EXPLORING THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S EMOTIONAL

INTELLIGENCE IN CLASSROOM TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATOR

SUPPORT

by

James Alexander Weaver

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

[Doctor of Philosophy]

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover the role and influence of high school administrator's emotional intelligence on classroom teachers' perception of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware. The theory guiding this study is Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence. This transcendental phenomenological study was concerned with ensuring that high school classroom teachers' shared experiences regarding perceptions of administrator support at a public high school in northern Delaware as affected by emotional intelligence are described in a manner that allows for the phenomenon's thematic elements to increase understanding. The study used individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts as the data collection methods for each of the ten classroom teachers that served as participants within the high school that served as the study's site. Data was analyzed through various forms of coding which in turn led to structural and textural descriptions ultimately resulting in themes of the phenomenon's essence. The study's findings revealed that the emotional intelligence components of self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy of an administrator directly influence classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, administrative support, burnout, perception

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my creator, from whom I have been so incredibly blessed.

To my parents, who from day one taught me right from wrong and that anything worth pursuing was worth putting everything you have into for the sake of growth.

To my wife, Jessica, who without her unconditional love and support, I would not even be in this position.

To the memory of Nan Nan and Pop Pop, who always believed in my abilities to earn a doctorate and instilled in me the values of learning and achieving within education.

To my children, Kaylee and Theo. May you understand that the most worthwhile things in life start and end with seeking newfound knowledge.

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      I want to thank every professor who I was fortunate enough to cross paths with along this journey. Every course I took proved to be invaluable and I would not have been able to achieve this feat without the support of every course professor I was so blessed to have at Liberty University. Likewise, I want to especially thank Dr. Pickard and Dr. Nixon whose encouragement, guidance, and unwavering support turned this dream into a reality. Thank you for believing in me and helping me push myself further than I ever thought I could.

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Intelligence quotient (IQ)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Human Resources (HR)

Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)

Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

While the traditional nature of secondary education is rapidly evolving and redefining in a post-pandemic world, the need for multifaceted support of classroom teachers is more important than ever. However, what constitutes support, the considerations teachers give within their perceptions of administrative support, and what administrators are doing to affect such perceptions require further examination. Therein lies the opportunity for research to examine how emotional intelligence can revolutionize the very nature of such a complex interplay of fluid variables. Chapter One will examine the historical context of teacher burnout as well as the social context of teachers leaving the profession. The aim of this phenomenological study is to discover the effect of high school administrator's emotional intelligence on classroom teachers' perception of administrative support with the hope of providing insight as to how to not only increase administrator support of classroom teachers in a practical manner but mitigate the effects of teacher burnout while ensuring a systemic issue within secondary education is curtailed before additional stakeholders are negatively affected.

Background

The multifaceted nature of high school administrators' job responsibilities combined with the rapidly increasing complexity of teacher's daily duties has culminated in a drastically complex educational landscape that continues to be redefined by pressure, stressors, and time constraints (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). In recent years, high school classroom teachers who do not perceive the administrators as supportive are finding it harder to justify staying within the profession and as a result are leaving at alarming rates (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). While teacher burnout is not a new phenomenon, modern trends due to both

internal and external factors within the educational system, such as student, teacher, and organizational variables, have altered the nature of what influences burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021). Embedded in the systemic problem of teacher burnout is the ripple effect it has caused, affecting all stakeholders, including but not limited to students, administrators, and local community members (Madigan & Kim, 2021). The proposed research designed to explore the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence in classroom teacher's perceptions of administrator support could greatly benefit practitioners in need of refining attempts to retain and support teachers while also helping administrators become more supportive in the role (Deutsch, 2021; Mahfouz, 2018). Numerous studies have postulated what constitutes effective school leadership, as well as the benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace, yet the extent to which, if any, emotional intelligence can have in helping administrators support the very same teachers succumbing to the pitfalls of burnout are relatively unknown (Karakus et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2022). Understanding emotional intelligence's role in perceptions of support and as a developable skill could mitigate the effects of a seemingly uncontrollable dilemma as it currently stands within secondary education (Deutsch, 2021; Karakus et al., 2021).

