

SECONDARY TEACHER BURNOUT: STUDENT SMARTPHONE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
USE IN THE CLASSROOM: A HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Joseph Ryan Koelle

Liberty University

A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to uncover the experiences of secondary school teachers regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and teacher burnout. Due to the focus on teacher burnout, the guiding theory for this research is Maslach's burnout theory. Maslach's theory was chosen due to the nature of what professional educators encounter in the classroom setting regarding student smartphone and social media use during instructional time and the potential effects on secondary teachers of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. How can student smartphone and social media use in the classroom influence secondary teacher burnout? The methodology that was utilized in this phenomenological research was based on primary research on the lived experiences of secondary educators in the classroom and the influences of student smartphone and social media use on teachers. The sample consisted of 10 seventh and eighth-grade teachers, and the setting was to be at two public school sites where over 2,000 students attend. There were three forms of data collection: individual interviews with teachers, survey questionnaire, and a focus group. The data retrieved produced three prominent themes that manifested. The main themes catalyzed into three unique interpretations with the experiences secondary educators have encountered in the instructional setting within the sphere of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom.

Keywords: teacher burnout, smartphone, social media, Maslach, student defiance

Copyright Page

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Lord of my life, Jesus Christ. Although I was a stubborn lost sheep, your loving hand brought me back to your fold.

This work is also dedicated to my family, especially my beautiful wife Angie, my daughters Bailey and Tiffany, and my beloved son Mason.

Lastly, this work is dedicated to all the people who encouraged me along the way in my journey through life. Thank you!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Teaching continues to be a profession that requires educators to adapt to student behaviors and classroom management strategies needed to create a setting of learning and growth. Positive classroom interactions among educators and students can produce a conducive environment where student engagement can increase, fueling the educators' passion for the profession (Tikkanen et al., 2021). However, environments where teachers can experience stressful work conditions, such as negative interactions with students, can lead to career burnout. A growing concern among educators is the distractions students experience when engaging with smartphones and social media in educational settings and the effects these distractions can have on students (Siebers et al., 2021). The purpose of this phenomenological research is to uncover the experiences of secondary school teachers regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. This chapter will focus on teacher burnout as it relates to the behaviors of students who utilize smartphones and social media during classroom instructional time. Chapter 1 will also focus on the social context in which the study will occur and the theoretical context that has been conducted within the parameters of teacher burnout based on the behaviors of students who utilize smartphones and social media while in class.

Background

Throughout the years, educators have had many challenges to successfully teaching, guiding, and disciplining students at the secondary level. Many teachers struggle with the tension between classroom use of technology and the distractions that can be brought about through the utilization of technology (Van Den Beemt et al., 2019). Increasingly, students are using smartphone technology in the classroom, and numerous students are becoming digitally literate

daily. Teacher career burnout is not a flight-or-fight response to a single stressful event; rather, it is a prolonged response to chronic job stressors over time (Bottiani et al., 2019). An increasing trend is the uptick of teachers who are leaving the profession at alarming rates due to job dissatisfaction and overall career burnout (Madigan & Kim, 2021). As trends continue to shift within the realm of teacher retention, what is creating significant changes regarding the retention of educational professionals?

Historical Context

The concept of burnout was introduced by Herbert Freudenberger as a form of occupational stress that an individual experiences based on chronic work-related stress, which can create emotional damage due to the emotional damage an individual incurs (Melguizo-Ibáñez et al., 2023). Teaching is known to be a stressful occupation that requires an individual to be competent in the subject matter and emotionally capable of dealing with stressful situations (Wang et al., 2022). Career burnout is prevalent among teachers; around five–35% of teachers will eventually experience burnout symptoms (Gillet et al., 2022). Several factors can contribute to teacher burnout, but the psychometric means of uncovering an absolute causation are vague (Benita et al., 2019). Burnout replaces the confidence of a professional with a lowered sense of self-esteem and self-respect while also mitigating personal recognition leading an individual to feelings of isolation (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Continued exposure to stressful working environments can accelerate burnout syndrome from an individual battling chronic stress related work issues (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022).

Growing evidence by numerous cross-sectional studies indicates smartphone and social media use increases mental distress in adolescent users (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020). Students who excessively use smartphones and social media can develop an addiction which can negatively

impact overall student achievement (Sunday et al., 2021). Smartphone addiction has rapidly grown among adolescent students and is becoming a major social and health concern for numerous professional organizations, including educational institutions (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2020). Smartphone devices can allure the learner away from the instructional task set before them due to digital multitasking (Fu et al., 2020). The daily habit of digital multitasking can have numerous effects on student learning and classroom behavior.

Dominant traits regarding teacher burnout within the spectrum of student classroom expectations are disrespectful student behaviors and student inattentiveness during instructional times (Nápoles, 2021). The idea that smartphones and social media may have potential ramifications for student classroom behavior introduces a dangerous paradigm for pupils who have become addicted to various devices and media platforms (Dennen et al., 2020). As the education field evolves, professional educators are apprehensive of the use of technology, such as mobile devices, in the classroom, due to the distraction it can create (Gan & Balakrishnan, 2014). Teacher attrition is rising throughout school districts due to workplace dissatisfaction within classroom environments leading emotional exhaustion and eventual burnout (Nguyen & Kremer, 2022).

Social Context

Teacher burnout can affect numerous individuals other than the educator who is experiencing career burnout. Within the context of uncovering teacher experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom, what is the effect it has on students? Teachers who experience career burnout display emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. In turn, students notice these negative emotions within an educator, which can create a negative learning environment (Oberle et al., 2020). Teacher behaviors, whether positive or negative,

within the learning environment can have lasting impacts on student cognitive and social development (Kahveci, 2023). When teachers display positive behaviors towards pupils, students are found to be more academically confident, motivated, and satisfied with the learning process (Kahveci, 2023). Teacher burnout is linked with adverse consequences for students who are under the educator's guidance while the professional is dealing with loss of career interest, depersonalization, and emotional disconnection from students (Romano et al., 2021).

Students who are under the instruction of an educator who is burned out may have low academic performance, drop out of school, or experience depression (Romano et al., 2021). Students who are under the teaching of a burned-out educator receive minimal or no emotional support; classroom management also lacks consistency, and the learning environment becomes a negatively charged atmosphere (Oh & Wolf, 2023). Classroom emotional and behavioral support correlates with students' academic and non-academic successes well beyond the classroom (Oh & Wolf, 2023). Teacher burnout impedes a student's motivation, leading to negative behavior effects, including student disciplinary action needed to intervene with student misbehavior (Brady et al., 2022). Teachers have historically been seen as professionals who improve students' reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities (Braun et al., 2020). However, educational aims have broadened to also focus on whole-student learning to include social, emotional, and moral growth (Braun et al., 2020). Addressing whole-student needs within the class setting can often create more stressful and emotional demands on educators (Braun et al., 2020).

Studies have revealed that student misbehavior is often the culprit for teacher burnout, citing negative interactions between educators and students that catalyze an already overextended educator (Peditzi et al., 2021). Many teachers believe that they were inadequately trained to deal with the overwhelming stress that can accompany being an educational

professional (Corbin et al., 2019). Teachers who exhibit burnout behaviors have difficulty with classroom management and learning goals needed for student success (Corbin et al., 2019).

When teachers are unable to properly cope with the stress that can accompany teaching, students are potentially not experiencing the full potential of their learning abilities. A classroom that is improperly managed can have negative effects on students who need additional support for academic and social success. When a classroom is in a constant state of disorder, this environment can exacerbate a teacher's burnout syndrome, leading to further student academic and emotional decline.

Theoretical Context

As research continues to evolve, more questions arise about teachers' experiences when it comes to students' use of smartphones and access to social media while in school. Seminal research by Hakanen et al. (2006) has uncovered that the job demands of a teacher can lead to career burnout for various reasons, leading to limited engagement between an educator and their professional commitment. Furthermore, Dussault et al. (1999) emphasize that educators are often isolated from other adults throughout the teaching day and are left to deal with the occupational stress of teaching alone. Likewise, Chang (2009) highlights that K–12 teaching is known to have high burnout rates along with emotional exhaustion partly due to student behaviors and other teaching requirements leading to high turnover. Teachers often suppress emotions when engaged in a teaching environment, which can further exacerbate emotional distress and frustration (Chang, 2009). Previous research conducted on teacher burnout has primarily focused on the educator themselves rather than the environment in which the professional is practicing (Zhou & Wen, 2007).

Varying theories have been introduced within the parameters of teacher stress, emotional exhaustion, and career burnout. Blase (1982) theorizes that teacher performance variables and teacher-student interactions can develop with positive or negative correlations over an elongated period. Fernet et al. (2012) highlights that self-determination theory is an approach to motivation where the individual needs autonomy in order to reach optimal performance. Environmental factors are crucial within the self-determination theory for the framework to facilitate genuine motivation or to thwart the ability of an individual to remain motivated (Fernet et al., 2012). Teachers who perceive greater control over student academics and classroom disruptions believe themselves to be more competent in the classroom, creating strong self-efficacy and resilience within the profession (Fernet et al., 2012). However, when teachers believe they have less control over the classroom environment, self-efficacy can become nonexistent, which could correlate to burnout (Fernet et al., 2012).

Conventional theories of teacher burnout have contributed greatly to the existing literature. Teaching is a unique profession in human services that requires the educator to establish working and healthy relationships with students (Maslach & Leiter, 1999). However, unlike other professionals who work in human services, educators do not work one-on-one but with large quantities of students, creating a production-type environment rather than a holistic one. There has been extensive scholarly research within the realm of teacher burnout based on classroom environments, educational leadership failings, student behavior, and personal struggles thrust upon educators. Conversely, current research on teacher burnout regarding student smartphone and social media use inside the classroom is nonexistent. Uncovering the experiences of teachers within this context can produce a clearer understanding of another possible facet of the epidemic of teacher burnout. Multiple parameters and environmental factors

can hinder educational professionals from performing at optimal levels. Studying teacher burnout within the proposed context can also serve as a guide for further investigation into how smartphones and social media affect student populations and the possible solutions educational administrators and policymakers can implement to improve teacher and student outcomes.

Problem Statement

The problem consists of the unknown experiences of teachers in the secondary classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential for teacher burnout. Much of the literature presents a biased stance towards smartphone devices and social media in the classroom as a tool to integrate learning, while neglecting the seriousness of the distraction phones and social media can produce in the instructional environment (Pedro et al., 2018). In general, numerous studies have been conducted on how teacher burnout is brought about by various factors, such as school administration, colleague conflicts, student behavior, and instructional expectations. However, there remain many questions as to the influences that student smartphone and social media use have on the educator regarding teacher burnout. The aim of the study is to uncover the experiences of secondary educators regarding student behaviors based on smartphone and social media use and what this specific factor in modern classrooms has on secondary teacher burnout.

Over time, adolescents who overuse social media are more likely to develop behavior traits that are narcissistic in nature and can hinder healthy development into adulthood (Hawk et al., 2019). Uncovering teachers' experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use can further provide insights into how to properly manage student phone use during school time. Adolescents are exposed to an unprecedented amount of media content with accessibility on smartphones (Gupta et al., 2022) Learning about the experiences of secondary teachers who

hinder student phone and social media use while in class, during passing periods, and while on lunch break can help uncover what teachers can do to mitigate disruptions, low personal morale, classroom management, and job-related stress, possibly leading to burnout.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential career burnout of secondary educators. Focusing on how early secondary educators are affected by student smartphone and social media use in the classroom can bring further clarity on how the educational industry can better assist current secondary educators and prepare future educators for the classroom environment of the 21st century. Potentially uncovering another facet of the phenomenon of teacher burnout by investigating student smartphone and social media use in the classroom is imperative within the educational system. Teacher burnout continues to hinder the education industry due to numerous factors that are both recorded and unrecorded. This study is being conducted to understand the thoughts, struggles, and victories of secondary educators who continually manage curriculum and student behavior amidst the era of smartphones and social media use.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical

With continuous emerging research being conducted and published highlighting various possible causes of teacher burnout, uncovering what teachers feel and believe about smartphones and social media use in the classroom can bring further clarity into the theoretical context of teacher burnout in the 21st century. With the large rise in secondary student smartphone and social media use, focusing specifically on the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom

can also contribute to educational management techniques in a technology-immersed world. From a theoretical standpoint, studying what teachers experience when students utilize smartphones and social media content in the classroom can increase awareness of teachers' perspectives on the phenomena being examined. Understanding what teachers feel when their pupils access phones and social media during class is necessary to capture the essence of job-related stress and career burnout among secondary teachers.

Empirical

The empirical data collected from the study will provide insights into the phenomenon of teacher experiences with student smartphones and social media access during school hours. Uncovering what teachers think and feel about student smartphone and social media use will provide an increased understanding of the phenomenon. The empirical data collected will further add to current theories on teacher burnout, and the secondary teacher perspective will demonstrate the current challenges faced in middle and high school-aged classrooms. As technology has rapidly changed the way students participate in education, school policies and procedures have been slow to change regarding the advancement of technology. Uncovering the need to support educators in the classroom with job-related stress due to possible smartphone and social media use can have lasting impacts on the current issues in the 21st-century classroom.

Research Questions

The intention of the study is to bring an awareness to the experiences of secondary teachers with student smartphone and social media use and career burnout. Utilizing a hermeneutical phenomenological framework highlights the essence of what others experience through making observational markers for the interpretation of the results (van Manen, 1990). It is vital for the central research questions and sub-questions to be properly aligned with the

theoretical framework that is guiding the research. The primary focus of what secondary educators experience regarding the phenomenon of student smartphone and social media use and burnout is structured with Maslach's Burnout Theory (1982).

Uncovering the phenomenon of what teachers experience in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and teacher burnout requires invasive questions to bring clarification. Teacher burnout has nuances such as emotional exhaustion, negative teacher attitudes, and lack of personal accomplishment leading to educators leaving the profession. The central research question allows the phenomenon under investigation to maintain a clear focus whereas, the sub questions add further context for clarity into the essence of the experiences of secondary educators.

Central Research Question

How does adolescent student smartphone and social media use in the classroom contribute to secondary teacher burnout?

Sub-Question One

How do students who are defiant towards teacher classroom restrictions on smartphones and social media use create emotional exhaustion for educators?

Sub-Question Two

How can student smartphone and social media use in the classroom create cynicism and negativity among secondary classroom teachers?

Sub-Question Three

How are secondary teachers coping with a lack of personal accomplishment because of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom?

Definitions

1. *Digital Citizenship*: Exhibiting responsible behavior while engaging in online activities (Gleason & Von Gillern, 2018).
2. *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)*: A phenomenon that occurs when an individual believes they are missing important life-changing moments (Tandon et al., 2021).
3. *Smartphone*: A mobile electronic device that can communicate through voice calls, text messages, and other forms of internet media (Reid, 2018).
4. *Social Media*: A digital platform that serves as a form of communication among individuals and enables them stay connected through an online application or website (Kapoor et al., 2017).

Summary

Understanding the experiences of secondary educators regarding student smartphone and social media utilization while on campus can assist in raising awareness of teachers' perceptions on the phenomenon. With past studies focusing specifically on the mental health of adolescents who utilize social media, understanding the experiences of secondary teachers and how they could contribute to career burnout can reveal an entirely new perspective on the contemporary issue. Not only are adolescent students experiencing mental health issues, but educators in general are also increasingly changing occupations for various reasons. Revealing the experiences of teachers working with secondary students who use smartphones and social media during school hours could also provide findings of what could or could not be beneficial within the instructional teacher support system. As student mindsets change and technology becomes more accessible, understanding the phenomenon of secondary teacher burnout and the reasons

behind it can better equip educators to avoid the pitfalls of potential burnout and ensure a healthy and conducive learning environment for all individuals involved.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter begins with the theoretical framework that will guide the literature being reviewed for research purposes. The theoretical framework is the lens through which the literature will be analyzed to draw a synthesis. The introduction will explain the current understanding of the climate in classrooms regarding smartphone use and teacher concerns. It will also explain educators' attitudes towards smartphones and social media. The subsequent section of the literature review will describe contrasting opinions of how smartphones could be beneficial within a structured educational setting. Literature highlighting teacher perspectives and teacher burnout will be analyzed to further understand how the phenomena being investigated can be strengthened through previous studies. Following the teacher perspective and burnout sections, the summary will synthesize all the literature reviewed to further clarify potential gaps in the current academic literature in order to address the phenomena being investigated.

Theoretical Framework

With the majority of students utilizing smartphones and social media in the contemporary American school system, student behaviors appear to have changed within the last two decades. As students have gained more access to smartphones and social media has evolved, teachers in the 21st-century classroom are facing new challenges. As teachers face a new frontier within classroom management, are smartphones and social media creating focused or distracted students? Could there be an unseen phenomenon occurring within classrooms? Could students using smartphones and social media in class possibly contribute to teacher burnout? Could there be a potential overlooked phenomenon of students overutilizing devices in the classroom setting?

How are teachers reacting when students disrupt a class because of smartphone use and refuse to hand over the device? Are there teachers in the profession struggling with gaining control of the classroom due to the phone utilization of students?

