motivation and commitment to the profession. Teachers will be asked to describe their experiences with student behavioral defiance, sharing their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds.

Again, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview, focus group, and reflective essay to share your thoughts and insights on this topic. It should take approximately 90 minutes to complete the procedures listed. I can accommodate your schedule and all interviews will be conducted virtually. While your position and years of experience will be mentioned, your responses to interview questions will be dealt with anonymously and you will be referred to only by a pseudonym. The interviews will be recorded for the purposes of transcription; however, the transcripts will have a unique code for identification, and the recordings will be destroyed. Your recording will not be used in any presentation or publication. All interview data will be kept in a secure location and will ultimately be destroyed to preserve your confidentiality. You will also be asked to sign an informed consent form if you choose to participate.

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study and will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. Any participant who chooses to withdraw from the study after beginning but before completing all study procedures will receive a prorated amount of \$5 per procedure towards an Amazon gift card.

Please contact me at this email address or telephone number (call or text) if you are able to participate:

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Robinson
Doctoral Student, Liberty University

Appendix E: Consent

Title of the Project: Teacher Motivation and Student Behavioral Defiance: A Phenomenological Study

Principal Investigator: Gwendolyn Robinson, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, 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 of age or older, a general education teacher in grades PreK-6, have experienced student behavioral defiance, and currently employed in a Virginia Public School or previously employed with a Virginia Public School within the last three years. 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.

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

The purpose of the study is to understand the influence of student behavioral defiance on elementary educators in Virginia.

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:

1. Complete a reflective essay on a provided prompt. This should take approximately 5-10 minutes.
2. Participate in a virtual, audio and visual-recorded interview that will take no more than 30 minutes.
3. Participate in a virtual, audio and visual-recorded focus group that will take no more than 45 minutes.
4. Review your interview transcripts to check for accuracy. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include an opportunity to share experiences from the classroom.

Benefits to society include increased knowledge on the topic of teacher motivation and student behavioral defiance, improved support for classroom educators, and sustained healthy school organizations.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating 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 by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- 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.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. Hardcopy data will be stored in a locked file box. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

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

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, focus group, journal entry, and transcription review participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. Any participant who chooses to withdraw from the study after beginning but before completing all study procedures will receive a prorated amount of \$5 per procedure towards an Amazon gift card.

Is study participation voluntary?

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

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

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

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

The researcher conducting this study is Gwendolyn Robinson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Justin Necessary, at [REDACTED].

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 IRB. Our physical address is [REDACTED]; our phone number is [REDACTED], and our email address is [REDACTED].

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

Printed Subject Name

Appendix F: Interview Questions

1. What is your full (first and last) name?
2. What is your current age?
3. How do you describe your gender identity?
4. What is your race/ethnicity?
5. What is the grade level you currently teach?
6. Describe your educational background and time in the teaching profession.
7. In your own words, describe behavioral defiance.
8. During your most recent school year, how often did you experience student behavioral defiance in your classroom?
9. How effective are you at managing student behavioral defiance within the classroom?
10. If needed, what could increase your effectiveness?
11. Recall, retell, and describe an instance involving student behavioral defiance within your classroom.
12. What was the outcome?
13. How does student behavioral defiance influence interactions among you and your students?
14. What emotions do you feel during instances of displayed student behavioral defiance?
15. How have these emotions influenced your teaching and perspective of teaching as a career?
16. Describe the value of the professional development and assistance practices currently in place regarding coping mechanisms and support within the classroom.
17. Describe the expectations you initially had regarding classroom management.

18. How is this similar to or different from your actual experiences?

Appendix G: Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to the group, sharing your grade level taught and how many years you have been teaching.
2. For this study, behavioral defiance will be defined as acts such as excessive arguing with people in positions of authority, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, frequent anger and resentment, and questioning rules. Describe any instances of student behavior defiance in your classroom.
3. What influence, if any, does the behavioral defiance have on these students, academically or socially?
4. How does student behavioral defiance influence the other students in the classroom?
5. What strategies, tips, trainings, etc. have been helpful in you managing student behavioral defiance? How did you come about them?
6. Describe situations of student behavioral defiance in which you find it necessary to seek assistance in the classroom.
7. What supports are available to you when you have instances of behavioral defiance exceeding your ability to manage them?
8. Describe your initial feelings when entering the teaching profession.
9. What are your perceptions towards your career after experiencing student behavior defiance in the classroom?
10. How do you cope with student behavioral defiance?
11. Who or what has influenced you to remain in the teaching profession up to this point?

Appendix H: Reflective Essay

Pseudonym: _____ Teacher Motivation and Student Behavioral
Defiance

What would you tell your younger self in order to be prepared for your experiences in the classroom with student behavioral defiance?

I am interested in knowing your thoughts regarding your encounters with student behavioral defiance. The information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous. Please take 10 minutes to write a letter to your former self describing information, tools, or guidance acquired after your first year of teaching that have been helpful in continuing your career as an elementary classroom educator. The essay need not exceed one page and is intended to create descriptions of knowledge and experiences gained throughout your career.