Historical Context

The very nature of the administrator and teacher relationship necessitates consistent feedback, various forms of evaluation, and constant communication (Hunter & Rodriguez, 2021; Maslach et al., 2001). However, with so many complexities embedded into both respective roles, the two roles have historically been a relationship defined as cohesive and symbiotic based on support, trust, and mutual respect (Goleman et al., 2002; Leithwood et al., 2020). However, one must consider that with differing personality types, workplace preferences, and diverse personal

backgrounds, a one size fits all approach for administrators to support teachers is anything but feasible (Baker et al., 2022). While education was once regarded as a purely intellectual and predominantly academic-focused profession, recent shifts to a more holistic approach geared towards ensuring the whole student is taught has led to increased rates of teacher burnout (Huk et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2022). Classroom teachers are now being held to the same standards for student achievement and classroom management combined with the addition of emotional, affective, and mental health issues students experience (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022). Consequently, teachers feel the added pressure, stress, and time constraints to fulfill prescribed job duties both in and outside the classroom (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). This combination of factors increasing feelings of burnout among secondary teachers has also given credence to the main problem pushing teachers past the breaking point; administrators are not fulfilling the socioemotional needs of the teachers overseen as teachers endure all of the aforementioned challenges (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). As a result, classroom teachers are not perceiving the administrators as supportive and give in to the infinite stressors of being a secondary classroom teacher in the modern educational system (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). Ultimately, whether it is individual teacher characteristics, administrator tendencies, or organizational qualities, secondary educators are leaving the classroom exponentially when the perceived level of support from the supervisors is seemingly nonexistent (Huk et al., 2019).

Social Context

Undoubtedly, teacher burnout has a direct effect on the profession as a whole, and in particular, continues to force the educational system to rapidly adapt to the evolving nature of what is required to not merely survive but thrive in such an intense environment (Hunter &

Rodriguez, 2021; Jurado et al., 2019). However, one must consider how many different groups are actually affected by classroom teachers not perceiving the administrators as supportive increasing teacher burnout (Gilmour & Sandilos, 2023). A snowball effect occurs when classroom teachers are overwhelmed by the demands of the job as signified by excessive stress, which seeps into virtually all facets of work life, including but not limited to interactions with colleagues and students within the classroom (Jurado et al., 2019; Turner et al., 2022). Specifically, a lack of perceived administrator support from the perspective of classroom teachers leads to a lower sense of personal and professional efficacy, motivation to uphold previously met standards of performance both individually and collectively, as well as a decrease in willingness to ensure colleagues and students are receiving what is needed (Jurado et al., 2019). This cumulative effect is often associated with students feeling less support in the classroom, decreasing the overall level of achievement, and feeling of comfortability to persevere through challenging content (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Likewise, when individual teachers are feeling the combination of minimal administrator support and unbearable stress the morale plummets which significantly decrease the quality of interactions among colleagues or what is commonly referred to as social support (Turner et al., 2022). Not perceiving one's administrator as supportive leads those teachers not to demonstrate any motivation to effectively teach, empower colleagues, or even maintain consistent parent communication (Madigan & Kim, 2021).

Theoretical Context

Salovey and Mayer (1990) initially brought significant attention to emotional intelligence as a unique intelligence that signified an individual's awareness and regulation of one's own emotions while simultaneously considering those of others to effectively communicate, interact,

and adapt to varying social contexts. Soon after, Goleman (1995, 1998) popularized the theory of

emotional intelligence that stated managing the inevitable presence of one's own emotions and

recognizing the influence emotions have on decisions is essential to have meaningful

relationships predicated on mutual understanding and empathy. From these foundational

concepts embedded into Goleman's emotional intelligence theory came extensive studies

regarding the extent to which emotional intelligence was a key underlying factor in effective

leadership and in particular, the potential impact it could have within an educational context

(Goleman et al., 2002). Emotional intelligence has been regarded as a developable skill, that

when included as the focal point in professional development and training for secondary

administrators, possesses the potential to empower administrators to be more mindful and

empathetic, resulting in higher rates of effectiveness (Deutsch, 2021; Mahfouz, 2018).

Additionally, the dualistic nature of emotions in all facets of the educational system has

been recognized, including but not limited to learning, teaching, and leadership (Karakus et al.,

2021). The research from the proposed study will add to the existing body of literature by

pinpointing specific components of emotional intelligence and the extent to which, if any, of the

emotional intelligence components affect classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator

support. Furthermore, the study has the potential to demonstrate the effect emotional intelligence

has in not only increasing administrators' support of classroom teachers but the manner in which

administrators perform prescribed duties of the job while simultaneously attempting to mitigate

the effects of teacher burnout. This new knowledge is needed to refine the training administrators

receive and the policies in place that are pushing teachers to the breaking point.

Problem Statement

The problem is that high school classroom teachers who do not perceive administrators as supportive are not finding it worthwhile to endure the challenges within a public school district in northern Delaware. Specifically, administrators who are perceived as unsupportive are not conducting consistent or fair classroom observations or providing timely and relevant feedback from the perspective of classroom teachers (Leithwood et al., 2020). As a result, teacher burnout has increased due to an excessive workload, lack of perceived support, and stress from daily responsibilities (Blaik et al., 2021). Consequently, retaining high-quality teachers has become immensely arduous while simultaneously failing to develop professionally and provide necessary growth opportunities for classroom teachers in general (Wirawan et al., 2019). When high school classroom teachers do not perceive administrators as supportive, such negative perceptions create a cyclical effect of doubt, hopelessness, and stress, which leads to an unwillingness and lack of motivation to often push through the daily responsibilities' teachers are presented with.