There are many questions related to the phenomenon that was investigated. Bringing about understanding into what secondary teachers experience when students refuse to follow classroom expectations and behaviors within the sphere of smartphone and social media use in the classroom is imperative in current classrooms. Burnout can be the final stage for professionals who serve people daily, and it generally develops through a chain reaction of occupational stress (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). Understanding what stressors contribute to teacher burnout will guide the study of understanding the phenomena being examined. Many factors can contribute to teacher burnout. Rasheed-Karim (2020) points out that many intrinsic factors, such as stressors from high workloads, administrative expectations, and student challenges, can also catalyze into teacher burnout. Furthermore, Rasheed-Karim (2020) identifies that teacher locus of control and variable age differences also play a major role regarding career burnout. Although teacher burnout can often end with a professional educator leaving the field, it can also mean teachers who are physically present but emotionally and intellectually absent (Rasheed-Karim, 2020). Using a proper theoretical lens to guide the study is imperative to further clarify and focus on what is being investigated.

The theoretical lens through which the information will be filtered is that of Maslach's burnout theory (1982). Maslach's theory on burnout developed from Maslach's academic investigations of professionals who work in close contact with people as part of their professional vocational duties, particularly with individuals who require significant emotional labor (Maslach, 2003). Individuals who need a nominal amount of care and compassion require

professionals who can distribute care and compassion as well as maintain a healthy professional balance between work and personal life. However, burnout syndrome is not limited to professional caregivers; it affects numerous professionals who offer human services (Maslach, 2003). The list is rather extensive in terms of the numerous professions and career occupations this phenomenon affects.

Maslach's burnout theory consists of three primary frameworks within the burnout process. First is the state of emotional exhaustion, where an individual overextends themselves, leading to feelings of being drained and a loss of focus. Individuals who experience the phase of emotional exhaustion within the burnout syndrome spectrum often feel they are no longer able to serve others and believe they are inadequate for the tasks required of them. At the onset of burnout, individuals feel drained of their energy, and their emotional resources are depleted. Once emotional exhaustion begins to set in, individuals begin to withdraw from serving or caring for others. The emotional exhaustion phase within the burnout spectrum lays the foundation for the next phase of burnout that will contribute to a professional or individual spiraling downward emotionally and professionally. Emotional exhaustion can begin early in a professional's career as job demands become more prevalent over the years and the individual does not feel validated or recognized. Furthermore, individuals who experience emotional exhaustion begin to limit contact with people they once served to regain a sense of personal control due to the burnout they are experiencing. Individuals who once served with compassion and enthusiasm follow only the minimum requirements needed to complete the task, creating a detached bureaucrat with no passion or drive.

The second parameter in Maslach's burnout theory is depersonalization. Depersonalization creates poor opinions of others in the individual who is experiencing burnout.

In essence, the person experiencing depersonalization due to burnout begins to despise the individuals they once served with enthusiasm and dignity. Within the phase of depersonalization, professionals begin to view the people they serve as problems and expect the worst from them. Professionals who have experienced the second phase of burnout, depersonalization, have had their vision of others marred. For example, a person experiencing depersonalization could have a negative attitude towards customers, students, patients, and family. Cynical behavior within the depersonalization phase of burnout becomes more apparent with verbal and non-verbal cues demonstrated by the professional or caregiver. Many who have suffered the effects of depersonalization no longer desire to serve those whom they once cared for.

The final phase of burnout syndrome is reduced personal accomplishment. Reduced personal accomplishment brings about thoughts and feelings of low self-esteem, making the professional to see themselves as a failure, be self-critical, and doubt the profession they have chosen. Many individuals who encounter the phase of reduced personal accomplishment often adopt the negative view of self-inadequacy. Self-esteem in the reduced personal accomplishment phase of burnout produces a crumbling sense of self-worth, and depression can follow. Many working professionals who experience the low self-esteem that accompanies reduced personal accomplishment will seek professional counseling or therapy, believing they are the ones who have brought on the emotional and mental anguish. Many professionals and caregivers who come face-to-face with this phase of burnout will change careers and abandon any work that deals directly with people every day.

Given the nuances of what burnout entails regarding individuals who work in the sector of serving others, such as teachers, Maslach's burnout theory is suited to frame this study investigating and uncovering the experiences of teachers in the classroom regarding student

phone and social media use. Using Maslach's theory can assist in solidifying the aim of the study by strengthening the foundation of understanding of what secondary teachers experience with a student population that continually uses smartphone devices and accesses social media.

This study will utilize the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educational Survey (MBI-ES; Maslach et al., 2018). A major instrument that arose from Maslach's original theory of burnout is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which consists of an emotional exhaustion scale. Since the original conception of the Maslach's theory, the burnout inventory has evolved in various forms to refine the underlying causes of burnout. The MBI-ES was developed to assist educators, administrators, and staff members who work in an educational setting where burnout can commonly occur. Maslach's Burnout Inventory (MBI) is one the most widely known tools in psychometric research to better understand what fuels burnout in the workspace (Douelfiqar et al., 2022). The teaching profession has a high occupational risk of burnout, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educational Survey (MBI-ES), since its inception, has provided researchers with concrete data when conducting work-stress related research (Safiye et al., 2023). The research being conducted within this study will utilize Maslach's burnout theory (1982) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Utilizing the framework Maslach has created through the theory of burnout and the burnout inventory educational survey will allow for a clearer understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Using Maslach's theory to uncover whether student smartphone and social media use within the classroom affects teachers' job outlooks can assist in the theory within the context of the 21st-century classroom. Since the inception of Maslach's theory in 1982, the educational setting has drastically changed. Student populations and mentality have changed, technology has advanced, and the curriculum has developed.

Understanding what can cause or facilitate educator burnout in the modern educational setting will be imperative to preventing the phenomenon from affecting current and future educators.

Related Literature

Student Smartphones and the Classroom Setting

Das and Ahmed (2023) discovered many educational institutions lack structured regulations related to smartphone use in the classroom. Problems arise associated with student smartphone use on campus and the ambiguous rules not defined by schools. Students who access phones while in school often succumb to digital distractions and divided attention creating frustration for teachers due to inconclusive phone policies on campus. Kim et al. (2019) researched 799 middle and high schools, with a total of 62,276 respondents. The results indicated that students experienced emotions ranging from an increase in depression and anxiety to lower self-esteem and suicidal ideation or suicide attempts when excessively using their smartphone device. Kim (2022) highlights that early adolescence is a critical period where crucial physical and cognitive development occurs. However, Kim demonstrates that the allure of smartphone and social media use could hinder self-esteem and induce a fear of missing out (FOMO) based on peer behavior online.

Accordingly, Ramos-Soler et al. (2021) found that student use of a smartphone device can have a negative influence on the behavior and lifestyle of teenagers who overuse the device. Ramos-Soler et al. discovered that nomophobia (fear of missing out) is mild to moderate among adolescent users of smartphone devices and can make them susceptible to engaging in negative behaviors due to social networking and smartphone abuse. Beyond the mental health ramifications that follow phone abuse by adolescent users, there is also an aspect of how smartphone devices affect student academics. The fear of missing out can produce feelings of

anxiety and frustration for the individual experiencing such feelings of inadequacy which can greatly impact behavior for the individual. Alinejad et al. (2022) discovered when students experience feelings of nomophobia, academic performance including lower grade point averages, meager study and homework habits, and lower retention of taught material increase with smartphone and social media use. Additionally, Throuvala et al. (2021) investigated the driving factors contributing to adolescent overuse of smartphone devices. They sampled 1,129 English-speaking university students in the United Kingdom and found that lack of impulse control was the leading cause of smartphone abuse among many pupils. Attention management is one of the most critical skills that is lacking due to the overwhelming number of distractions posed by the online environment and the digital devices available.

Ozen and Yildirim (2022) highlight that classroom management is paramount for educators who daily encounter numerous scenarios that require a professional to use sound judgment for every situation. Classroom management that is not properly carried out can have negative effects upon a teacher if a professional lacks training or knowledge to execute proper student management. Classrooms that are structured and managed properly can reduce distractions that often hinder student development. Ozen and Yildirim also uncovered students who are distracted, and off task often distract peers and frustrate the learning process both for the students and educators. Educators who are frustrated can become short-tempered with students leading to a division between teacher and students. Mrazek et al. (2021) surveyed 135 high school students from four US high schools and found that 38% of the respondents were distracted by their smartphones during homework time, and 64% believed they should be focusing more on their homework time than they currently were.

Concerns over student distractions in the classroom among teachers are not unwarranted; many teachers have witnessed firsthand the divided attention of pupils due to digital devices being readily available to capture students' attention (Ochs & Sonderegger, 2021). Devices such as smartphones can hinder whole class learning with students who become distracted by a peer who is an actual possession of such a device leading multiple learners at risk for off task behaviors. Reysen et al. (2020) investigated student entitlement within the parameters of smartphone use and discovered that students who believed it was a right to access a phone during instructional time had higher scores of nomophobia and lower scores of instructional connectivity. Furthermore, Nema et al. (2023) identified that student interaction has increased for peers within the social media sphere creating a new realm of communication with limited supervision. However, due to the inability to monitor student activity on social media, it has created concerns for educational professionals due to the possible negative effects of digital distractions. Conversely, Nema et al. found it takes the average learner around thirty minutes to refocus and concentrate on their studies once they have become distracted. While student distraction in the classroom is a concern for educators, research also indicates students' grade point average suffers as well when a pupil is engaged continuously on social media.

Chen et al. (2020) explains that digital distractions in the classroom has gained widespread attention from educators looking to manage such challenges as technology continues to rapidly evolve. Although parents, policy makers, and educators are increasingly recognizing the need to prevent dysfunctional use of smartphones and social media, it remains a severe problem within numerous settings including educational institutions. Researchers Um et al. (2019) found that middle school students who are highly dependent on smartphones require a variety of classroom management techniques to hinder the distractions phones can produce.

Middle school students can often struggle with social cues and structured environments where classroom expectations are to have digital devices such as phones off and away. The detrimental effects of academic distraction have increased in recent years due to students multi-tasking on smartphone devices while in a classroom environment (Dontre, 2020).

The student population often fails to resist the temptation of checking their smartphones, which has become one of the most frequent interruptions in the classroom (Johannes et al., 2019). School districts are beginning to recognize these issues and implement regulations on smartphone use while on campus to help curtail the adolescent mental health epidemic facing global youth (Wood et al., 2023). Oraison et al. (2020) uncovered that the usage of smartphones is widespread among secondary students, with many using the devices up to 150 times per day. Oraison et al. found that students who have become addicted to smartphone devices exhibit behaviors such as limited compulsion control and disruptive behaviors in environments that require attention and instruction. Rather than engaging with activities in class, students will turn their attention away from academic tasks to indulge in compulsive smartphone use, further embedding the addictive pattern of smartphone dependency. Fabio et al. (2022) note that excessive smartphone use can lead to negative consequences such as a lower ability for self-regulation and addictive behaviors and traits. Several factors, including the size of a smartphone device, can make an addiction to it more insidious and pervasive due to the availability of the device to a person throughout the day.

While technology can be a challenge for many current educators, the US Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology emphasizes the importance of new teacher candidates having a technological component within their appropriate teacher preparation program (Clausen et al., 2022). Many of the current teacher preparation programs in existence

today emphasize technological pedagogy generally in one course instead of weaving the importance of technology throughout the entirety of a teacher preparation program. Due to the lack of preparation for new teachers within the realm of technology, many teachers enter the classroom underprepared to use technology in an educational setting and struggle with technology integration at many levels within the instructional process. Given the phenomena being investigated, the smartphone is a technology that rapidly evolves daily. Teachers who have been underprepared in teacher preparation programs to properly manage the inundating technology of student smartphone use in the classroom may eventually face the challenges of classroom mismanagement and career burnout.

Within recent years, numerous students have been advised by educators across the globe to switch off devices while in a classroom setting (Wood et al., 2023). For example, Wood et al. discovered that numerous secondary schools within the UK have implemented policies of phone restrictions while students are on campus. UK educational administrators have noticed that students' mental wellbeing declines when pupils have unlimited access to phones during the instructional day. According to a recent Pew Research Center poll, 95% of teens have smartphones, and 45% of those teens state that they are continuously on the device (Schaeffer, 2019). Liu (2021) found digital distractions in the classroom has increased as educators often utilize technological devices for instruction. Due to learning in environments where internet accessibility is abundant, students often succumb to the allure to digitally wander during an instructional lesson. As the digital revolution continues to unfold, greater awareness is now being implemented into the compounding problem of students who are physically present in the classroom but are not mentally. Beyond the basic bodily needs of individuals throughout the day, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping, daily access to media through smartphone applications is

predominant, with the average student checking their phone an average of 58 times a day (Troll et al., 2021). Students who demonstrate addictive behaviors of smartphone use can often show patterns of procrastination and fear of missing out (FOMO; Wang et al., 2019).

Dodson (2020) found that 58% of current smartphone guidelines in numerous school districts throughout the United States allow students to bring and use smartphones while on campus. Smartphones have infiltrated the lives of all adolescents at a speed at which many questions have been left unanswered, particularly regarding frequent users (Cheng et al., 2021). Smartphone addiction is a current phenomenon that has taken place in recent years and impacts the social and behavioral development of adolescent users. Cheng et al. uncovered that when a teenage smartphone user is denied access to their device, they experience many of the symptoms a drug user endures when withdrawing from an illicit substance, such as being out of control, having mood changes, showing decreased tolerance, and exhibiting changes in behavior. Teenagers use smartphones at a more noticeable rate than other groups; smartphone addiction has translated into several behavioral concerns for parents, counselors, and educational professionals.

Students who acquire sufficient sleep nightly have stronger school attendance rates and better academic performance levels than students who are sleep deprived (Mac Cárthaigh et al., 2020). Adolescents who utilize smartphone devices during nighttime hours show reduced quality of sleep, mental health problems, and poor performance-based abilities during daytime activities (de Sá et al., 2023). Alahdal et al. (2023) studied 373 high school students in relation to smartphone utilization and sleep patterns within the examined group. They found that within the study, the average time spent on smartphone devices averaged over 6 hours a day, resulting in a positive correlation between smartphone addiction and sleep deprivation (Acikgoz et al., 2022).

Godsell and White (2019) found that the leading common obstacle to proper sleep-in adolescent-aged groups is personal electronic devices such as tablets and smartphones. There is an underlying factor of social pressure that lures teens to be active on social media during sleeping hours, further promoting the sleep deprivation of already exhausted adolescent youth. Bègue et al. (2022) highlight that adolescent sleep deprivation significantly impacts student behavior, leading to aggressive activity, academic decline, and an overall decrease in mental wellbeing. Students who suffer from chronic sleep deprivation due to nightly phone use struggle with self-control and often become cyberbullies (Zhao, 2023).

Smartphones and Student Benefits

Smartphone use in the classroom for academic purposes is a controversial and developing subject among teachers that is still in the infancy stages of a practiced norm (Sumekto & Setyawati, 2019). Yoon and Yun (2021) found that smartphone usage time was not necessarily correlated with problematic behaviors. For students who used smartphone devices for academic purposes during learning group time, the devices had a positive influence on their achievement goals. Likewise, Roberts and David (2019) uncovered that social media allows adolescents to experience relationships through sharing interests online bringing forth an active form of socializing beyond school campuses. Furthermore, Sharma et al. (2021) found that students who utilized smartphones to complete assignments finished quickly, connected with friends frequently, utilized eBooks extensively, and communicated with professors proficiently. Furthermore, Lambton-Howard et al. (2020) uncovered many students use social media as the main form of communication that will continue to be embraced by colleges, employers, and colleagues as a prominent form of correspondence. In addition, Cook and Sayeski (2022) found that student self-monitoring apps are being created to assist students to remain on task through

tracking of upcoming assignments. Keeping track of assignments due is especially beneficial to students with learning disabilities such as ADHD. Not only are a select group of students seeing the benefits of utilizing smartphones for social connection and academic support, but educators are also beginning to harness the device in the classroom setting as well.

Sutisna et al. (2020) researched a high school where teachers used smartphone apps for various instructional purposes and students were also allowed complete freedom to use smartphones while on campus. Sutisna et al. discovered that many students at the school used their smartphone devices for assignments during class and to communicate with parents to ensure transportation needs at the end of the day. Additionally, Firmansyah et al. (2020) found that academic performance among middle school students improved with the use of educational apps along with direct teacher guidance. Moreover, Ketsman (2019) explains that many new teachers entering the profession are coming out of certain teacher pre-service programs with pedagogy practices that utilize smartphones to enhance student learning.

Lang and Šorgo (2023) uncovered that a large portion of the student population possesses smartphones and has utilized them for educational purposes since the age of 15. The idea of integrating smartphones into education is still in its early stages within the lower secondary setting but is gaining traction among educators. Gigantesco et al. (2019) studied middle school student behavior and concluded that teachers need to encourage students to use smartphone devices properly to improve productivity and their emotional and social stability. Likewise, Salcines-Talledo et al. (2020) note numerous teachers are beginning to incorporate smartphones and social media into their pedagogy in order to use the devices as a classroom tool as well as a communication device. Moreover, Hasbiyati et al. (2019) found smartphones to be beneficial in science classrooms that use smartphones for eBooks, giving students access at any time to

pertinent information and video links in the eBook app to strengthen taught concepts from the teacher.