The proposed study will explore the role of an administrator's emotional intelligence and the impact it has on high school classroom teachers' perception of administrative support. While having an effective and emotionally supportive administrator does not eradicate all the systemic stressors classroom teachers face, it is imperative to understand to what extent, if any, emotional intelligence may have on mitigating the effects of teacher burnout by increasing perceptions of administrative support (Chen & Guo, 2020). The issues that are both explicitly and implicitly accompanied with high school classroom teachers' job duties are known, yet the role of an administrator's emotional intelligence in reducing the adverse effects of classroom teacher's daily responsibilities must be addressed (Baker et al., 2022). Failure to alleviate the emotional exhaustion teachers endure combined with a lack of perceived support from administrators will

only perpetuate the ongoing trend of teacher burnout (Maas et al., 2021). The future of secondary education depends on obtaining the answers as to how high school classroom teachers define support, what affects the perceptions, and if the emotional intelligence of administrators influences teachers' decision to stay in the profession when teachers perceive higher levels of support.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to discover the perceptions of administrative support from the viewpoint of classroom teachers and the role that administrator's emotional intelligence plays within teachers' perceptions of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware. At this stage in the research, the effect of high school administrator's emotional intelligence on classroom teachers' perception of administrator's support will be generally defined as an administrator's emotional awareness and regulation and the influence it has on the consistency with which classroom observations are conducted, the nature of feedback provided, and quality of the interpersonal interactions between both respective parties (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Additionally, classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator's support will be defined as the extent to which teachers feel as if their voices are being heard, feelings are empathized, and daily workload is minimized when feasible (Daniëls et al., 2020).

The proposed qualitative study will utilize a transcendental phenomenological approach in an attempt to explicitly identify all preconceived notions and biases the author has with classroom observations, feedback, and the varying effects of teacher burnout to help draw necessary attention to the experiences of other high school classroom teachers with perceptions of administrators' level of support (Moustakas, 1994). The proposed study is concerned with

ensuring that the shared experiences of classroom educators regarding the impact of the perceptions of administrator support and the role administrator's emotional intelligence has been vividly described so the information may be analyzed and categorized thematically to capture the phenomenon's essence (Giorgi, 1985, 2009).

Significance of the Study

Theoretical

Classroom teachers who do not perceive the administrators as supportive developing a mindset that it is not worthwhile to remain in the profession due to the array of daily challenges has developed into a systemic educational problem at the secondary level. While teacher burnout is a longstanding phenomenon, recent shifts in the responsibilities of both administrators and in particular classroom teachers, has led to a complex evolution from the original characteristics of burnout (Huk et al., 2019; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This study will contribute to understanding how increased perceptions of administrator support from the perspective of classroom teachers can reduce the effects of teacher burnout, while also encapsulating the shared experiences of participants in conveying what perceived support looks and feels like (Baker et al., 2022; Chen & Guo, 2020). Additionally, the study will extend the current knowledge of effective school leadership and instead offer detailed insight as to the role of administrators' emotional intelligence and the specific components within emotional intelligence that tangibly affect administrators' duties with supporting teachers (Blaik et al., 2021; Deutsch, 2021; Karakus et al., 2021). This study will allow for both classroom teachers and administrators at the secondary level to precisely understand the effect of emotional intelligence in prescribed responsibilities as well as interpersonal exchanges in a rapidly changing educational environment that is comprised of multifaceted stakeholder considerations (Mahfouz, 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020).

Empirical

The proposed study would explore how the emotional intelligence of high school administrators affects classroom teachers' perception of administrative support. The perception and affect components of the proposed study are what necessitates that it is conducted in adherence to qualitative standards due to its interpretive nature (Moustakas, 1994). The proposed qualitative study will utilize a transcendental phenomenological approach in an attempt to explicitly identify all preconceived notions and biases of the author with classroom observations, feedback, and the varying effects of teacher burnout to help draw necessary attention to the experiences of other high school classroom teachers with perceptions of the administrators' level of support (Moustakas, 1994). The proposed study is concerned with ensuring that the shared experiences of classroom educators regarding the impact of the perceptions of administrative support are vividly described so the information may be analyzed and categorized thematically to capture the phenomenon's essence (Giorgi, 1985, 2009). As such, the research that will be conducted as a result of this study will significantly contribute to the empirical literature regarding what classroom teachers deem as support from administrators as well as what constitutes cohesive relationships between administrators and the teachers overseen (Daniëls et al., 2020; Du Plessis et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2022). Furthermore, this study while relating to previous examinations of effective school leadership (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018), will expand upon the existing knowledge by drawing attention to what keeps teachers from leaving and how administrator emotional intelligence influences that decision despite all of the stressors teachers are experiencing (Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Turner et al., 2022; Yadav & Lata, 2019).

Practical

Knowledge derived from the study could prove to be significant for both classroom teachers and administrators because it will provide insight into how specific emotional intelligence components can tangibly help administrators increase efforts to support the teachers overseen which in turn will positively influence teachers' perception of the administrator's support (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). Additionally, this study is of the utmost importance because it will draw necessary attention to the shared experiences of teachers who feel as if the administrators have been supportive and even unsupportive (Gransberry, 2022; Maas et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2021). By gaining this understanding of the common features of both supportive and unsupportive administrators, such an understanding will allow for practitioners to acquire a pre-established set of competencies, tactics, and skills that administrators will need to possess or develop in order to support teachers so administrators are equipped to withstand the plethora of pitfalls associated with teacher burnout (Deutsch, 2021; Mahfouz, 2018; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This study will ultimately be used to assist high schools across the world to change the nature of the professional development provided to administrators, identify coping and intervention strategies teachers may use to become more self-sufficient, and how emotional intelligence is a developable skill that all roles within the educational system must cultivate and create to combat the systemic conditions of burnout affecting a multitude of stakeholders (Blaik et al., 2021; Deutsch, 2021; Karakus et al., 2021; Madigan & Kim, 2021).

Research Questions

The central research question of this transcendental phenomenological study addresses the research problem and is aligned with the purpose statement by seeking to provide opportunities for classroom teachers to discover the effect of emotional intelligence of high

school administrators on classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. From this broader central research question are three sub-questions that are designed to elicit an understanding of classroom teachers shared experiences of administrator support and the extent to which emotions play a role in the quality of daily interactions. The culmination of the central research question and sub-questions will allow for classroom teachers to provide insight regarding what constitutes feelings of support and the tangible actions taken by administrators to increase perceptions of such support.

Central Research Question

What influence does the emotional intelligence of high school administrators have on classroom teachers' perceptions of the administrator's support?

Sub-Question One

How do high school classroom teachers describe administrator's support?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of high school classroom teachers who perceive administrators as supportive?

Sub-Question Three

How do high school administrators' emotions and feelings influence classroom teachers' perception of the quality of interactions?

Definitions

1. *Burnout-* A psychological condition in which an individual has emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of efficacy (Maslach et al., 2001).

2. *Emotion* – A feeling comprised of specific thoughts, physical manifestations, and a particular mindset with the potential for a multitude of motivations for a person to act. (Goleman, 1995).

3. *Emotional exhaustion* –When an individual is rundown or overworked to the point that physical and emotional resources are significantly diminished (Maslach et al., 2001).

4. *Emotional intelligence* – An individual's ability to monitor one's own feelings as well as those of others to inform decisions made and actions taken (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

5. *Tenured teacher* – A secondary educator with three or more years of experience as the leader instructor in a classroom that has received a satisfactory set of formative evaluations and deemed experienced by the Delaware Department of Education.

Summary

The secondary educational system continues to struggle with high school classroom teachers who do not perceive administrators as supportive, ultimately leaving the profession because teachers are not finding it worthwhile to endure the daily challenges. This increasingly alarming trend gives credence to the proposed transcendental phenomenological study in hopes of discovering the effect of high school administrator's emotional intelligence on classroom teachers' perception of the administrator's support at a public high school in northern Delaware. Research could provide invaluable insight into the commonalities of classroom teachers' experiences as to what administrator support looks and feels like. Additionally, practitioners can gain much needed strategies for how to develop specific emotional intelligence skills within administrators to ensure administrators are not only perceived as more supportive but capable of mitigating the effects of teacher burnout. While the complexities and array of responsibilities that classroom teachers face on a daily basis appear to have no end in sight, it is evident that

administrators are being equally inundated with tasks further reiterating the need to discover the

extent to which, if any, emotional intelligence can have in alleviating the burdens both roles face

so support can be given and felt while simultaneously fulfilling the various needs of all

stakeholders within a seemingly broken educational system.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systemic review of the literature was conducted to explore the problem of high school classroom teachers who do not perceive administrators as supportive and are not finding it worthwhile to endure the challenges within secondary education, resulting in teacher burnout. Chapter Two presents a review of the current literature related to the topic of study. The first section discusses Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence, followed by a synthesis of recent literature regarding school leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and school climate. Lastly, the literature surrounding the factors which lead to teacher burnout is addressed. A gap exists in the literature about the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrators' perceived support of classroom teachers regarding classroom observations, teacher feedback, and mitigation of teacher burnout, presenting a legitimate need for the current study.