Students who are foreign language learners are reaping the benefits of smartphones being utilized in the classroom setting to promote foreign language acquisition while building comprehension and confidence for the pupil (Kaceti & Klímová, 2019). Furthermore, Eilola and Lilja (2021) highlight that second language acquisition has a social dynamic that learners of a foreign language utilize through apps and search engines. Researchers Cheng et al. (2020) discovered that science teachers who integrated a smartphone-based paper airplane simulator had a high level of student response and effort. Mobile devices in the science classroom offer numerous advantages, such as computing and calculation power, and instant access to information via the internet. The incorporation of smartphone devices into a lesson can further promote student learning based on student buy-in and connectivity among peers and the lesson being taught.

Social Media Influence on Student Behavior

The phenomenon of adolescents utilizing smartphones and social media as the main medium to connect with peers has only come into focus within the last two decades; it has become a normalized part of everyday life for the average teenager (Greenhow et al., 2019). While there are tangible benefits for students using smartphones in the classroom, students also utilize the device for inappropriate purposes that can result in disciplinary action (Motamedi Heravi et al., 2022). Feeling connected to family and peers is crucial to the development of an adolescent's mental health (Winstone et al., 2021). Parental involvement in an adolescent's social media use needs to be measured with clear guidance that promotes trust and responsible time management for proper implementation. Winstone et al. also found that supporting young

individuals in responsible social media use can assist in social connectedness while still promoting breathing space during online interactions, preferring trust over the online availability of peers. Pouwels et al.'s (2021) prior research uncovered that the formation and maintenance of friendships are vital to the growth and development of adolescents. Social media can be utilized as a tool for friendship development. However, the type of social media being accessed by an adolescent user determines whether it is beneficial or not. Pouwels et al. discovered that middle school-aged youth are particularly attracted to social media use, in part because of the transition from family support to the more dominant role of peer support within the life of an emerging young adult.

Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2023) explain that self-esteem is often used as an evaluation tool an individual will use on themselves, especially within the parameters of self-judgment, approval, disapproval, and personal worth. Although there are several perspectives on the development of self-esteem, Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. focused on the use of social media and its effects on self-esteem among middle and high school students. Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. discovered that middle and high school students who excessively utilize social media have greater odds of lowered self-esteem and a strong correlation with posting regret. Students who accessed social media more than 5 hours a day were significantly linked to posting regret and lower overall self-esteem, regardless of whether the student was in middle school or high school. Contrastingly, Valkenburg et al. (2021) discovered that social media influence and lower self-esteem were not necessarily due to social media use alone but based on the personal traits and developmental stages of each adolescent student. However, Setiadi et al. (2019) uncovered that smartphone addiction contributed to numerous physical and mental health issues including obesity, depression, anxiety, and low stamina.

Ozimek and Bierhoff (2019) describe self-esteem as an affective-evaluative frame of viewing oneself. They sought to uncover the effects of comparative social media use, self-esteem, and depressive tendencies among adolescent youth. They found a correlation between the upward comparison of peers through social media, lower self-esteem levels, and depressive symptoms. Acar et al. (2020) describes an upward comparison as “comparing oneself with superior others who have found positive characteristics.” When adolescent social media users encounter peers posting highly positive information, an upward comparison is made (Ozimek & Bierhoff, 2019). An upward comparison within the mind of an adolescent social media user could potentially trigger thoughts of inadequacy based on the positive posts of peers who appear to have a more personally fulfilling life. Acar et al. (2020) investigated the effects of social media on adolescent users and discovered that adolescents who were emotionally and socially stable used social media to connect with peers, but adolescents who struggled with emotional and social stability and lacked social support were often negatively affected by excessive social media use. Researchers uncovered that adolescent individuals who have problematic Instagram use demonstrated a higher level of loneliness, general anxiety, and social anxiety.

Previous research conducted by Lee et al. (2020) sought to reveal the experiences of adolescent social media users not receiving likes and other positive messages from peers and the effects of these experiences. Lee et al. noted that insufficient peer validation on social media elicited feelings of rejection, distress, sadness, anxiousness, or embarrassment. Lee et al. highlight that individuals who are within the adolescent developmental stages are particularly sensitive to social status among peers. Social media has become the main medium where adolescents access and communicate with peers and where individual thoughts and feelings are put on public display for all to see. As adolescent users utilize social media, an individual who

receives little to no positive affirmation from peers, such as likes, shares, or views, experiences feelings of rejection, which can exacerbate anxiety, depression, and an overall low view of self. Moreover, Gajdics and Jagodics (2021) identified that secondary students form attachments to social partners as well as inanimate objects such as smartphone devices. Adolescent-aged individuals form a bond of safety and security with mobile devices, and when the smartphone device is removed, students feel separation anxiety.

Furthermore, Gajdics and Jagodics discovered that anxiety scores increased when mobile phones were taken away due to students experiencing nomophobia. Gajdics and Jagodics highlight that when schools enforce phone-free classrooms, disruptive student behaviors can occur due to the anxiety students experience from the device being withheld. Students who utilized phones to access social networks had a higher anxiety score than students who did not, due to the utilization of the device in non-convenient situations where social stress may occur. Students begin to believe that their friends are engaging in activities without them through social media, and they exhibit behaviors relating to fear of missing out (FOMO; Shane-Simpson & Bakken, 2022). Shane-Simpson and Bakken also found that many students use social media in class as a mental break; however, access to social media during instructional time can lead to distraction from the lesson being taught. The fear of missing out (FOMO) continues to be a driving force behind why some students often struggle to refrain from social media use in class and at school. Rautio and Stenvall (2019) highlight that smartphones have become the everyday companion for many adolescent individuals, creating an intimate relationship between the student and the device.

Secondary Teachers and Burnout

Teaching is known to be a mentally and emotionally exhausting occupation, and many professionals leave the educational field due to career burnout (Rajendran et al., 2020). At the core of career burnout is the emotional exhaustion educators often face. Professional educators consistently deal with extenuating circumstances varying from challenging students to parents with high demands. Many of the factors that lead an educator to leave the profession are predicted by the stressful working conditions that numerous teachers face within the scope of professional expectations. Martínez-Monteaudo et al. (2019) found that when teachers' personal emotional resources are depleted, the likelihood of an educator experiencing burnout syndrome can become high. Martínez-Monteaudo et al. also discovered that teachers who are better at controlling their emotions in stress-producing situations such as teaching have a lower probability of experiencing professional burnout than colleagues whose control of personal emotions is unregulated and unchecked. Teachers who suffer from various psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress are more likely to experience burnout syndrome than other teachers who do not struggle with these mental ailments.

Ramberg et al. (2019) found that stress and stress-related complaints is common among teachers who often struggle with fatigue and symptoms of depression due to working environments. Research has also uncovered that students are less motivated to learn when teachers are depleted of energy and demonstrate no passion in the classroom. Chu et al. (2021) explains that pre-occupation of using smartphone devices leads students to develop negative behaviors which can challenge over-extended teachers. Incidentally, Sahlström et al. (2019) discovered that phone use in the classroom decreased the participation patterns of students. When it came to whole-class learning, teachers had to compete for students' attention while

students were inattentively scrolling through their phone. The daily stress secondary teachers encounter is directly influenced by environmental and personal elements that are characterized by the demands of the job and the teachers' ability to cope personally with the requirements of the profession (Jōgi et al., 2022).

Secondary teachers face high emotional demands, and burnout syndrome is prevalent among secondary educational professionals due to the taxing nature of serving an adolescent population (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019). Teachers are the key agents when it comes to implementing policies on classroom phone restrictions (Grigic Magnusson et al., 2023). Furthermore, Grigic Magnusson et al. uncovered that many teachers believe it is beneficial to enact strict phone policies at the beginning of the school year to ensure student compliance and classroom expectations. Grigic Magnusson et al. also identified teachers who implemented strict phone policies and would collect student phones daily before the lesson started, preventing any students from being tempted to utilize the device during instructional time. However, teachers who collected phones before the lesson started were constantly in conflict with students who were unwilling to forfeit the phone, creating an environment of tension and frustration both for the student and the educator at the beginning of class. In Grigic Magnusson et al.'s study, teachers expressed frustrations about enacting phone ban policies due to the time constraints of collecting mobile phone devices and the daily conflict between teachers and students. Grigic Magnusson et al. concluded that teachers who upheld the phone ban throughout the school year would have continual behavior problems and conflict with students.

Holley and Park (2020) surveyed high school teachers in a study examining policies on smartphone use in class. They found that 66% of the teachers believed that phones in class are a major distraction to the learning process. However, Stachowski et al. (2020) noted that there

continues to be a divide in teacher attitudes towards smartphones in the classroom, with some teachers supporting it and others opposing it. Beerli and Horowitz (2020) argue that when it comes to classroom discipline regarding smartphones, there are two approaches teachers use: allow students unlimited access to phones during instructional time or have a complete ban on smartphone devices while students are in class or on campus. Likewise, Nikolopoulou (2020) sampled 64 secondary teachers in Greece and discovered that teachers' main concerns were the abuse of smartphone devices and the inability to prevent students in the classroom from disregarding classroom rules. Delello et al. (2020) explains that digital devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones have created an environment in the classroom where students' attention is continually divided.

Researchers Varanasi et al. (2021) conducted a study examining the associations between stress caused by smartphones and teacher burnout in low-income schools. They discovered that smartphone use dramatically increased the risk of teacher burnout. Educators are often forced to police classrooms rather than teach which can create distress for professionals who rarely are allowed to practice their true vocation in the classroom. Stress is an underlying factor within the burnout paradigm and can create feelings of cynicism as well as lack of accomplishment. Low-income schools often struggle with parental involvement, creating an environment where an educator can become isolated. Yildiz Durak (2019) found that teacher-driven prevention strategies must be prioritized within the parameters of students' uncontrolled impulses when it comes to smartphone access in the classroom. Lemov (2022) explains that many students have difficulty switching tasks due to the short attention span they have developed in part because of phone overuse. The tension between education and technology resides with the use of technology during instructional time and the distraction that smartphones can produce in an educational

setting (Kumpulainen et al., 2022). Kumpulainen et al. elaborate that student assessment and integrity can come into question when students are introduced to learning apps. The educational apps could manipulate proven measures that are currently in place for teacher and student success. Further, Wang and Yao (2021) highlight teachers that are novice professionals who have less than three years in the classroom, are more susceptible in experiencing burnout due to technostress. Teachers entering the profession can become overwhelmed with demanding skills such as troubleshooting technology issues when classroom instruction is interrupted, and students are led off task. Oberle et al. (2020) highlight that over the last 10 years, the occurrence of job-related stress has dramatically increased among K–12 educators.

Daily stress among K–12 educators is on the rise, with 46% of teachers in the United States indicating that lack of assistance, depersonalization, erratic student behavior, and lack of success at work contribute to career burnout. Not only can burnout directly affect the career of an educator who is impacted by the phenomenon of burnout, but other educators who are in close contact with the individual experiencing burnout are potentially affected as well (Meredith et al., 2019). Furthermore, Meredith et al. found that the individual career burnout of one teacher could become a negative catalyst among an educational work team. Meredith et al. also found that the personal successes and failures of educational professionals emanate through a pro-social workgroups such as teachers that are highly interconnected work teams. Teachers often depend fellow educators for professional and emotional support due to the stressful nature of the profession. Educators can form tight-knit groups that are based on professional and personal relationships outside of the educational setting. When a fellow colleague becomes disgruntled, many within the group can begin to take sides with the dissatisfied teacher. The effect of a

teacher experiencing burnout can have devastating implications to teacher work groups as well as the school site itself.

Alonso-Tapia and Ruiz-Diaz (2022) exposed that classroom climates are influenced by teacher, student, and coworker attitudes within educational settings. When teachers are unmotivated, students are distracted, and when coworkers are not supporting of other educators, a negative unproductive environment can accelerate teacher burnout. When teacher motivation is low, learning goals are often missed and students can perceive the teacher's lack of interest in instructing. Not only are student academic goals missed, but student behaviors can also become defiant and apathetic towards classroom rules and expected behaviors. The climate within an educational setting with an educator that is disinterested in teaching, creates a negative cycle for all participants in such settings.

Developmental differences in students and different classroom expectations challenge secondary students who have multiple teachers throughout the day compared with one primary figure of authority in the elementary setting (Zoromski et al., 2020). Inconsistencies can occur between teacher expectations that differ from classroom to classroom, due to the autonomy each teacher has when it comes to classroom management. With the differing classroom expectations each student is required to follow, frustration among students can culminate in absolute defiance about the phone policies required by each teacher throughout the day. Negotiations can often occur between student groups and teachers regarding smartphone use in the classroom (Dinsmore, 2019). Power struggles often occur in the classroom due to teachers' desire to maintain proper professional educational boundaries and students' emphasis on the importance of accessing a personal device. These power struggles create an environment where tensions can arise.

The association between disruptive student behavior and teacher stress and burnout increases significantly when teachers have insufficient classroom behavior management strategies (CBM; Zoromski et al., 2020). When students have little to no structure in the classroom, inappropriate behavior can manifest, and teachers face a strong possibility of losing pupils' attention. Zoromski et al. highlights numerous variables that can contribute to teacher burnout syndrome based on age level, gender, education level, and even marital status. These variables can play major roles when chronic long-term stress creates career burnout (Safiye et al., 2023). Arvidsson et al. (2019) found that large portions of teachers have more long-term sick leaves, worse physical health, lower psychological wellbeing, and lower career satisfaction than other professionals. Teachers are continually challenged with student misbehavior, balancing pressure from parents and administration to keep up with heavy workloads, frequent meetings, and constant policy changes.

Kariou et al. (2021) note that the teaching profession requires a significant amount of emotional labor due to the multi-tasking aspect of the trade, which consists of positive student learning goals and proper classroom management. Olin-Scheller et al. (2020) identified students within a study who used smartphone devices between lessons in the secondary classroom setting and primarily accessed social media apps such as Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram. Student groups in the Olin-Scheller et al. study did not use phones 89% of the time, but when students in the same control groups utilized the phone, it was mainly for social media exclusively. Students who access social media are likely to be updating their feed or watching videos in class during instructional transition points. Park and Ramirez (2022) discovered that students who become apathetic or bored with the learning process in the classroom setting will begin to exhibit signs of slow progress or disengagement. Students who see little to no value in the curriculum being

taught will avoid work in the classroom, miss deadlines, not complete homework, have unexcused absences, consistently fail to turn work in on time, and create extensive excuses.

Park and Ramirez highlight that when students become bored during a lesson, student disengagement occurs and teacher frustration arises, creating a downward spiral of students continually using phones to reduce boredom. Students often cite boredom in the classroom as a source for disruption leading to negative academic outcomes (Tam et al. 2019). Batch et al. (2021) found that lack of enforcement of cell phone policies by staff was a leading cause of students using phones for non-educational tasks while in the classroom setting. Boredom is projected to be a leading factor causing students to access smartphone devices in a classroom setting due to the inability of the instructor to maintain the attention of the pupil. Świątek et al. (2023) evaluated the relationship between social media use and student mental health and discovered that many students demonstrated a lack of impulse control skills and continually checked their phones for notifications, which led to social exhaustion, fatigue, and frustration during class-time activities. Problematic phone use can occur when students feel overwhelmed in the class setting and, as a natural response, begin utilizing a smartphone to access social media and other apps to pull their attention away from the trigger stimuli.

Vanden Abeele et al. (2019) explain that phubbing is a new terminology based on social behaviors in a 21st-century setting. The word phubbing is a combination of two words: phone and snubbing. Phubbing is the act of mindlessly scrolling through a phone while engaged in a social interaction. Generally, phubbing is the practice of passive involvement that occurs where an individual's attention is split between an in-person interaction and a phone interaction simultaneously. Vanden Abeele et al. also noted that an individual who engages in phubbing creates tension between themselves and their counterpart whose attention is not divided. When

surveyed, the participants involved in the study expressed frustration, believing they were not worthy of gaining the full attention of their pupils. Teacher frustration can create behaviors in an educator such as cynicism toward students, leading to disconnection from the intrinsic desire an educational profession once had. Teachers are noted with competing with phones for the attention of the learners, creating an environment of tension for both the teacher and the student.

Alakurt and Yilmaz (2021) investigated public school educators' opinions on phone use in the classroom and found that 69.17% of teachers in the study believed that phones are a major distraction in the classroom setting. Furthermore, Alakurt and Yilmaz uncovered that teachers believe phones hinder student discipline and concentration and that the devices create an environment of frustration for both the teacher and engaged students. Flanigan and Babchuk (2020) found that educators use various techniques to hinder student phone use in the classroom, including prohibiting phone use in the syllabi, sending students out of class, making verbal reprimands, reducing grades, and making non-verbal redirections. Furthermore, Flanigan and Babchuk identified numerous teachers who believe the educator should have full autonomy when it comes to phone policies in the classroom; conversely, a large portion of students within the study believed it was not the teachers' right to enforce such policies on personal devices. Additionally, Flanigan and Babchuk found that students' attitudes toward restricted phone policies in the classroom did little to nothing to deter student phone use in classroom settings. Moreover, students believe that silent phone use in class should be permitted if the individual student is not distracting others.