Theoretical Framework

This research has a theoretical framework based on Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence performance model theory. Goleman's theory assists in comprehending the problem of perceptions of unsupportive school leadership within secondary educational institutions and the challenges administrators face when attempting to support teachers with classroom observations, providing feedback, mitigating the effects of teacher burnout, and providing value amid data collection and analysis. Goleman's emotional intelligence performance model theory provided the framework for exploring the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence affecting classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support.

The goal of this research was to examine the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrators' perceived support of classroom teachers, and this examination started with

Goleman's (1995) creation of emotional intelligence theory. Goleman was impacted by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Goleman's brain and behavioral research explored the profound influence of emotional intelligence as a better indicator of people's potential for success than the intelligence quotient (IQ) alone. Salovey and Mayer (1990) initially explored the role of emotions in the workplace and sought to define emotional intelligence as an ability that could transform people's lives. Salovey and Mayer (1990) emphasized emotional intelligence as an individual possessing the ability to carefully pay attention to feelings and others in an attempt to use emotional intelligence as a means of consideration in one's actions and thought processes. Goleman built upon this initial idea and transferred emotional intelligence within the context of work on the brain and behavioral research on historical systems of psychology and the meditation practices of Asian cultures that utilize such practices. Over time, Goleman (1995, 1998, 2000) further developed the theory of emotional intelligence to define specific emotional intelligence factors and reiterated that emotional intelligence is a different form of intelligence and not innate but rather developable despite childhood differences (Blaik et al., 2021). Worldwide, Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence is referred to in the workplace as a performance model (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022).

Goleman (1995) defined three factors as the foundational premises of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, and empathy (Lumpkin & Achen, 2018). This study focuses on the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrator's perceived support of classroom teachers, including the influence on classroom observations, providing feedback, and mitigating the effects of teacher burnout. Goleman (1998) summarized the emotional intelligence theory and established a clear connection to this study: "Emotional intelligence skills are synergistic with cognitive ones; top performers have both. The more

complex the job, the more emotional intelligence matters – if only because a deficiency in these abilities can hinder the use of whatever technical expertise or intellect a person may have" (p. 39). Comprehending the role of emotional intelligence in a secondary administrator's overall effectiveness, perceived support, and influence on classroom observations, providing feedback, and mitigating the effects of teacher burnout could show that emotional intelligence should be a part of professional development for school leaders. Understanding how secondary administrators perform and how teachers perceive administrative support could provide insight into the potential impact of emotional intelligence within an educational context.

Emotionally intelligent secondary administrators understand the effect that various feelings and emotions can have on the quality of interactions with the teachers overseen, as well as the extent to which administrators can effectively support teachers in professional development and job satisfaction (Crisci et al., 2019; Smet, 2022). This understanding could influence how secondary administrators conduct classroom observations, provide feedback, and help reduce teacher burnout. Secondary administrators need to recognize the potential impact of thoughts and feelings on not only themselves, but the teachers' administrators are responsible for supporting and developing so that all parties involved can coexist harmoniously (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence theory provides invaluable insight into the developable skills that can be professionally cultivated and refined within individuals. Goleman's emotional intelligence theory supports this qualitative study that examines the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrator's perceived support of classroom teachers by assisting efforts to closely examine the different contextual factors and prescribed duties of administrators that are directly impacted by not only administrators' emotions but those of the

teachers overseen. Additionally, Goleman's theory provides a slightly different consideration within emotional intelligence that will allow for a multitude of questioning and researching to occur to gauge the entire scope accurately and thoroughly of what is involved regarding classroom observations, providing feedback, and helping to reduce the effects of teacher burnout. Goleman's theory provides the theoretical framework for emotional intelligence, and the study will benefit from such intensive and practical considerations with the hope of equipping practitioners with understanding and an improved sense of how to correct the systemic problem of a perceived lack of support from high school administrator's leading to teacher burnout.

Related Literature

School leadership and what constitutes effective versus ineffective school leadership can be explored by looking at related literature for both school leadership and the various research on the background and current practices within the field. The literature intersects in areas related to teacher job satisfaction and an administrator's perceived support and overall effectiveness as a closely interconnected relationship that serves a common effect. Literature related to school leadership, including the background and current practices within the field, teacher job satisfaction, quality of relationships, and professional development and growth opportunities, will be reviewed in this section. Additionally, there will be a focus on school climate as it pertains to high school administration characteristics and organizational communication culture as well as teacher burnout with insight regarding stress overload and emotional exhaustion in this section.

School Leadership

This literature review examined the extant background and current research on effectively supportive school leadership and emotional intelligence within secondary education,

including responsibilities specific to administrators and the individual components of emotional

intelligence. The administrator's effectiveness within the secondary setting and the teacher's job

satisfaction can be categorized as a dualistic relationship (Leithwood et al., 2020). Through this

research, administrators' perceived support might be improved, and the potential for various

factors associated with teacher burnout could be significantly reduced. Leadership theories have

been closely examined and studied for decades in an attempt to provide prescriptive value to

those within management and leadership roles, yet depending on the organizational context,

scholars have found the process cumbersome to determine which leadership styles are most

effective (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). Within an

educational context, one must consider the tremendous pressure and stress both teachers and

administrators face with the prescribed duties that accompany both roles and those that are

implicitly expected (Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019). Due to the nature of both respective

parties' roles therein lies the opportunity for individuals to feel overwhelmed and, at times,

hopeless regarding the state of education (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021).

Background

Effective school leadership is predominantly based on the quality of the interpersonal

relationships within the school (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

Specifically, the extent to which trust is evident depends on a school leader's ability to listen,

learn, and appropriately respond to the socioemotional needs of the teachers overseen (Harris et

al., 2019). However, not every secondary administrator can earn such trust quickly (Daniëls et

al., 2019). Additionally, effective school leadership is often determined by how well an

administrator can keep feelings in check while simultaneously recognizing feelings in others (De

Nobile, 2018). Administrators who can discern between personal and others' emotions are

perceived as caring and competent, whereas those unable to remain attentive come across as cold and indifferent (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). However, the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrators' perceived support of classroom teachers regarding classroom observations, providing feedback, and mitigating the effects of teacher burnout have not been explored in-depth. The literature to date has only offered a surface-level understanding of the specific roles secondary administrators are tasked with and how emotional intelligence influences such responsibilities (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018).

The foundational premise of effective school leadership resides in the quality of the interpersonal relationships combined with the ability to espouse a set of core values designed to fulfill a shared vision (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). This is impossible without genuine trust between an administrator and the teachers overseen (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Without trust, there is no buy-in from teachers when new policies are put into effect nor is there any receptiveness to constructive criticism or organizational change due to third parties such as the school district or state agencies (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

Within the abundance of scholarly research on what constitutes effective school leadership, one must recognize that the contextual variables in which a school is situated can have a tremendous impact on the specific leaderships style necessary to enact change and ensure a meaningful impact occurs (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player, 2019). School leadership must constantly remain cognizant of the underlying factors that shape student achievement, parental involvement, teachers' professional needs, and the surrounding community's influence (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player, 2019; Markkanen et al., 2020). On a daily basis there is a cyclical

effect that teachers endure regarding student misbehavior and level of parental support that culminates into teachers desperately needing to understand not only what is expected of them in those situations but the extent to which the direct administrators are willing to have the teachers' best professional interest at the forefront of consideration (Bellibaş et al., 2021). While there is no denying the complexities that accompany student misbehavior and the various home environments from which students derive, the one foundational premise comprised of effective school leadership revolves round administrators taking tangible actions to support teachers by intervening in sticky situations involving students and parents (Hitt & Player, 2019; Markkanen et al., 2020). Consequently, ineffective school leadership will remove themselves entirely when teachers feel susceptible to ridicule from external stakeholders amid vulnerable situations (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player, 2019; Markkanen et al., 2020).

Embedded into several of the main components of effective school leadership is an administrator's ability to transcend the inherent power of the role into a mindset predicated on consistent feedback from subordinates and discerning the differences between what classroom teachers want and truly need (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). Inevitably, whether it is a principal or assistant principal due to the prescribed duties that accompany such a role feedback must be given on a weekly to monthly basis to classroom teachers in order to ensure high-quality instruction is the normal routine for student's betterment (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). However, another key distinction between effective and ineffective school leadership is the willingness of the administrator to receive feedback from classroom teachers and to not merely consider such feedback but implement the suggestions in order to support those teachers overseen and improve within the administrative role held (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player,

2019; Markkanen et al., 2020). Attentively listening and carefully considering teacher-proved

feedback empowers both levels within the principal-teacher relationship which ultimately

benefits the organization as a whole including students and parents (Du Plessis et al., 2020;

Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Markkanen et al., 2020).