Mérida-López and Extremera (2021) found that students can become hostile when a teacher initiates a phone ban or confiscates the device when a pupil does not adhere to a phone-free class. Students can exacerbate an already ingrained behavior of constantly checking phones

throughout class, reinforcing the belief that the student has the right to access their phone at any time throughout the instructional day. When students do not adhere to classroom policies, teachers often confiscate phones leading to conflicts between educators and students. Violence against teachers or perceived threats against teachers is a major underlying condition that can contribute to career burnout. Student aggression and misbehavior towards educators are complicated factors that teachers continually contend with in order to maintain a personal and professional balance. Mérida-López and Extremera discovered that teachers who have experienced physical, verbal, or emotional violence become emotionally withdrawn from students and peers. McMahon et al. (2022) found that middle school teachers have a higher probability of student aggression based on teacher experiences.

Numerous middle school teachers note verbal threats and obscene gestures from students as the highest form of harassment from the early adolescent-aged student population. Teachers who work with grade levels seven and above are unlikely to be receivers of physical aggression from students; however, teachers in the secondary level are more likely to be targets of non-physical threats such as sexual harassment, bullying, and verbal threats. Middle school is a pivotal time for the early adolescent student population as physical and emotional changes take place as early as sixth grade and continue through to the high school years. McMahon et al. surveyed 2,558 teachers across the United States and discovered across all secondary grade levels that 65.8% of teachers reported various forms of harassment, from verbal offenses to property damage, within the secondary school setting. Compared to their elementary teacher counterparts, middle school teachers within the study reported proportionally higher rates of student aggression, particularly within the parameters of obscene remarks, inappropriate gestures, verbal threats, intimidation, internet victimization, and property damage.

Although a large proportion of respondents in the study reported student-to-teacher harassment to be non-physical, other studies have found that student aggression can also become physical, causing bodily harm. Moon et al. (2019) indicate that violence enacted upon teachers leads to detrimental effects upon the physical and mental well-being of educational professionals. Student violence against teachers and staff is associated with lower rates of employee retention, poor mental health, chronic physical pain, and low morale as opposed to teachers and staff who do not experience violence in the workplace. Saloviita and Pakarinen (2021) found teacher burnout to be prevalent among subject teachers and lower among special education teachers, regardless of class size. Furthermore, Saloviita and Pakarinen discovered that teacher burnout can be influenced by multiple levels of variables, ranging from the ages of student groups to the support needs each student requires. Grade levels are a significant factor when teachers are on the verge of experiencing work-related burnout syndrome. It is noted that secondary teachers are at an increased risk of burnout due to student behavioral patterns.

Khoo and Yang (2021) have uncovered a link between adolescent smartphone use and aggressive behavior. The literature pertaining to smartphone use and aggression among adolescent-aged individuals is nearly non-existent. Excessive smartphone use can lead to hostile behavior and create an addictive pattern. Adigun et al. (2022) note that students in Grades 7–12 are more vulnerable to classroom disengagement and distractions. Recent Gallup poll findings demonstrate that nearly half of the secondary student population has been distracted and disengaged in recent years due to numerous personal digital devices that have infiltrated the average student's life. Agyapong et al. (2022) found that student phone use influenced teacher behavior, workload stress, and personal employment outlook, which contributed to teacher anxiety and career burnout. Park and Ramirez (2022) link the frustration of teachers who witness

students' lack of motivation and disengagement within the classroom with higher depressive and anxious symptoms and eventual career burnout. Professionals who face chronic stress on the job are more likely to use maladaptive coping strategies as a form of self-regulation until eventual burnout occurs (Bakker & de Vries, 2020).

Summary

The current literature on secondary teacher experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use within the classroom is rather vague. The majority of studies within the parameters of smartphones and social media, are exclusively related to the impact on the student population. With the growing number of users of smartphone devices, bringing about an understanding of how student smartphone and social media use behaviors in the classroom effect teacher experiences is paramount in 21st century classroom. Numerous articles highlight student experiences within the realm of smartphone distraction, social media pressure, cyberbullying, and mental health. Other current academic articles also focus on teachers' personal experiences with smartphones and social media regarding work-life balance and utilizing the device for workgroups. The overwhelming majority of the current literature focuses primarily on the mental health of adolescent-aged groups and the numerous drawbacks smartphones and social media have on the developing brain. Within the ambiguous literature of firsthand teacher experiences regarding adolescent learners using phones and social media within the classroom, there is substantial evidence of a phenomenon not yet uncovered. The mounting evidence of students who are continually distracted due to smartphones and social media use, could possibly lead to a larger issue within current classroom management techniques in the twenty-first century.

Teacher burnout continues to affect high numbers of educational professionals due to high emotional and cognitive demands. Teacher shortages continue to plague school districts,

certain classrooms are left without a permanent teacher throughout the school year due to low numbers of qualified professionals actively working in the field. Uncovering secondary teachers' firsthand experiences with student smartphone and social media use inside the classroom is a multi-layered investigation. The complexities that involve teachers leaving the educational profession cannot be regarded as a one-sided phenomenon based on student smartphone use and social media alone. However, the connection between student misbehavior, distraction, and teacher frustration provides a framework within the literature being investigated. With the numerous drawbacks and benefits of smartphone utilization in the classroom, the question arises: What are secondary teachers' experiences with smartphone devices in the classroom? Secondary students have differing maturity levels than their younger elementary school counterparts. With secondary-aged students, there is an influx of hormones as well as new emotions that may be difficult for a young adolescent to handle. The literature examined briefly brushed the surface of what secondary teachers experience regarding student phone and social media use and the classroom setting. Many studies focus specifically on the student population while glancing over the opinions of the teachers who witness the daily utilization of smartphones. Challenges persist for many educators who are navigating classroom management issues do to loosely regulated electronic device restrictions on school campuses.

Teachers are the main agents of change, discipline, and authority in the classroom and are the professionals who have witnessed the change within the student population. Previous studies have demonstrated the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing smartphone devices in an instructional setting. Current literature emphasizes the numerous disadvantages of students overusing the device and its allure to distract students from completing assignments or focusing in class. Teacher burnout is not solely based on an educator leaving the profession; it can also be

represented through teachers who remain in the profession but are not authentic or impactful. As teachers adapt to student changes based on expected societal behaviors, uncovering firsthand experiences is pivotal to better understanding the teaching profession.

Smartphone abuse by the younger adolescent age group is shown to increase negative emotional, social, and academic outcomes. Contrastingly, when students are allowed to use smartphone devices in the classroom with strict teacher guidance, they show positive connections with educators and peers. There is need for further research on how secondary teachers experience phone use within the classroom and the effects it has within the realm of burnout. The existing research on phones in the classroom has been extensively examined; however, it appears that minimal research has been conducted on secondary teachers' experiences with students utilizing the device within the learning space. Educators' perspectives on phone use in the educational environment could help upper secondary teachers to better prepare for managing a classroom full of potential digital distractions.

The existing literature references numerous middle school studies on the effects of smartphones, primarily in Asian countries. Regarding student behavior and academics, the United States has numerous cultural differences and expectations compared to Asian countries. Societal expectations within the United States regarding phone use in various public and private spaces are comparably different than those of Asian countries. Focusing on secondary teachers' experiences can solidify the current expectations within the classroom setting to gain a consensus of expected classroom behaviors. A thorough examination of current secondary educators' perspectives can assist in shaping further studies and understanding what teachers may be experiencing with phones in the classroom. The focus of this research is theoretical, aiming to

close the gap in the current literature regarding smartphone use in the classroom and middle school teacher experiences.

With the amount of technology inundating schools, particularly smartphones, understanding teachers' perspectives is vital to provide new insights on the phenomena being uncovered. Within the paradoxical framework of the potential new learning opportunities smartphones can provide to educators and the potential distraction these devices can have on students, discovering teachers' perspectives on smartphones in the classroom can further shape twenty first-century classrooms. The distractions smartphones and social media can introduce into the classroom can further frustrate an educational professional with excessive work demands and classroom management strategies.

The theoretical framework of Maslach's burnout theory (1982) assisted in providing clarification with reference to student phone use and teacher frustration. The potential emotional impact of distracted students and student defiance was investigated to clarify any potential educator burnout regarding permissible phone use in the classroom. Although career burnout is not a one-sided phenomenon, there possibility of outside influences regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom can catalyze an already delicate teaching population. Maslach's theory provides not only a framework for career burnout but also a foundation for the researcher to investigate attitudes towards student defiance regarding smartphone and social media use in class. Utilizing Maslach's framework to collect data can assist educational instructors and educational administrators to create schoolwide policies for comprehensive change. Uncovering the phenomenon and the essence of what teachers experience with students and social media, will further the understanding of properly implementing techniques to assist teachers who are struggling with student digital distractions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential career burnout of secondary educators. This chapter focuses on the research design that was utilized to bring about an understanding of the phenomenon that was investigated. The chapter will also highlight the research questions that were essential to the study and provide a description of the setting and participants involved. A brief overview of the researcher's personal point of view and assumptions will be described, as will the procedures used to conduct the data collection. The chapter will continue with the details of each form of data collection that was incorporated within the study. Lastly, the process of data synthesis and validity measures will be explained to conclude the chapter.

Research Design

Designing a framework that presents clearly identified findings can take two distinct approaches within the academic research process. The two designs that can be utilized are quantitative and qualitative forms of research. Quantitative and qualitative frameworks grant the researcher the ability to bring about clarity to a particular problem or area of interest depending on the desired outcomes. This study utilized a qualitative framework for conducting the research. Qualitative research allows the researcher to identify variables related to the issue being investigated that cannot be easily measured through quantitative means (van Manen, 1997). Regarding secondary teacher experiences with student smartphone and social media use within the classroom and teacher burnout, capturing the experiences of this group is not easily identifiable. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to study the contextual settings where

participants address the problem or issue being investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Given the aim of the research, which is to capture the phenomenon of teachers witnessing secondary students accessing smartphones and social media in the classroom and teacher burnout, the qualitative framework is an appropriate design for the intent of the study.

The social environment where the study was conducted is a charged atmosphere where teachers face numerous classroom management challenges. Secondary teachers are entrusted as stewards of a unique position due to the emotional and behavioral obstacles facing many developing adolescent students, including the influence of peers over authority. As adolescent aged students navigate through the stages of development, peer approval becomes an increasingly important socializing agent for academic patterns and personal attitudes during this transitional stage of life (Busching & Krahé, 2020). The design for this qualitative study was that of the phenomenological framework to capture the essence of what secondary teachers experience during classroom instruction while students access smartphones and social media, whether it is or is not permissible. Phenomenological studies focus on what all participants have in common as the phenomenon occurs, bringing clarity to those shared experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Phenomenological research is a framework where philosophical discussions can occur within the lived experiences of others regarding the parameters of individual subjective experiences and the objective experiences of a group phenomenon (van Manen, 1997). Capturing the essence of the experiences of secondary teachers who interact with students who access smartphones and social media while in class was appropriately guided by the phenomenological research framework. Through the process of analyzing the five qualitative designs available, the phenomenological framework was chosen for its appropriateness.

Phenomenological research allows phenomena to be explored in areas that need further understanding of what is occurring within a group or subgroup of individuals (van Manen, 1997). Teenage smartphone users have increased significantly during the past decade, with 95% of adolescent teens possessing the ability to access smartphones and social media throughout the day and a further 45% reporting always being on the device (Rutledge et al., 2019). With a large majority of teenage students in possession of a smartphone device and half the population using the device throughout the day to access text messages, cameras, games, various apps, and social media, understanding what the secondary teachers experience regarding classroom management, behavioral expectations, and career burnout will be best achieved through the phenomenological design.

Phenomenological research has origins that emphasize the importance of philosophical components from individuals such as German mathematician Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Husserl emphasized the need for oneself to overcome the personal ego to not containment the phenomenon under investigation (Claudio, 2020). Heidegger expanded Husserl's work by adding existential and hermeneutical forms of phenomenology, beginning with Heidegger's project on fundamental ontology, which later influenced Sartre (Heotis, 2020). Through the progression of the phenomenological research philosophy, French scholar Jean-Paul Sartre emphasized the need for the transcendence of the ego and was hostile to the conception of the self as an inner entity at the core of individuals, which played an explanatory role in relation to personal experience (Sartre, 2004). Maurice Merleau-Ponty's contribution to phenomenology brought about major changes during the 20th century. Merleau-Ponty focused on the phenomenology of the essence of perceived experiences

of consciousness through perception, which was judged by the relationship between any object and personal perception (Gallagher, 2022).

The hermeneutical design was utilized for this research. Hermeneutical phenomenology allows the researcher to interpret the texts of life to generate not only a description of what is occurring but also an interpretation of the meaning behind the process (van Manen, 1997). Hermeneutical phenomenology also provides a philosophy of how the interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated is to be framed within the scope of bringing relevance to the meaning of human experience (Benner, 1994). Hermeneutical phenomenology is keenly interested in the interpretation of human experiences and relationships (van Manen, 1997). Hermeneutical phenomenological science is focused on the human aspect of life and the variegated aspects, which emphasize the importance of studying men, women, and children in their natural settings (van Manen, 1997).

Research Questions

The intention of the study was to bring an awareness to the experiences of secondary teachers with student smartphone and social media use and career burnout. Utilizing a hermeneutical phenomenological framework highlights the essence of what others experience through making observational markers for the interpretation of the results (van Manen, 1990). It was vital for the central research questions and sub-questions to be properly aligned with the theoretical framework that guided the research. The primary focus of what secondary educators experience regarding the phenomenon of student smartphone and social media use and burnout is structured with Maslach's Burnout Theory (1982).

Uncovering the phenomenon of what teachers experience in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and teacher burnout requires invasive questions to

bring clarification. Teacher burnout has nuances such as emotional exhaustion, negative teacher attitudes, and lack of personal accomplishment leading to educators leaving the profession. The central research question allowed the phenomenon that was investigated to maintain a clear focus whereas, the sub questions added further context for clarity into the essence of the experiences of secondary educators.

Central Research Question

How does adolescent student smartphone and social media use in the classroom contribute to secondary teacher burnout?

Sub-Question One

How do students who are defiant towards teacher classroom restrictions on smartphones and social media use create emotional exhaustion for educators?

Sub-Question Two

How can student smartphone and social media use in the classroom create cynicism and negativity among secondary classroom teachers?

Sub-Question Three

How are secondary teachers coping with a lack of personal accomplishment because of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom?

Setting and Participants

In order to gain a clear understanding of the phenomenon that was studied, a contextual setting was needed to validate the proposed problem. The research was conducted in the greater region of Southern California. The area is considered a growing region and the town has a population of 75,867 residents. The study was conducted in two schools within one larger school district that teaches grades K-12 and has 13,603 students in attendance.

Site

The schools that were utilized are two K–8 schools with grade levels divided by K–6 and 7–8 in different portions of the school. The schools reside within a larger school district that consists of 14 total schools, including the two selected for the research. Based on the central research question “How does adolescent student smartphone and social media use in the classroom contribute to secondary teacher burnout?” The two sites were ideal for gleaning information from where seventh and eighth grade teachers work.

The schools where the study was conducted shall be named middle schools one and two to protect the identities of all participants. The school sites also have a wide variety of students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities, which promoted diversity and provide insights into the experiences of all—not simply one race or family with a greater financial status than others. The wide array of backgrounds of the students at the school sites also served as a determining factor in selecting the schools for the study. Middle schools one and two have various levels within the organizational leadership structure. Middle school one has 1,135 students in attendance and serves student populations kindergarten through eighth grade. The student-to-teacher ratio is 24 to one. Middle school number one has 173 seventh and 148 eighth grade students in attendance. Middle school number two has 874 students in attendance and serves student populations kindergarten through eighth grade. The student population is 24 to one. Middle school two has 107 seventh and 95 eighth grade students in attendance.

Participants

The participants were adults 18 and older who are certificated educational professionals with a bachelor’s degree or higher. Participants in this study were seventh and eighth-grade secondary middle school teachers who teach single-subject classes each period. Five teachers

from each site totaling 10 were selected based on years of experience, age, gender, and educational background. Five participants will have less than five years of experience and five participants will have more than five years of experience. Selecting a group of three to 10 participants assists in phenomenological studies allowing ample opportunity to identify themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The aim of recruiting participants from each site included both the male and female teacher perspectives as well as veteran and novice teacher insights into the phenomenon that was studied. Selecting an array of individuals with differing backgrounds created diversity within the study for a thorough understanding. Ethnicity, socioeconomic status, marital status, and education status varied from educator to educator to enhance the study.

Recruitment Plan

The participants that were selected for the study were secondary teachers who taught grades seventh and eighth. The number of the participant group was 10 in order to create a purposeful sample (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The selected group was notified of the study through school district email. Each participant in the study was recruited on a volunteer basis. The goal of the recruitment plan was to select 10 secondary teachers who taught seventh and eighth grades. The selection was done in order to achieve a broad spectrum of the various experiences shared by the selected groups (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Each school site will have five participants, for a total of 10. Larger numbers are often needed within qualitative research due to the positivism or social construction approaches these types of studies employ (Boddy, 2016).