One of the most overlooked core components of effective school leadership is

establishing smart and attainable goals for a school based on the collective needs of all

stakeholders as well as the determined areas for improvement necessary to ensure tangible

progress is made (Blackmore et al., 2023; Castro, 2022; Guthery & Bailes, 2022). The reality is

that not every school is at the same level whether it is regarding staffing, teacher placement,

student achievement, status within the local community, or access to financial and technological

resources (Gagnon et al., 2022; Tamir, 2021). Consideration must be given to the array of

contextual variables that directly impact on an organization's ability to either thrive or barely

survive (Holmes et al., 2019; Perrone & Eddy-Spicer, 2021). Effective school leadership is often

placed under a critical lens that is judged based on significant improvements and changes but the

key to school leaders that successfully turn around a dire situation or even make strides in a

somewhat functional organization is the identification of not only what goals must be established

but the realistic ways in which all levels of employees can see them to fruition (Blackmore et al.,

2023; Castro, 2022; Gagnon et al., 2022; Holmes et al., 2019). Some schools struggle with

teacher shortages or staffing issues due to demographic or behavioral issues that deter qualified

candidates (Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Perrone & Eddy-Spicer, 2021; Tamir, 2021). It is the

discretion of the school leader to understand the biggest area of need within that building and

from there allocating the necessary resources to ensure that the most-needed positions are filled

rather than appeasing external expectations (Blackmore et al., 2023; Gagnon et al., 2022;

Guthery & Bailes, 2022). Meaning, it might better serve a school to hire a veteran interventionist or special education department chair knowing that solving behavioral issues and fulfilling legally required obligation regarding special education is more vital than not having a vacancy within a specific content area (Blackmore et al., 2023; Gagnon et al., 2022; Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Holmes et al., 2019). The personnel decisions a principal makes can either push a school to its breaking point or alleviate the burden of unfulfilled areas (Holmes et al., 2019; Perrone & Eddy-Spicer, 2021; Tamir, 2021). Frequently, staffing as a broader concept is exclusively regarded as a human resources area of expertise which hold some merit, but a principal's sense of the school pulse and most prevalent needs is a foundational premise from which other policy-making decisions can ensue (Castro, 2022; Tamir, 2021). Ultimately, a principal and the school administration's is limited within discretionary power regarding how much money is received for the organization due to student population size and the community surrounding the school, but within the locust of a school leader's control is the ability to discern what is needed most for that specific building and how to best fulfill the highest areas of need whether it is recruitment, retention, or resource and personnel placement (Blackmore et al., 2023; Castro, 2022; Gagnon et al., 2022; Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Holmes et al., 2019; Perrone & Eddy-Spicer, 2021; Tamir, 2021).

Current Practice

Effective school leadership was once exclusively regarded as a principal or administration who could consistently produce an overall student body capable of performing well on standardized tests and ensuring the external perception of the school was one of high student achievement (Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019). However, there has been a recent shift in the factors one must consider in deeming school leadership effective due to the

increasingly complex environmental and contextual factors within the educational field (De Nobile, 2018; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). While test scores are certainly important, embedded into the numerical prowess of high-test scores is student wellbeing, the same classroom teachers in charge of students, and the overall culture in which all stakeholders coexist (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021).

Emotionally intelligent administrators can gain traction regarding the vision and mission of the collective school organization by connecting with people on an interpersonal basis stemming from attentive listening, inclusive decision-making practices, and recognizing the human element evident in teachers (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). Self-awareness of one's own emotions and letting a tangible presence serve as a reminder of the realities of such stressful and diverse role allows for there to be consideration given to the potential impact of such emotions, which can lead to regulation and ultimately control of those emotions, so both administrators and the teachers overseen are not negatively affected (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Secondly, when administrators can monitor and regulate their emotions, it equips them to pay close attention to what others think and feel (De Nobile, 2018). Not every teacher is motivated by the same things, nor are socioemotional needs the same hence the importance of an administrator embracing the innate differences of teachers so administrators can better serve individual needs and help teachers become the best possible educator (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). It is from these high-quality interpersonal relationships cultivated from the trust that administrators are then able to inspire teachers overseen to pursue the organization's collective goals while ensuring teachers feel confident to individually thrive (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021).

When teachers recognize a consistent effort is being made by the administration to seek teacher feedback, implement feedback when appropriate, and meet emotional needs, there is a cyclical effect that leads to increased motivation, higher satisfaction, and more resiliency when the daily demands of the job become difficult (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). Teachers stick around even when the stress seems infinite and there is a vicious cycle of unreasonable work demands brought on by external factors because there is a foundational trust between teachers and administrators (De Nobile, 2018). Ultimately, influential school leaders see the inherent and intangible value each individual possesses and makes a concerted effort to embrace differences while dedicating the time to listen, learn, and support those individuals so that trust serves as the catalyst from which teachers decide to stay no matter how arduous the daily demands become (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018).