Selection of the participants took place within two parameters in order to achieve a diverse group of individuals representing the study. The first parameter was years of experience; I sought to find candidates who had less than five years' experience and candidates with more

than five years' experience. The second parameter was the subject matter the educator taught. Recruiting educators who taught various subject matters from each site ensured the full spectrum of the phenomenon was captured. The typology of the sampling strategy was an intensity-based form of recruitment to uncover information-rich findings that concentrated the phenomenon that was studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Researcher Positionality

Research can be guided in numerous ways to uncover a new phenomenon or the experiences that have led the researcher to conduct a study. As a professional educator who has witnessed what smartphones and social media have done to the student population, the desire to examine teacher experiences had manifested. Qualitative research does not require the researcher to have extensive experience or expertise however, having extensive knowledge of the proposed focus of research has advantageous (Johnson et al., 2020). Due to my profession and mindset, I will be providing my interpretive framework along with my philosophical, ontological, epistemological, and axiological attributes.

Interpretive Framework

The interpretive framework in which I conducted this study was the social constructivism paradigm. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of context and culture to construct an understanding of what is occurring (Kim, 2001). Utilizing the social constructivism paradigm as the interpretive framework for this study allowed myself to present the essence of the phenomenon based on the context of the participants examined and how the experiences were interpreted. Social constructivism aligns with the understanding that reality is constructed through human activity, and therefore knowledge and learning are human constructs (Kim,

2001). Social constructivism allows knowledge to be built about oneself, school, and everyday experiences through reflection and creating meaning from the environment (Hirtle, 1996).

Philosophical Assumptions

There are differing views on what truth is and the conception of truth and how various individuals and groups interpret this view. Efforts to validate qualitative research comes through various forms of philosophical approaches including ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Spencer et al., 2020). In the following subsections, I will explain my personal views on each of the assumptions mentioned within the philosophical framework required for qualitative research.

Ontological Assumption

Due to the nature of the qualitative research structure, it is appropriate to reveal the researcher's worldview and concept of reality. I am a Protestant Christian who believes that there is one absolute truth that has been revealed through the Holy Bible as the inerrant Word of God. I follow the creed of the five solas of the Protestant Reformation: *Sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone), *Sola fide* (by faith alone), *Sola gratia* (by grace alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone). I believe in the sacrificial life of Jesus of Nazareth for the personal salvation of all those who believe and put their faith in His atoning work alone. My entire worldview is filtered through the Scriptures of the Bible as the ultimate authority and final word in decision making.

Based on my worldview, the concept of reality I adhere to is that mankind is inherently wicked; therefore, humanity has a misconceived view on a singular understanding of the absolute truth that God has created the universe and has revealed His will to humanity. Furthering my position on reality is the belief that the sovereign hand of God is on the believer and non-believer

to carry out His will for humanity. Mankind is born with a natural proclivity to rebel against God's moral law; nevertheless, God has provided a way of salvation through His Son.

Everything in all creation is under the power and authority of Jesus Christ and is subject to His will and purposes, and they will ultimately be judged by God Almighty at the end of the age.

This concept of reality is absolute; it is not a subjective opinion but rather an objective stance based on personal experiences and evidence presented by the Scriptures and creation itself.

Epistemological Assumption

Based on my position as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, explaining how I understand and perceive knowledge is once again framed through the biblical lens. The writer of Hebrews explains, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His Being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty" (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Heb. 1:3). Being that all things are under the authority of Christ, the way in which I perceive knowledge is objective under Christ, but my faith is subjective based on belief. As with all human ventures, having a complete and total understanding of how knowledge is acquired is beyond my understanding. Although my personal understanding of knowledge may be devoid of complete and total reasoning objectively, I still subjectively adhere to and believe that there is logical order within the universe and that God is the giver of knowledge.

God exists outside of time and knows all things at all times: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends; With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a day" (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, 2 Pet. 3:8). As a Christian, I believe in a transcendent reality that exists outside the dominion of time. Therefore, knowledge may be deduced through observation in the physical and current realms, although different laws apply to various portions

of the universe within dominative powers and principalities. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in the Heavenly realms” (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Eph. 6:12). Since there is a subjective reality that exists outside the physical world that is observable, certain knowledge is unobtainable based on what is physical and what is spiritual.

Axiological Assumption

To fully bring about an understanding of my position and outlook on the context, discussing my axiological position is necessary. First, I am an eighth-grade English teacher who has been in the field of education for seven years. I personally have witnessed and experienced what students’ access to smartphones and social media has done to the secondary student population and how it has created a distraction on campus. I have also experienced the frustration of repeatedly informing students to put their devices away weeks and even months after classroom expectations were set at the start of the school year. Additionally, I have witnessed students engaging in physical altercations due to social media use and the misinformation that is spread through these digital platforms. I believe it would serve the education community well to investigate the impact that student phones and social media have on professional secondary educators. I understand that my position may appear biased and against the use of student smartphones and social media while students are in class. However, I have seen the benefits of students using smartphones for research on Google or accessing the calculator app to solve math equations. My position as an educator in the classroom has given me a front-row seat to watch the behaviors and academic outcomes of students who engage in smartphone and social media use in the classroom. As a current practicing educator, I remind students multiple times a day to

put their smartphone devices away while attempting to teach a classroom that has 29–35 students.

Researcher's Role

I am the human instrument for the study, and I was the individual interpreting the data collected within the study. I was the sole interviewer for the individual interviews, the administrator of the survey, and the facilitator of the focus group interviews. The chosen design was a hermeneutical phenomenological research framework that I used to frame the essence of the experiences of secondary teachers. I am a full-time tenured English teacher at a school within the district of the schools that were researched. I have no authority over the educators at the two school sites that were used in the study. The decision to research other school sites and not my own was to prevent any preconceived notions other secondary educators may have of my opinion into the phenomenon being investigated. Although the participants work within the larger district in which I am employed, there are no personal influences or relational ties. The secondary teachers that were selected will not know my opinion on student smartphones and social media in the classroom in order to remain objective within the study. Due to the implications of bias within hermeneutical phenomenological research, my role was that of a collector of data and not a colleague with opinions on the phenomenon under investigation. The importance of eliminating bias is crucial due to potential data misinformation and deviation from actual results (Florczak, 2022).

Procedures

Development of the study began with the choosing of a framework that would properly highlight the lived experiences of educators in the classroom regarding the phenomenon of student smartphone and social media use and secondary teacher burnout. The selection of a

hermeneutical phenomenology framework was instituted due to the emphasis oriented toward lived experiences and the interpretation of the texts of life (van Manen, 1990). The structure of the study consisted of individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and a focus group for data collection that guided the direction of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Permission to conduct research was secured through Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the application of research phase occurred. Once approval was granted from the IRB, the next process was soliciting prospective participants from the school sites where the study was conducted. This took place with an official email solicitation through the school district's email accounts linked through my professional account. Initial contact through email to each prospective participant was conducted to recruit the needed number of teachers for the study.

A formal email will be sent out to seventh and eighth grade teachers at both sites. The screening questions sought to uncover level of education, years in the profession, subject matter taught. Using screening questions will allow for a variety of eligible participants to be chosen from within the prospective sample pool. There were three forms of data collection for the research process to clarify and present the essence of the lived experiences examined. The data collection analysis began with transcription of all the audio recorded and written texts to organize the information gathered. The data was then closely read to further assist in uncovering consistent themes found within the gathered data. The essence of a phenomenon is multilayered and cannot be one-sided therefore, utilizing numerous structures of meaning to uncover patterns and themes was essential in phenomenological research (van Manen, 1990). Ensuring the validity of the phenomenological study through triangulation was achieved through three forms of data collection based on interview, survey, and focus group findings revealing the experiences of the participants and phenomenon that was investigated.

Data Collection Plan

Gaining pertinent data for the study was critical to discovering the phenomenon of what secondary teachers experience with student smart and social media use in the classroom and teacher burnout. Once the approval of the IRB was granted, the data collection commenced. The data collection was initiated with individual interviews to gain rapport with the participants as well as gaining knowledge into each participant's point of view of student smartphone and social media use and secondary teacher burnout. The interview process constituted initial findings from each of the 10 participants through face-to-face interviews as well as remote interviews for convenience of certain participants. The interviews were audibly recorded to ensure notes taken during the interview correlated with participant's actual testimony. The next channel where data will be harvested from was a survey questionnaire sent out via email to all participants at both school sites. The survey questionnaire was intended to retrieve data without the influence of an interviewer. The survey was sent to all 10 participants and furthered the investigation and assisted in triangulating the phenomenon.

The third and final approach of data collection was a focus group. The focus group consisted of five participants of the original 10 involved. The focus group gathered a subgroup to answer questions and reflect on the phenomenon. The individual interviews as well as the focus groups were also audio recorded and then transcribed. The survey questionnaire already had the transcription built in due to the digital platform that was utilized for the survey. All the data gathered through all three forms of information collection were analyzed and sifted through to highlight the lived experiences of the sample group. A close rereading of the information gathered through each form of information retrieval assisted in understanding themes and sub-themes that manifested during the study. Data analysis was then processed through a

hermeneutical framework to interpret the shared experiences of secondary teachers within the phenomenon of student smartphone and social media use and secondary teacher burnout.

Individual Interviews

All 10 participants that were chosen for the study participated in the individual interview process. The first portion of the data collection plan consisted of direct individual interviews with the individuals in the study. Individual interviews allowed direct interactions with the researcher and the participant, thus creating a dialogue where the researcher sets the agenda (Baillie, 2019). Due to the always-present time constraints for teachers, the individual interview process allowed questions to remain focused with the goal of gathering pertinent information. Professional colleagues who have commonality are generally more prone to being open and honest in a one-to-one interview setting when there is no influence or distraction from peers or other colleagues observing the interview.

The process of collecting data through direct interviews with participants were conducted after school hours in each of the educator's classrooms or online due to time constraints or other unforeseen circumstances. The interviews were audibly recorded with a computer to ensure no answers are missed once questions are asked. Interview questions aimed for the responded to give a detailed account of what was occurring in the classroom. Data collecting was also accomplished through nuances in the interview questions regarding student smartphone and social media use to achieve academic confidence.

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please describe your experiences with student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and how they have potentially impacted your career. CRQ

2. What is your opinion of students having access to phones while in the school setting?

CRQ

3. What was your reaction when you implicitly restricted students' access to smartphones or social media while in class and a defiant student ignored your policy? SQ1

4. How does a pupil accessing a smartphone or opening social media disrupt your class?
SQ1

5. How have you reacted when a student directly disrupts a class and refuses to hand over a phone? SQ1

6. Please describe any negative personal effects that student smartphone or social media use in a class setting has had on you as a professional educator. SQ2

7. As an educator, what changes have you witnessed regarding the use of smartphones by students, and what effects have these changes had on the profession? SQ2

8. As a professional educator, when do you believe it is appropriate to utilize smartphones or social media in the classroom? SQ3

9. How have smartphones and social media utilized by your students aided you in delivering comprehensive instruction or assisted in classroom management? SQ3

10. How Is smartphone and social media use in the classroom strengthening or weakening teacher accomplishment? SQ3

11. What other elements regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom affect teacher career outlooks? SQ3

Hartwell et al. (2019) underline the employment of structured individual interviews has been utilized the most for consistency of data collection and superior for validity and reduction of adverse information. Each question in the interview process is based on the central research

question and the three sub-questions guiding the study. The first two questions in the interviews are based on the central research question and seek to gain an overall view of the phenomenon on uncovering secondary teachers' personal opinions on student smartphone and social media use and burnout. Burnout is a multilayered process consisting of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and reduced of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2003). Due to the three elements involved with burnout, the central research question establishes the vision for the investigation whereas, the three sub-questions guide the central research question through focusing on each of the three parameters for burnout.

Questions three through five are based on sub-question one which underpins emotional exhaustion in the burnout structure and how student behaviors in class effect the `emotional state of a secondary educator. Personal reactions and experiences of teachers regarding defiant student behavior were highlighted in questions three through five. Questions six and seven are based on sub-question two and focus on the depersonalization or cynical effect that can manifest through defiant student behavior. The questions probed around the educator's point of view on how student phone and social media has changed the educator's perspective with the devices in the classroom setting and how the device has changed education. Questions eight through 11 were based on sub-question three which seeks to uncover the lack of personal accomplishment parameter of the burnout inventory. Question eight transitions into the educator's view on when or if smartphones are necessary in the classroom setting. Question nine went invasive with asking each teacher if the smartphone device can assist in classroom management. Question 10 and 11 ask the participants directly if they believe there have negative impacts on personal outlooks of smartphones, social media, and teacher accomplishment.

Survey Data Collection

The next phase of data collection involved surveying the participants within the study. All the sample group participated in the second phase of the study, which consisted of a multi-question survey pertaining to student smartphone and social media use and the effects it has on secondary teachers. The survey allowed each participant ample time to reflect and answer the questions thoroughly without any outside influence from the interviewer or peers. When participants reached the survey questionnaire portion of the study, ample time had passed since the initial individual interviews. The survey was not given directly after the one-to-one interviews. The passing of time between each of the data collection methods being used in the study allowed each participant to reflect and gather thoughts that are clearer and more concise for the researcher to gain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Table 2

Survey Questions

1. How do challenges or disruptions in your classroom due to student smartphone use effect the learning environment? CRQ
2. How has your experience with students using smartphones and social media in the classroom changed your opinion over time? CRQ
3. What type of personal thoughts arise when managing students who continuously access smartphones and social media? SQ1
4. How do you believe the use of smartphones and social media in the classroom has impacted the profession as a whole? SQ1
5. What does the environment of a classroom resemble when student smartphone and social media use is unregulated by an educator? SQ2

6. How often do you find yourself reminding students to keep their devices off and away?
SQ2
7. What emotions do you experience in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use? SQ2
8. If you had the opportunity to enter a new profession, what would you consider and why?
SQ3
9. What advice would you give to new educators entering middle and high school teaching regarding student smartphone and social media use? SQ3
10. What are your considerations when students fail to pass assignments or struggle to comprehend taught material? SQ3
11. What are your personal thoughts on the implications of smartphones and social media on the success or failure of teaching students? SQ3
12. How do you manage situations that frustrate your sense of classroom management regarding smartphones and social media? SQ3

Just as with the individual interviews, the theme of the survey questions was framed around the central research question and the three-sub questions guiding the study. Questions one and two focus on the central research question just as stated previously, to gain a better understanding of the overall attitudes of secondary teachers and student smartphone and social media use. Questions three and four sought to understand the educator's personal view specifically within the parameter of the phenomenon of burnout and the context of emotional exhaustion. Once more, searching for themes and patterns is crucial for phenomenological research to interpret the experiences of others (van Manen, 1990).

Questions five through seven correlate with sub-question two was framed by the depersonalization aspect of career burnout. Question five allowed the educator an opportunity to reveal the classroom environment where smartphones and social media are unregulated and the effects it can have upon a teacher's view of control. Question six emphasized the monotony of daily tasks required in the modern classroom pertaining to smartphones and student disregard. Question seven asked the direct question of the emotional effects of smartphones and social media used by students in the classroom and the effect it can have on teacher outlook on the device.

Questions eight through 12 corresponded with the final phase of burnout, reduced personal accomplishment. Question eight was poignant through soliciting the idea of an educator leaving the profession due to burnout and the causes for leaving. Question nine and 10 sought to find any validation to student smartphone and social media use and the personal struggles teachers face in the classroom. Lastly, question 12 intended to gather the essence of student phone and social media use and the environmental factors in the classroom that can frustrate a professional educator.

Focus Group Data Collection

The focus group was the final method of data collection for the study. Through qualitative interviews, events that were not anticipated were uncovered to enrich the data being collected for a particular study (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). The aim of the focus group was to capture the essence of the experiences of the participants, thereby enabling the researcher to gain a group-wide understanding. A focus group allowed the researcher to gather a group of select individuals to discuss common experiences (Powell & Single, 1996). Dialoguing with

participants was the aim of the focus group, which provided insights into participants' attitudes regarding social media use in the classroom setting.

The focus group also saved time within the research process in that it avoids the process of having to re-interview individual participants but gathers pertinent data in one sitting (Powell & Single, 1996). The focus group had five participants from the original 10 participants from the study. Consistency in capturing the entirety of the phenomenon generated the best results by continuing to utilize the same individuals from each site. If a focus group becomes too large, the group can easily go off track, and the data retrieved could become skewed (Powell & Single, 1996). The focus group consisted of one 60-min session with eight questions aimed at identifying the phenomenon. The questions below were asked during the focus group session to promote dialogue. The focus group was recorded with an audio device and notes will be taken for later review in the interpretation process.

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

1. What have you experienced as an educator in the classroom regarding students, smartphones, and social media? CRQ
2. What are your opinions about student smartphone and social media use and the effects it has on professional educators? CRQ
3. When a student refuses to put away a smartphone, what thoughts and emotions are evoked in you? SQ1
4. How many times a day do you remind students to put away their smartphones, and what effect does it have on your outlook as a teacher? SQ1

5. Do you believe that teachers can become callous toward students due to repeat disruptive behavior regarding smartphones, and why? SQ2
6. What are your experiences regarding defiant student behavior regarding smartphone and social media use during your instructional time? SQ2
7. Now that you are professional educators, what advice would you give to aspiring teachers regarding smartphone and social media use in the classroom? SQ3
8. How can teachers feel a lack of personal accomplishment because of defiant classroom behavior regarding smartphone and social media use? SQ3

The final portion of data collection consisted of one focus group. Each question in the focus group data retrieval session was aimed at encouraging participant communication amongst colleagues and the interviewer. The focus group questions followed the same patterns outlined with the interview and survey questions through utilizing the central research question and the three sub-questions to frame the focus group questions. Questions one and two were based on the central research question and were aimed to begin the conversation of student smartphone and social media use and the potential effects it has had on educational professionals.

Questions three and four corresponded with the emotional exhaustion portion of Maslach's theory (1982) pertaining to student disruption, defiance, and personal frustration. Once more, questions three and four were framed by sub-question one to better understand the phenomenon. Questions five and six were created to uncover teacher's attitudes toward student smartphone and social media use and the potential cynicism educators have towards the devices and behaviors. Due to cynicism or depersonalization development within the burnout framework, question five and six focus on sub-question two of the guiding structure of the study. Lastly, questions seven and eight were based on sub-question three which incurs teachers' lack of

personal accomplishment. The focus of question seven was to uncover any possible regret a current educator may have towards choosing teaching as a profession. Question eight finished the discussion through having the participants focus directly on the feelings of professional defeat due to student smartphone and social media use. As stated earlier, the final two questions were aligned with the third portion of the burnout phase where a professional believes they are not making a difference in those whom they serve.

Data Analysis

Hermeneutical phenomenological research differs from other forms of research in that hermeneutical phenomenological research does not attempt to theorize or control the context, but it presents possibilities and insights into the experiences of others (van Manen, 1990). The analytic data strategy that was utilized for the study will be that of analyzing transcripts and finding patterns and themes for interpretation. Processing and analyzing data will consist of data reduction through selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the processed data into a reported written form for interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After the collection of the individual interviews, survey questionnaires, and focus group findings, the data was transcribed from audio to written text form to uncover themes and patterns manifested through each participants' responses. The close rereading of data assisted through analyzing the statements of the participants which was interpreted from to highlight what the group experienced. The data gathered from the study clarified the essence of what secondary teachers experience with student smartphone and social media use and career burnout. Each form of data collection had an analysis plan to clearly present the phenomenon and achieve triangulation for validity. Conducting an analysis in phenomenological research is not a one-sided investigation that is bound to certain criteria, but a process of interpretation, therefore

choosing the strongest framework for data interpretation is at the discretion of the researcher (van Manen, 1990).

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

The interview portion of the study was audio-recorded as well with the utilization of a digital recording device (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Following the interviews, recorded audio was transcribed into written text and then compared with the audio of the interviews to ensure accuracy. Once the audio and transcribed data were in correlation, notes were taken during the initial reading of the transcribed interviews to later compare with the themes found with the close rereading process. During the initial note taking process, reflection initiated on essential themes to assist in characterizing the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). Once the data was transcribed and the initial overview occurred, the interview transcriptions were closely reread which uncovered patterns and themes missed by the initial overview of the transcribed data.

As noted throughout, the final portion of the data analyzation was a close rereading of the transcripts line-by-line of the entire interview of each participant in the study which allowed a fuller understating into the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The process of analyzation and reflection included discovering patterns, explanations, and propositions that were vague at first, then evolved into becoming increasingly explicit (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Describing the essence of what the participants have experienced was fully achieved after the data collection was completed. Allowing the information collected to be thoroughly analyzed before any final reflections are provided was imperative for clarity of the phenomenon.

Survey Questionnaire Analysis Plan

Just as in the individual interview data analysis, the process of analyzing the data of the survey was to uncover patterns and themes to assist in creating a proper hermeneutical

interpretation (van Manen, 1990). Unlike the individual interviews, participants' very words were already be transcribed due to the survey being written responses from the participants. The transcripts were once more be overviewed, and notes were taken to uncover consistencies among the participants responses. The survey was once more be reread line-by-line to retrieve any further insights that may have been potentially missed (van Manen, 1990). Once more, the utilization of various forms of data analysis aided in the interpretation of essence of the phenomenon to better understand what the participants have experienced.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan.

The conversations that occurred during the focus group were digitally recorded to ensure consistency during observation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Once the session ended, the recording was reviewed, and annotations were made of themes and patterns that appeared throughout the dialogue. Field notes were available to compare any similarities or contrasts with the annotated recordings. Just as with the individual interviews and the survey questionnaire analysis, the process for analyzing the focus group information followed the same template. The data was synthesized by narrowing down the field notes and recording annotations to remove any unneeded data regarding irrelevant portions of the conversations.

Just as with the initial interviews and the survey, an initial overview of the transcribed responses was analyzed. Following the same patterns outlined in the interview and survey data analysis template, the transcribed information from the focus group participants was closely reread to uncover patterns missed by my initial findings in the overview. Notes were taken from the results and were compared with overview notes that formed patterns of consistency.

Data Synthesis

A uniform understanding of all three data collection results were achieved by identifying patterns and themes that were consistent with the various forms of data collection enacted. The process of uncovering consistencies within the three data collection results assisted in triangulation to strengthen the findings the study conveyed (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Verification of phenomenon was achieved by through examining the summaries from the interviews, survey questionnaire, and focus group transcripts. Verification of data analysis was a process that was achieved through a short excursion back into the field notes collected during the initial data collection phase of a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The data synthesis was conducted by reducing the interpreted results from each of the data collection processes, both audio and transcribed data to funnel pertinent information for further understanding and interpreting the essence of the phenomenon. The written results informed the reader of the most common themes and patterns throughout the entirety of the study and represented what the participants experienced with student smartphone and social media use and career burnout. The synthesis segment, just as the other segments, had a written portion that gathered all the previous written entries within each data collection process to uncover the results of identified patterns and themes needed for proper interpretation. The verification process followed the previous forms of validity by ensuring that all transcribed and chart data was appropriately matched the written field notes and any annotations made during the process of synthesizing the results from all three forms of data collection. From the information provided through the written narratives, graphical charts, and themes and patterns exposed, a conclusion can be drawn regarding the essence of what teachers experience regarding student smartphone and social media use and secondary teacher burnout.

Trustworthiness

In research, the results retrieved from the data collection process are only as valid as the level of trustworthiness that is built into the study. Qualitative research is unique due to the processing of data to reflect the human experience through narrative form (Stahl & King, 2020). It can be understandable that data can be polluted due to the bias of the researcher conducting the study, this is why the requirement of the four main frameworks of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are crucial within a qualitative study. There are also ethical considerations that need to be accounted for in order to ensure the privacy of the participants and the sites where the study will be conducted are protected.

Credibility

There are numerous methods of creating credibility in qualitative research that are utilized for validation within a study. Establishing credibility is vital to ensuring the intersections of quality and trustworthiness can be accomplished in a qualitative framework (Patton, 1999). Presenting the validity of what secondary teachers experience with student smartphone and social media use and career burnout was achieved through triangulation and persistent observation of the data. Triangulation is logically based on the premise that a single method alone cannot defend the phenomenon (Patton, 1999). Strengthening the findings through prolonged observation, triangulation was achieved through analyzing data sources, methods, and investigator objectivity (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The next facet of establishing credibility within the study was persistent observation. Creating credibility with persistent observation is focused on what is relevant to the phenomenon and familiarizing oneself with the participants and gaining a rapport with them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Learning the context and the culture where the phenomenon is being investigated serves

to better prepare the researcher in formulating proper interpretations of the essence of what the participants experience.

Triangulation

The method of triangulation was used to bring about the level of trustworthiness that was needed for the study to achieve validity. To achieve triangulation, I checked for consistency during the data collection process. Checking for consistency with the results generated by the data collection methods was accomplished by examining the consistency of the different data sources, using multiple analysts to inspect the findings, and using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data (Patton, 1999). Utilizing Patton's framework allowed the findings to be cross-checked throughout the retrieval process to strengthen the effectiveness of the research.

The final step that assisted in synthesizing all three results from the data collection process was triangulation. The logic of utilizing triangulation was based on the foundation that no single method can solve the problem of opposing explanations (Patton, 1999). Using a combination of individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and the focus group strengthened the patterns and themes allowing myself to properly reflect and interpret the experiences of the participant group. Using multiple forms of data collection provided cross-data validity checks to build a strong foundation for trustworthiness throughout a study (Patton, 1999). Triangulation was utilized throughout the study to ensure consistency of what was investigated. In the final step of the data synthesis process in this study, the data was compared to the other forms of data collection initiated in the study to ensure clear direction and validity.

Persistent Observation

Another approach that was utilized during the study is persistent observation. The process of persistent observation ensures depth of experience by further exploring the details of the

phenomenon being studied to identify what is relevant to the study and what can be discarded (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Spending sufficient time on each data collection phase of the study enabled myself to achieve persistent observation for the research. Evenly distributing time across all phases of the data collection process strengthened my findings with consistency and credibility.

Although the study consisted of three forms of data collection with individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and a focus group, evenly distributing time with each facet of data collection will support the framework of persistent observation. Spending a large quantity of time in the field and reviewing the notes and information extracted allowed the researcher to become deeper acquainted with the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

The ability for transferability within the qualitative research framework is the ability to apply or extrapolate findings to different contexts or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is the responsibility of the researcher and can be achieved through extensive description of the processes of data collection and the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The goal of understanding what secondary teachers experience regarding student smartphone and social media use and burnout needed to be described extensively for proper transferability. The intention for transferability was to ensure trustworthiness, although the description of the data collection processes as well as the data analysis processes is highly detailed, transferability is not guaranteed. However, through consistency of presentation of the recruiting, data collection, and data analysis processes, the findings created larger applicability within the professional educator career.

Dependability

Measuring and replicating an experience cannot always be accomplished in qualitative research. Unlike quantitative studies where replication can be produced, phenomenological qualitative research focuses on the experiences of the participants and often are not repeatable. Although replication can be difficult in phenomenological research, it is not impossible. Dependability demonstrates how findings are consistent and can be possibly repeated with the proper context and forms of data collection (Lincoln & Guber, 1985). The study lists in detail the phenomenon that was investigated as well as the participants who are impacted by the problem. Future replication can be plausible through recruiting 10 to 12 secondary teachers at two school sites and asking questions pertaining only within the sphere of student phone and social media use and the impact it has on an educator's career.

Confirmability

Reinforcing trustworthiness manifests through confirmation of findings uncovered in the research process. Without conformation, trustworthiness in presented results would create doubt in the reader as well as bring questions to the validity of the study. Confirmability relies on the extent of the research findings being corroborated by others and evidence-based procedures such as documentation, consideration of opposing viewpoints, and conducting data audits (Lincoln & Guber, 1985). Presenting the experiences of others and the essence of what the phenomenon encompasses for the participants needs to be handled with precision and care for proper representation for confirmability (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Utilizing triangulation for the data collected ensured the data is accurate within participant findings. Triangulation took on the form of an auditing tool to verify the results of what teachers experienced within the phenomenon. The next portion of confirmability is through

the application of persistent observations of the participants experiences and not that of my own to keep any personal bias removed from what the participants are witnessing and feeling.

Persistent observation is the highly detailed orientation towards the participants and the data of what is being experienced that solidify the results.

Ethical Considerations

The first step in conducting the research process is to gain approval from the Liberty University's IRB. The approval will be obtained through a detailed application of what the study encompasses as well as training to properly conduct the study. Parameters of the confidentiality of the school sites and the participants was outlined in the recruitment email to participants. Protecting the identities of the participants and the school was priority number one within the ethical considerations' parameter in the study.

Permissions

Prior to collecting the data of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and secondary teacher burnout, the IRB permission was obtained. First, the approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board. Next, with the approval of Liberty's IRB, the next step was to draft a formal email that was sent out to the secondary teachers at the locations where the study was conducted. The letter informed the educators about the extent of the study and the level of participation required from them.

Other Participant Protections

Since the study utilized participants who were actual educational professionals working in an existing public school, all names were changed, and pseudonyms were used for the site and other pertinent and identifying data to protect the identity of all teachers involved. Teachers have the ability to withdraw at any time from the study based on personal beliefs, circumstances, or

professional discretion. The data from the research will be stored electronically with encrypted software for the duration of 36 months after the study is conducted then deleted after the allotted timeframe expires. Physical notes taken during the interview and focus group sessions will be stored in a secure filing cabinet for 36 months after the study concludes then shredded and discarded after the duration of 36 months has passed.

Summary

Utilizing the phenomenological hermeneutical research design allowed the data collected to undergo the process of reflection and analysis, enabling the researcher to draw meaning from the phenomenon under examination. Conveying the experiences of secondary teachers who witness the phenomenon of student smartphone and social media use while in class required multiple levels of data collection and observation to truly explain the essence of the phenomenon occurring. The different forms of data collection—individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and a focus group—were all selected to complement each other in order to uncover the potential phenomenon. Phenomenological research often seeks to understand the phenomenon occurring in its natural context. The processes of triangulation and persistent observation were selected to analyze the data through bringing clarity to the phenomenon. The focus of presenting the essence of what secondary teachers experience regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and career burnout was the aim of this research project.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential career burnout of secondary educators. This chapter will disclose the details of each recruit that participated in the study with years taught, grade level, content area, and attitudes of smartphones and social media in the classroom. The chapter will discuss the results uncovered through the individual interview process, survey questionnaire collection, and focus group results. Next, the themes and sub-themes that manifested during the study will be presented to convey a thorough presentation of the what the participants experience in the classroom. The chapter will continue with outlier data that was uncovered as well as research question and sub-question responses that guided the data collection process. The chapter finish with a conclusion reviewing and highlighting the themes and findings from the data retrieved.

Participants

Having a diverse group of participants to uncover the experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use and secondary teacher burnout was vital in uncovering any potential phenomenon. The desired number of participants for the study was 10 secondary teachers who worked at the seventh and eighth grade levels. The recruitment process brought about successful results with the number of participants equaling 10. Each participant contributed to the research through volunteering their time with individual interviews, answering a survey questionnaire, and participating in a focus group. The range of years of experience as professional educators ranged greatly and brought about a diverse group of teachers who shared

different experiences and opinions within the context of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and secondary teacher burnout.

Mrs. Smith

Mrs. Smith is one of two participants with the least amount of classroom experience among all the teachers, with only two years' experience as an educator. Mrs. Smith teaches English and yearbook at her school site, and she is actively involved with school functions. The school site where Mrs. Smith works is the only school she has been employed at as a professional educator.

Mrs. Moore

Mrs. Moore has 19 years' experience and teaches math and an elective class. Mrs. Moore has worked at previous school site that served lower socioeconomic student populations. Mrs. Moore coordinates several field trips a year to expose her students to college campuses throughout the region. Mrs. Moore has exclusively taught grades seventh and eighth throughout the span of her career.

Mrs. Johnson

Mrs. Johnson has the most amount of experience within the participant group with 40 years as a professional educator. Mrs. Johnson has worked exclusively with secondary students over the span of her career, primarily seventh and eighth grade students. Mrs. Johnson has taught English and has indicated that she is retiring after the 23-24 school year.

Mr. Miller

Mr. Miller has three years' experience as a teacher, and he teaches social studies and science. Mr. Miller coaches basketball at his school site. Mr. Miller has exclusively taught

seventh and eighth grade student populations over the course of his career. Mr. Miller is an active volunteer within his sites' extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Jackson

Mrs. Jackson has five years' experience as a seventh grade English teacher. Mrs. Jackson has previously worked at a school within her current district that served students from a lower socioeconomic population. Mrs. Jackson teaches honors seventh grade English along with general English classes throughout the day.

Mrs. White

Mrs. White has 18 years' experience and teaches seventh grade English as well as an elective class. Mrs. White has also served at a school that had a lower socioeconomic student population. Teaching exclusively seventh grade for the duration of her career, Mrs. White partners with Mrs. Moore with for exposing students to college campuses throughout the region.

Mr. Lewis

Mr. Lewis is the second participant within the study who has the least amount of teaching experience with two years as an educator. Mr. Lewis is a unique participant due to his experience as a school security guard for 27 years prior to becoming a teacher. Mr. Lewis teaches seventh grade math at serves at a school site with a lower socioeconomic student population.

Mr. Garcia

Mr. Garcia has five years' experience, and he teaches seventh grade English and history. Mr. Garcia has exclusively worked as a middle school teacher over the span of his time as an educator. Mr. Garcia works at a school lower socioeconomic student population.

Ms. Davis

Ms. Davis has 25 years' experience as an educator, she teaches seventh grade math along with an elective course at her school site. Ms. Davis has worked every grade within the kindergarten through eighth grade levels as a teacher. Ms. Davis has worked at schools with differing student populations regarding socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds. Ms. Davis has also worked at multiple school districts over the course of her career.

Mrs. Scott

Mrs. Scott has 34 years' experience as a teacher and is dual credentialed both in general education along with special education. Scott teaches eighth grade English classes with both lower-level general education students along with mild/moderate learners. Mrs. Scott is actively involved with academic student support programs at her campus.

Table 4*Teacher Participants*

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Grade Level	Content Area	Attitude on smartphone	Attitude on social media
Mrs. Smith	2	8th	English	No access in class	Fosters bullying
Mrs. Moore	19	8th	Math	Downfall of education	Students cheat through sharing
Mrs. Johnson	40	7th	English	Takes away focus	Creates no boundaries
Mr. Miller	3	7th	Science/History	Major distraction	Creates no privacy
Mrs. Jackson	5	7th	English	No access 100%	Creates short attention span

Mrs. White	18	7th	English	Negative in school setting	Distracts large numbers of students
Mr. Lewis	2	7th	Math	Benefits some, hinders others	Has poisoned our children
Mr. Garcia	5	7th	English/History	Do not belong in school	Saddened by students using it
Ms. Davis	25	7th	Math	Students do not need them	Changes students attitude negatively
Mrs. Scott	34	8th	English	Keep phones at home	Inappropriate for adolescents

Results

The results from the study manifested a consistent set of themes throughout the individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and focus group. Throughout the data collection process, a total of three themes with two sub themes for each major theme have been identified within the experiences of secondary teachers regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. Through a detailed examination of what secondary teachers experience within the realm of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom, consistent phrases and words continued to manifest with each participant as the interviews, surveys, and focus group findings concluded. The themes and sub themes assist through uncovering what secondary teachers experience in the classroom and what educator's opinions are in the 21st century classroom.

Table 5*Themes & Subthemes*

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2
Emotional Responses	Discipline	Policing
Classroom Disruption	Peer Distractions	Instructional Time Wasted
Teacher-Student Relationships	Contextual Settings	Social Media

Emotional Responses

Within the context of understanding what student smartphone and social media use in the classroom does to secondary educators, several questions were asked through all three forms of data collection to gain a clearer understanding of the central research question. Teachers were asked what their experiences were with smartphones, social media, and career impact. Teachers were also asked their opinion of smartphones, social media, and the classroom setting. A recurring theme that was prominent through this phase of data collection was emotional frustration. All the participants used words such as frustration, anger, emasculation, and sadness when describing their experiences with student smartphone and social media use in the classroom.

Mrs. Johnson who has the most professional experience within the participant group with 40 years as an educator explains, “I feel there's an anger that rises up.” There was a wide range of emotions that teachers said they had experienced regarding student phone and social media use in the classroom, from concerns over student smartphone addiction to sadness witnessing student behaviors due to smartphone and social media use of the student population. Mr. Garcia

with five years' experience who teaches seventh grade English and history states, "You know us as teachers are hanging on by a thread." Weariness due to the emotional strength it requires to consistently deliver comprehensive instruction while constantly navigating and redirecting students who focus their attention on phones and social media was a consistent theme throughout the data collection process.

Discipline

Within the context of teacher's emotional responses was the concern over discipline. Many of the participants noted that they spent a large amount of time correcting student behaviors regarding smartphone use in the classroom. Teachers would need to focus more attention towards monitoring not only common issues such as students not staying on task or doodling during teacher-led instruction, but also on constantly monitoring if students are utilizing phones while in class. All the participants have had incidences where students were using phones or social media while in class and refused to put the device away and rejected turning the phone over to the teacher. Mrs. Smith highlights her personal thoughts when an incident such as this occurred in her classroom recently, "I am annoyed and frustrated for sure, especially since they know what they're supposed to do." The expectation at the school site is for phones to be off and away. However, the students disregard school policy.

Policing

The emotions that teachers experience such as frustration and anger are catalyzed by the constant need for the educator to spend a nominal amount of time policing the students rather than instructing the students. Participants believed that the need to monitor and enforce the no phone policy is a constant battle that takes a daily toll on the instructional time as well as the desire to continually enforce the rule. Mrs. Jackson explains the enforcement aspect, "I would

say the frustration of wasting time on policing phones and trying to get phones put away so that we can focus and learn is exhausting, because it's not teaching and that's what I am here to do.”

Classroom Disruption

As the individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and the focus group results began to be analyzed a dominant theme was the topic of classroom disruption. Every participant in the study expressed a strong concern of how smartphones and social media in the classroom can create a major distraction. The disruption is threefold, first the student who is using a smartphone or accessing social media is distracted, students who are surrounding the user begin to have their attention drawn towards the user, finally the teacher must intervene to refocus the class. Mr. Miller describes such an incident when he states, “It could be as simple as taking away the attention of one student, where instead there is a focus on whatever's on their phone like Snapchat or Instagram and it could also be a distraction for the whole class.” It appears that when student's access smartphones and social media, it is often not an isolated incident.

Peer Distractions

Whether a single student utilizes a smartphone or numerous pupils within the same class disregard the no phone policy, distractions throughout the classroom manifests. The essence of the disruption is compounded when more than one student is led off task due to what other students are doing with their smartphone devices. The participants explained that when students are surrounded by peers and have a phone in their hand, it creates a beacon of distraction for those surrounding the defiant student. Mrs. Scott points out, “They are on things (social media) that they shouldn't be on or maybe they've taken a picture of somebody at a fight at school and of course, everybody gets involved so collectively as a group they're all distracted by what someone maybe showing someone in the classroom for a video of fights.” Videos, social media posts, and

text messages can create a hostile environment not only for the students, but the educators as well who must mediate the disagreements among student groups creating additional stress.

Instructional Time Wasted

Participants demonstrated that when a student would access a smartphone or social media in the classroom, it would create distractions and therefore takeaway instructional time from teachers. Once a disruption would occur in the classroom due to student smartphone and social media use, the teacher would need to refocus the class and re-teach classroom expectations. Mrs. Moore explains, “When a student pulls out a phone, I have to get them back all back into focus on what we were learning.” The time it takes to discipline the student who is breaking the classroom policy and the effort to refocus a class takes away from valuable instruction time because of smartphones.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Another noticeable theme that was prominent throughout the individual interviews, survey questionnaire, and focus group was the concerns the participants had about the teacher-student relationships. More than half of the participants explained that there has been a shift among the relationships between students and teachers. The teachers who alluded to this paradigm shift conveyed the constant need to police the classroom rather than instruct. Teachers are seen as disciplinaries rather than supportive educators who nurture positive teacher-student relationships.

The classroom environment aims to create a space of safety where healthy relationships can form and students can thrive. However, Mrs. White points out what smartphones and social media have done to teacher student relationships, “It hurts us because it makes our classroom not a safe place and it makes us vulnerable because if they're recording us as educators, we should be

transparent, but there are things that happen that could be taken out of context.” Participants explained that phones have created distance between themselves and the students and that real and authentic teacher-student relationships are becoming non-existent.

Contextual Settings

Within the teacher-student relationships theme, a predominate trait that many participants were conveying was that of contextual settings. The concern was that teachers would have themselves filmed while teaching or redirecting a class that was off task. Because of the advanced technology within smartphones and social media, students could clip videos and utilize artificial intelligence to present teachers as unprofessional individuals within a chaotic setting. Mrs. Smith explains, “I think it can make teachers more fearful of being recorded or just create more problems with students being bullied or teachers being fired over something that's taken out of context.” The concern over videos going viral on social media that are taken out of context creates a hurdle between teacher and student professional and appropriate relationships.

Social Media

In the final portion of teacher-student relationships is the social media aspect of students searching for their teachers’ personal profiles to gain information about the personal lives of their teachers. Mr. Miller describes such an instance, “I've had students reposting my social media pictures on their social media and just the dealing with that from a discipline standpoint and taking it up to the office has been pretty frustrating.” The concerns of personal profiles being searched for and viewed by students created stress for teachers in the workplace. The participants not only explained the concerns over students viewing their profiles but their profiles being shared via the internet creating a viral effect of friend requests and inappropriate comments.

Outlier Data and Findings

Most responses to the research questions resonated how smartphones and social media in the classroom effect secondary teachers with a predominately negative narrative. However, during the data collection process there were three outlier responses that manifested which contradicted all other respondent answers to within each perspective question. Each response below was vastly different compared when compared with the same question to different respondents.

Appropriate in Certain Settings

During the individual interview portion of the data collection process, the participants were asked, “How has your experience with students using smartphones and social media in the classroom changed your opinion over time?” All the participants except one stated a negative viewpoint and believed there was never a place for phones in the classroom. However, Mr. Miller’s response to the same question was unique, “It honestly hasn’t, if students could use it at appropriate times and for educational purposes, I wouldn’t have a problem.” Mr. Miller appears to be open-minded about smartphones in the classroom if students would be able to responsibly use them.

Considerations on Success

Another outlier manifested during the survey questionnaire which requires attention due to the outlook of a teacher’s perspective on why students are successful or not apart from smartphones and social media usage. The question was, “What are your considerations when students fail to pass assignments or struggle to comprehend taught material?” Mrs. White’s response was opposite of what her colleagues stated when she wrote, “Absences, personal emergencies, and extend due dates, besides that, work is their responsibility.” Mrs. White

highlighted other factors outside the sphere of smartphones and social media referencing traditional hurdles that students face apart from the influences from modern technologies.

Access in School Settings

The last outlier was also uncovered during the individual interview process and was a surprise due to the negative feedback almost all the participants displayed when being questioned regarding phones and social media. The question was, “What is your opinion of students having access to phones while in a school setting?” Mr. Lewis’ response was opposite of every participant in study when he responded, “I think if you're in certain schools where the students are taught to be more responsible, I think that it can be a positive influence. When you're at school such as mine which is low income and low scoring, I think it could be a negative because it's just a plain distraction.” Mr. Lewis was aware that his school site would not benefit from smartphones in the classroom however, unlike the rest of the respondents he was open to the idea of phones in certain settings.

Research Question Responses

Through the constructing phase of this research project to uncover any phenomenon regarding student smartphone and social media use and burnout of secondary educators, a proper framework needed to be erected to guide the study. The questions that would allow a successful study including a central research question and three sub-questions to gain an essence into what secondary teachers experience within the phenomenon. What became clear throughout the data collection process was themes and patterns that was consistent among all the participants. Except for three outlier responses to three different data collection questions, the group was consistent when it came to the issues of smartphones and social media accessed by students in the classroom and the effects it has on educators.

Central Research Question

How does adolescent student smartphone and social media use in the classroom contribute to secondary teacher burnout? Within the central research question are multiple layers of nuances that each participant expressed during the data collection process. Mr. Garcia contextualizes what was prominently conveyed by the teachers when he states,

There are many times that it is hard to keep students engaged and on task during instruction due to smartphone usage. Students are more focused on their phones than anything else. We give everything we have day in and day out and then to make it worse, certain students to try to jeopardize our jobs by posting things out of context or taking inappropriate videos of other students you and that bothers me a lot.

Participants highlighted how phones and social media have dynamically impacted their careers in a negative manner. Mr. Miller describes this impact,

Several ways first, the smartphone use is kind of an epidemic now I'm sure it's not only our campus but other campuses as well. It's a constant battle of telling them to put it away not do this and not to do that. I have students trying to record other students on Snapchat or Instagram without their consent, posting videos of me or reposting my photos from my personal account without my consent.

Sub-Question One

How do students who are defiant towards teacher classroom restrictions on smartphones and social media use create emotional exhaustion for educators? Participants explained that smartphones and social media use in the classroom has forced them to become disciplinaries rather than educators which has created emotional exhaustion. Mrs. Moore illustrates,

I think phones are the main problem of all my disciplinary issues with my students. I feel like I did not have to discipline that much before cell phones and now I'm disciplining a lot more, as a teacher I feel that I'm a meaner person because of that.

The shared mindset participants have in common of disciplining students and the exhaustion identified due to smartphone usage in the classroom is clarified with Mrs. Johnson when she states,

It made me mad if they refused to give it to me. I called security to come pick them up called the parent and suspended them from class for two days. It's you know, you won't be defiant, you can be defiant any place else you want to, but you're not telling me no.

Sub-Question Two

How can student smartphone and social media use in the classroom create cynicism and negativity among secondary classroom teachers? The perspective of the participants explained the various types of emotions regarding students accessing smartphones or using social media while in class. The emotions described by the participants included anger, frustration, sadness, and emasculation. Each participant was passionate about their stance on what smartphones have done to the profession of education and the impact it could potentially have on the career of a teacher. The essence of these experiences is explained by Mrs. Scott when she states,

My career I would say has been impacted in a negative way because I spend so much time confiscating phones or talking to students regarding their usage in the classroom. They have Chromebooks when technology involvement is needed in

the classroom, but instead the kids want to use the phones because they go to sites that they're not supposed to go to while in school.

All the participants noted that a great amount of time is spent dealing with phones rather than teaching. Ms. Davis elaborates,

I think it just boils down to the frustration of constantly having to ask them over and over again to put things away knowing they're not supposed to have them out, just the repetitive need to keep repeating myself. I think for us it has changed the mentality of our students when they're more interested in becoming social media stars than learning anything which makes it hard to do your job.

Sub-Question Three

How are secondary teachers coping with a lack of personal accomplishment because of student smartphone and social media use in the classroom? Participants demonstrated that many educators are apprehensive in the work setting because of the ability for students to create content on social media that can be out of context with the actual classroom setting. Mrs. Smith states,

I think phones can make teachers and students more fearful of being recorded, problems with lack of consent, bullying, or being fired over something that's taken out of context. I think that teachers get worn out from repeating to put phones away or taking them or taking up class time it messes up our timing our lessons for each incident that occurs.

Participants believe the smartphones and social media in the classroom are weakening the profession altogether and is hindering their professional intrinsic accomplishments. Mrs. White explains.

Smartphones and social media hurt us because it makes our classroom not a safe place and it makes us vulnerable. This is because if they're recording us as educators and I agree that we should be transparent, but there are things that happen that could be taken out of context. There are even times where we're working in the corner doing something and then suddenly it just takes an instant for that to become something that is volatile. Phones in the classroom are not a good thing, it's a negative thing to have on campus just weakens the whole structure of our profession.

Summary

The data collected during the interview, survey, and focus group portion of this research project demonstrated that several themes manifested with what secondary educators experience in class regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. All the themes showed negative connotations within the main themes and sub-themes. First, emotional responses were framed by frustration which created discipline issues in the classroom as well as forcing teachers to policing students more than teaching. The second major theme was classroom disruption based on smartphone presence in the classroom which hindered students from focusing on lessons culminating with instructional time wasted creating further stress on secondary educators in the classroom. The last theme embodied the strain smartphones and social media put on teacher-student relationships due to videos posted out of context through social media which causes educators to constantly balance positive classroom environments and perceived settings created by students on social media. The themes and sub-themes highlight that smartphones and social media utilized by students in the classroom effect teachers significantly and can potentially create additional stress to an already strained professional workforce. All the

participants demonstrated that phones create risks for not only students, but educators who must navigate new territory within the realm of the modern classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential career burnout of secondary educators. This chapter will present the interpretations of the study based on the data collected during the interview, survey, and focus group findings of the participants. The chapter will continue with the implications for policy and practice changes highlighted through the interpretations and the benefits the changes could potentially bring. Likewise, theoretical, and methodological implications will also be presented as well as limitations and delimitations set in place during the research process. Lastly, recommendations for future research will be discussed to further bring about clarity into the new territory of how student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and teacher career burnout is an investigable phenomenon. Each section will provide a detailed description to allow the reader to understand the presented interpretations as well as allow the reader to draw conclusions on the final portion of data presentation.

Discussion

The findings during the research process displayed considerable amounts of information that was unexpected during the data retrieval portion of the study. Participants were open and concise about their experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. Surprisingly was the extent of what each participant has witnessed and experienced and the multiple levels of how phones and social media have changed the dynamics in the secondary classroom. Understanding the phenomenon does not exclusively convey that student smartphones and social media use in the classroom directly creates career burnout of secondary

educators. However, what the data reveals is another feasible facet that adds to an already strained modern teacher which could contribute to career burnout.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Through the process of individual interviews, survey questionnaires, and focus group findings, themes began to populate patterns of shared experiences among the participants. The teachers involved in the study shared similar mindsets regarding the theme of the emotional response of frustration due to phone and social media use in the classroom. The underlying sub-themes of discipline and policing came about due to the necessity of teachers having to regulate classroom use of smartphones and social media among students who lack self-control. The participants explained the overwhelming need to police the classroom due to student defiance regarding the devices in the classroom setting. The next major theme that became prominent was the classroom disruption that smartphones and social media cultivate in an educational setting. When students access a phone to play a game, or open a social media app, the participants explained that not only the student who is being defiant who becomes distracted, but peer distraction manifests and as well.

As peer distractions gain further momentum in the classroom, teachers would necessitate redirecting the students away from the distraction through reminding the students involved of the no phone policies. Every participant alluded to peer distraction through smartphone or social media use would create situations where phones would be confiscated, and vital instructional time would be wasted. Many participants described the annoyance of instructional time being wasted and the hindering of the learning process because of the paramount distractions' smartphone devices can impose. The final portion of the thematic findings is the strain of teacher-student relationships due to the boundaries smartphones and social media have crossed

regarding students accessing personal accounts of educators as well as students posting videos from the classroom out of context. The participants expressed the fear of being terminated from their position due to students creating videos out of context or utilizing artificial intelligence to create a false narrative of actual events transpiring in the classroom.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of the study were successful in uncovering what secondary teachers experience in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and the potential for career burnout. The study produced three themes that manifested during the data collection process resulting in three interpretations. The interpretations are explained in detail in the following sections and will highlight what the themes were translated into. The first interpretation will focus on educators' emotional distress. The second will uncover teacher-student relationships and the cynicism that can arise between educators and students. Lastly, the third clarifies the influences of student smartphone and social media use and teachers' beliefs of lack of personal accomplishment.

Emotional Distress and Career Outlooks

All participants exemplified pressing personal concerns over what smartphones and social media use by students in the classroom has done to the profession of education. The connections between the distress experienced by secondary teachers due to student smartphone and social media use can further instigate frustrated educators who are perplexed with the dramatic changes of unprecedented student behaviors. Teachers within the study articulated the lack of impulse control students have regarding phones and the emotional effort it requires teachers to daily remind learners to keep phones off and away. Participants expressed their feelings over policing phones with anger, frustration, and exhausting. A proponent to career

burnout is emotional distress, when emotional distress forms within a professional, depersonalization can occur which lays the foundation for Maslach's burnout syndrome framework (Maslach, 1982).

The additional strain of student smartphones and social media use in the educational setting, places increased feelings of emotional exhaustion among current educators which can induce feeling of depleted energy levels while at work. Emotional exhaustion can be marked with a dwindling desire to perform tasks once enjoyed, as well as a feeling of detachment within the workspace (Maslach, 1982), which appeared within the tone of certain participants. When participants explained their experiences with student smartphone and social media use in the classroom, frustration was prominent, followed with a disconnection from a desire to teach students off task, and the feeling of futility with the lack of restraint to the problem. Although career burnout is multilayered, it's worth noting the complexities of teachers' emotions when mentioning students using smartphones. Participants explained career outlooks appear vague given the current environment with erratic student behaviors primarily driven by phone and social media use. Teachers noted that stress caused by student smartphones and social media in the classroom are a threat to current and aspiring educators. Emotional stress among teachers can capitulate to potential career burnout due to the burden of emotional exhaustion to manifest through feelings of detachment from one's profession which several participants demonstrated.

Negative Teacher-Student Relationships

Participants explained how the classroom setting has dynamically changed both for students and educators alike. Traditionally, students were the individuals where social pressures would require an individual to align with expected behaviors and practices within certain peer groups. With the advent of the smartphone device and social media used by both students and

educators, teachers now must fundamentally change how their interactions on social media can hinder or even terminate a professional career. Participants expressed the concerns over how private information can be shared through social media among student populations which could strain teacher-student relationships. Participants expressed a tone of cynicism towards their students due to the constant policing required by teachers hinder unwarranted phone use, one of Maslach's (1982) parameters for burnout is a disdain towards individuals once served. Educators are tasked with serving students however, participants explained that numerous students do not desire authentic relationships but likes on social media. Teachers who once served students with passion through educating are now guarding against the fear of being disciplined or terminated for recordings of conversations taken out of context for students to gain likes on social media.

One participant explained how abusers of smartphones would target other students through sharing sensitive personal information or humiliate a teacher through taking pictures in the classroom of an educator and utilizing artificial intelligence to superimpose inappropriate images. The threatening presence of social media is eroding teacher's sense of job security which has created distance between the teacher and the student. Participants expressed irritability towards students when describing situations where learners have used phones inappropriately coinciding with the cynicism portion Maslach (1982) articulates within the burnout paradigm. Professional educators know the value of a healthy teacher-student relationship and the value it can bring to the learner and the educator. However, due to videos being posted showing teachers speaking about sensitive topics inside of the classroom and taken out of context, the trust between teacher and student is slowly diminishing. Teaching for most is less focused on the nominal benefits of the profession but rather the intrinsic benefits. Student smartphone and social media in the classroom use not only affect student populations, but they can also create a chasm

between teacher and learner, a once desired relationship that is needed for a society to properly function.

Teachers' Lack of Personal Accomplishment

When teachers do not feel the personal accomplishments and self-fulfillment that educating can produce, the lack of intrinsic motivation can hinder the mind and heart of the educator. Inefficacy with career accomplishment in the burnout model produces feelings of inadequacy within Maslach's (1982) model and is exemplified with participants. Teachers within the study explained they are often overwhelmed with the regulating of phones required in the classroom while simultaneously instructing a lesson with limited student buy-in. The redundancy of negative interactions due to student smartphone abuse culminates through teachers vocalizing the feeling of emptiness with their chosen profession. Emptiness is accompanied with instructing a mixed class of students with some who are eager to learn, others apathetic, and many who are distracted.

When professionals struggle with personal fulfillment as Maslach (1982) highlights, the desire to stay within the field of education can dwindle. Teacher frustration within the observed phenomenon uncovers a deeper struggle teachers endure throughout the instructional day, student distraction. Distraction among students is not a new phenomenon however, with the introduction of smartphone devices accessible to learners, distraction among pupils appears currently unprecedented. With the enormous pressures placed upon the shoulders of teachers, balancing a classroom of learners while competing for the attention of others can feel frivolous. Intrinsic motivations are foundational to educators' careers that bring about a sense of accomplishment when students are responsive to teachers' leading and instructing. The ineffectiveness teachers may feel when managing the overuse of phones by students, can create a

cycle of professional weariness due to the repetitive nature to daily combat smartphone and social media use.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Various studies demonstrate a need for a modification or direct changes within the policies of certain groups or organizations as well as current and expected practices. This study establishes the precedent that student smartphone and social media use in the classroom does affect secondary teachers and a proposal into policy and practice changes would produce advantageous results.

Implications for Policy

Current policies within the educational setting where the study was conducted have established guidelines that are loosely enforced. The need for secondary educators to establish direct classroom policies which aim to prohibit smartphone use by students can remove two distractions simultaneously. First, prohibiting access to smartphone use through creating a contractual agreement between parent/guardian, student, and educator administered by the school's leadership could invoke the level of seriousness on the position the teachers and administrators take on student smartphone use in the classroom. The policy signed between the parties mentioned above will require students to keep phones off and away from gate to gate.

Second, with the policy in place of restricted student phone access throughout the entire duration of the instructional day, student social media use would cease. When students have no access to smartphone devices, the ability to login to social media becomes nearly impossible due to school encrypted computers assigned to every learner.

Enacting the policy of gate to gate would require the dedication of all staff on school campus to ensure consistency throughout the duration of the instructional day. At the school

district level, a consistent policy across the entire district would ensure all school sites have coherence regarding the student behavioral expectations with smartphones and social media. Teachers would be collectively required to enter into an agreement with adhering to the district-wide policy of prohibited phone use while in attendance. Teachers would be liable for enforcing student phones were off and away to bring about a unified force in inhibiting the ability for pupils to utilize the device while in the educational setting. These policies put in place could potentially alleviate the stress on secondary educators by hindering a considerable distraction and issue that has affected the realm of education significantly.

Implications for Practice

In an applicable manner, the discoveries uncovered during this research study can further assist secondary teachers in preventing symptoms of burnout produced by student smartphone and social media use in the classroom through enacting policies that are relevant and practical. Policies created that prohibit the use of student smartphones and the necessity for every educator to enforce the rules is theoretically desirable. However, the school sites have similar policies and the majority of teacher buy-in on the no phone policy in class and students still disregard the expectations. For the success of the proposed policies to manifest, a new approach must be presented.

Several companies now produce phone pouches that allow the user to retain possession of the electronic device while simultaneously prohibiting the user to access the device. The pouches require a special magnetic key that locks and unlocks the pouch. Upon entering any school site within the district, students would be required to place their phone into a lockable pouch that only administration or staff could unlock during or after the instructional day ends. The expectation that secondary students will adhere to the gate-to-gate phone policy strictly based on

high personal moral conduct is unrealistic. Secondary students are notorious for pushing boundaries and displaying behaviors that can be often devious and defiant. Locking phones away during the instructional day would be feasible to prevent the numerous problems smartphones and social media have manifested since entering the educational atmosphere.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The study brought about results that solidify the theoretical framework used for the study as well as the extensive literature review conducted to draw conclusions from. Empirically, the data retrieved during this study demonstrates how students accessing smartphones and social media in the classroom produces negative teacher experiences aligning with Maslach's (1982) burnout theory. The theoretical implication supports Maslach's burnout theory through a new facet leading to potential career burnout due to students accessing phones and social media in a secondary setting.

Empirical Implications

During the literature review process, there was non-existent literature regarding how student smartphones and social media use in the classroom effect secondary teachers. However, there was an extensive amount of relevant literature regarding how smartphones effect student behaviors, academics, and mental health status. As noted with the Setiadi et al. (2019) study, students' who become addicted to smartphone devices often struggled with poor physical and mental health, participants in the current research noted their concerns over student behaviors based on the phenomenon that was investigated. The findings from previous studies such as Das and Ahmed (2023) uncovered numerous educational institutions' limited policies regarding smartphone use in the classroom, utilizing such studies to frame the current study assisted in discovering the experiences of the participants. The findings in the research agree with previous

studies such as Delello et al. (2020) that highlighted divided student attention and the strain it created among educators, the frustration demonstrated amid participants in the current study due to student inattentiveness was present. Previous research conducted by Ramberg et al. (2019) on teacher burnout compliments with the data uncovered when teachers were questioned about stress and frustration regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. Stress plays a significant role in Maslach's (1982) burnout model which was utilized to frame the study, teacher stress was present in the responses of the participants.

When teachers' personal emotions are depleted such as in the Martínez-Montea-gudo et al. (2019) study, teacher burnout can manifest. The data suggests that teacher stress and frustration gains momentum when students defy classroom expectations of no phones, furthering the instigation of an underlying potential for career burnout due to the working environment. Defiant behavior among adolescent groups is an expectation many secondary educators navigate within a classroom setting when pupils are surrounded by like-minded peers. Nonetheless, traditional defiant behaviors are amplified when students have access to phones and social media throughout the instructional day compounding inappropriate behaviors while school campuses. When students rely on social media for peer approval as was discovered in the Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2023) study, learners exemplify unsuitable behavior to feel a sense of belonging which educators in the current study explained. The phenomenon that was uncovered with the shared experiences of secondary teachers, adds to the literature of what smartphones and social media have done to the classroom environment. The findings do not contradict but compliment previous literature through expanding how smartphones and social media use by students' impact teachers in a negative manner. The relevancy of how smartphones and social media hinder the

learning process rather than assist it, is evident based on the previous literature and the current findings.

Theoretical implications

The theoretical framework for the study was Maslach's (1982) career burnout theory and the continued research conducted by Maslach and other researchers within the field of studying professional career burnout. Burnout consists of three stages or frameworks that create the suitable mindset for a professional to leave a career. The findings discovered during the data collection portion of this study, suggests that students who access smartphones and social media in a classroom setting are creating an environment for educators to experience emotional frustration and lack of personal accomplishment. The lack of personal accomplishment experienced by participants due to student smartphone and social media use in the classroom, expands Maslach's burnout theory through uncovering another catalyst for burnout.

Although not every participant stated exclusively that they were frustrated, all the participants expressed concern over the phenomenon of phones, social media, and teacher career outlooks. The essence of the shared experiences of all the participants clarifies that the theoretical framework was aligned with the objective of the study to bring focus on the phenomenon that was investigated. Conclusively, burnout from emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of personal accomplishment can deeply affect a career professional Maslach (1982). Through the investigation of student phone and social media use on educators' career outlooks, the participants universally expounded that indeed smartphones and social media utilized by students in the classroom are a facet on teacher career satisfaction within modern day classrooms.

Limitations and Delimitations

Unforeseen factors in any study can create unexpected limitations and delimitations that need addressing for transparency and clarity. These factors are not within control of the researcher and can hinder the research process. These factors can include design of the study, chosen methodologies, and design frameworks. Through reflection post-data collection, recommendations for future research will be discussed once the limitations and delimitations are analyzed.

Limitations

The limitations for the research conducted can highlight potential weaknesses within the study. The first limitation was the recruiting of participants. Upon sending the formal initial email, only three participants responded. Through persistence, I was able to retrieve the needed pool to conduct the study. Since the framework of the phenomenon investigated was focused on middle grade level secondary classrooms, high school teachers were not included which could have potentially changed the data collected. Another facet that would be a limitation to the study was the exclusion of kindergarten through sixth grade teachers and what this group has experienced regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. These limitations clearly demonstrate the need for further research due to the constraints and limitations imposed by accessibility of more school sites and availability of participant groups.

Delimitations

During the initial stages of formulating a research framework and choosing the type of phenomenon to be investigated, numerous avenues were available. However, delimitations needed to be enacted to maintain the focus of what teachers experienced. The primary objective of qualitative hermeneutical research is to display and narrate what a group of individuals

experience within a phenomenon and the essences of the shared journey. The participant pool of 10 was chosen for the minimal pool needed to properly manage the data collection process and not hinder the researcher in understanding the essence of each participant's experiences. Properly uncovering a potential phenomenon within the qualitative hermeneutical structure can be daunting with large numbers of participant groups. Seventh and eighth grade teachers were selected due to availability within the larger school district and the willingness of this participant group. Seventh and eighth grade teachers were also chosen to bring about focus on a particular set of secondary teachers. The focus of secondary classrooms enabled the research to highlight what the teachers of adolescent youth experience, clarifying a specific time and under a specific set of circumstances.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the study's findings, limitations, and delimitations there is still considerable data yet to be retrieved through future studies of the phenomenon that was investigated. Due to the exclusivity of only utilizing seventh and eighth grade secondary teachers in this study, recruiting high school teachers could potentially enrich the essence within the researched paradigm. Another aspect that could continue to uncover the phenomenon further, is the of impact on paraeducator professionals who serve alongside teachers and what their perspective is within the framework of phones and students. Furthermore, qualitative research designs have certain limitations; enacting a quantitative design to investigate the number of professional educators who leave education based on student smartphone and social media use in classroom could set a precedent in a potentially growing phenomenon among educators. Future studies can also include specific teacher populations based on socioeconomics of student served, national and state rankings of schools, and parental involvement. Given the accessibility to smartphones,

teachers of younger student populations could also benefit from a potential perceived epidemic among modern schooling.

Conclusion

The study uncovered the experiences of secondary educators regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and teacher burnout. Through the initial stages of construction of a proper framework to capture the essence of teacher experiences, bringing about a solidified focus was paramount for a successful study. Through analyzing current literature within the paradigm of professional educator burnout, a gap within the current literature was identified regarding the phenomenon of student phones, social media, classroom use, and teacher burnout. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, a narrative was postulated to present a possible connection between student smartphone and social media in the classroom and teacher burnout. The next phase was the initiation of the proper research techniques which included the creation of individual interview questions, survey questionnaire, and focus group questions. Guided by the central and sub-research questions, data retrieval was successful within the proposed phenomenon under investigation. Numerous themes and sub-themes manifested that assisted in uncovering the essence of what secondary educators experience in the current classroom. The findings conveyed that there was a connection within the realm of what teachers experienced and the aforementioned phenomenon that was investigated. The results of this study demonstrate the need for further investigation into the new frontiers of how revolutionary devices and software such as smartphones and social media effect teachers and students alike in the 21st century classroom.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 24, 2024

Joseph Koelle
Rick Bragg

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-1800 SECONDARY TEACHER BURNOUT: STUDENT SMARTPHONE AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN THE CLASSROOM: A HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Joseph Koelle, Rick Bragg,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application per 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 described in your IRB 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).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents, **which you must use to conduct your study**, can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research on student smartphone and social media use in the classroom and secondary teacher burnout as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Education. The research is qualitative based and will exclusively highlight what secondary teachers experience in the classroom when students utilize smartphones and social media and the potential for career burnout. I am writing to invite you to join my study in this interesting phenomenon within the 21st century classroom.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and have at least a bachelor's degree along with a California multiple or single subject teaching credential and teach in a seventh or eighth grade secondary middle school classroom. Participants will be asked to engage in an individual interview (30-45 minutes), an online survey (10-15 minutes), and a focus group interview (45-60 minutes). The individual interviews can be done on Zoom for convenience, the survey will be conducted digitally, and the focus group will be conducted at your school site. Names and other identifying information will be requested as a part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please email me indicating your interest at the email address listed below if you meet the inclusion criteria.

A physical consent document will be brought to your school site or an arranged place of meeting before the initial interviews take place. The consent document provides additional information about my study. If you choose to participate, you will need to write your name on the document and then sign and date it before the data collection process begins. The consent document will be securely stored due to the confidentiality of the study.

Respectfully,
Joseph Koelle Doctoral Candidate
Liberty University



Appendix C

Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: Secondary Teacher Burnout: Student Smartphone and Social Media Use in the Classroom.

Principal Investigator: Joseph Koelle, Doctoral Candidate

Key Information about the Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and have at least a bachelor's degree along with a California multiple or single subject teaching credential and teach in a seventh or eighth grade classroom.

Things you should know:

- The purpose of the study is to exclusively highlight what secondary teachers experience in the classroom when students utilize smartphones and social media and the potential for career burnout.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research.

Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to highlight the experiences of secondary teachers in the classroom regarding student smartphone and social media use and career burnout.

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. Participate in an individual interview via Zoom that consists of 11 questions (30-45 minutes).
2. Answer questions through an online questionnaire (10-15 minutes).
3. Participate in a focus group (1 session 45-60 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participation in this study could directly benefit you through bringing about a clearer understanding into personal self-reflection on how to manage smartphone usage in your class as well as burnout stress awareness.

The benefits participants should expect from participating in this study include contributing significant knowledge to the current literature and theories on teacher burnout. Currently, there is seldom research on secondary teacher experiences regarding student smartphone and social media use in the classroom. In participating in this study, you will be the first to uncover what teachers undergo with this phenomenon.

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 and his faculty chair will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with codes.
- 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 focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. Notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a secured room. The the researcher and his faculty chair will have access to the data. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.

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 not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address in the next paragraph. Should you withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not 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 Joseph Koelle. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Rick Bragg Ph.d., 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 want to talk to someone other than the researchers, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that human subjects research will be conducted ethically 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

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

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date