Administrators that make a concerted intentional effort to adhere to teachers' emotional needs are often able to do so due in large part to exhibiting individual components of emotional intelligence including but not limited to self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). Emotional intelligence's influence within the administrator-teacher relationship is that the professional titles of both respective parties don't matter nearly as much as the recognition of the human element within each (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020). Classroom teachers that struggle with self-awareness or self-regulation benefit from an administrator who listens and tends to various situations through an empathetic perspective (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). Likewise, an administrator who can effectively remain self-aware and self-regulate varying emotions in a multitude of experiences with teachers can better discern which social skills to utilize and when depending on what a teacher needs at

any given moment (Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; Hayes & Derrington, 2023). The fluidity with which a teacher's daily reality is shaped necessitates that administrators can effectively alter their emotional intelligence skills to fit the specific needs of a diverse set of contextual factors (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019).

Scholarly research trends have shifted the focus from which factors predominantly comprise effective school leaders to what are the preferences that teachers seek or hope to find in a school's leader (Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). Historically, the principal possessed the majority of the power and the administration the principal oversaw made up the group of decision-makers within a school, yet as decades have unfolded into the modern era of education it has become increasingly clear that leveraging the different perspectives of all stakeholders and exemplifying leadership that is willing to learn in the interest of creating a community of collaboration and culture is what truly changes the trajectory of a school (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). Effective school leadership starts with ensuring the right working conditions are in existence for teachers to effectively perform instructional duties, followed by changing the cultural norms of a school resulting in the refinement over time of the systems and procedures in place that were either ineffective or insensitive to the inclusive nature of secondary education's present-day landscape (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Thornton et al., 2019).

Current trends in school leadership research have revealed a dramatic shift regarding implementing change or maintaining high standards of excellence at the secondary level (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Leithwood et al., 2020; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). True change and sustainable schools are led by administrators that invest in teachers first by making a committing to interpersonal fulfillment and professional development prior to restructuring

organizational components. By starting with people first therein lies the potential for trust, compassion, empathy, and the courage necessary to break hardened habits from both respective parties (Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Thornton et al., 2019). Lastly, effective school leadership is focused now more than ever on ensuring that high-quality instruction is being delivered because it fulfills a vast array of necessary consideration ranging from student achievement, parental satisfaction, and local community perception (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player, 2019). Principals and the administration of a school can no longer just let teachers either thrive or flounder but instead must make a concerted effort to ensure that the integrity of the curriculum, pedagogical choices, and instructional techniques are effectively teaching students which in turn benefits teachers' growth (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hitt & Player, 2019; Markkanen et al., 2020).

While many scholars agree that high-quality interpersonal relationships based on trust deriving from emotional intelligence are an essential factor in effective school leadership (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021), a more viable solution to determining the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrator's perceived support of classroom teachers may be to focus on specific emotional intelligence components necessary for positively affecting other responsibilities within an administrator's role (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018), to ensure the role of emotional intelligence in influencing specific secondary administrator responsibilities is determined so practitioners can, in turn, provide the necessary training to put administrators in a position for successfully mitigating the effects of teacher burnout.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

While the quality of interpersonal relationships undoubtedly influences teacher job satisfaction, teacher job satisfaction is also impacted by the professional development and

growth opportunities provided (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). In addition to trusting superiors and feeling as if emotional needs are being considered, educators want to improve and get better at teaching so students can ultimately benefit (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). When educators are given relevant training, diverse and practical professional development, and growth opportunities in leadership roles, teachers feel empowered and valued as a vital asset to the organization (Vekeman et al., 2018). Despite this scholarly knowledge, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the role of emotional intelligence in developing and creating such opportunities (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). Goleman (1995, 1998, 2000) emphasizes in the theory of emotional intelligence that emotional intelligence provides invaluable insight into the practical implementation potential for an individual's self-awareness, self-management, and empathy to improve overall performance significantly. The proposed study will examine the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrators' perceived support of classroom teachers regarding classroom observations, providing feedback, and mitigating the effects of teacher burnout. Understanding the role of emotional intelligence within this context could be highly impactful in guiding practitioners within school leadership positions while simultaneously improving school culture and reducing teacher burnout which has plagued the profession for years.

Despite the stressors and the variety of complex responsibilities educators face within the profession, there has been increasing research pinpointing some of the main factors in ensuring teachers' satisfaction and securing retention within the field (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Vekeman et al., 2018). Of those factors, teachers want relevant and consistent professional development and growth opportunities (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). When teachers feel empowered and supported emotionally and professionally, such empowerment instills

confidence and a genuine belief that teachers are a valuable asset to the educational organization (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Embedded into the attentive listening of effective administrators is genuinely hearing what a teacher feels is an area for improvement (Vekeman et al., 2018). Additionally, teachers often desire a refresher to get up to date with a skill or pedagogical approach that has significantly evolved (J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). In these moments where teachers feel comfortable enough to voice the desire to learn and improve as an educator, the onus lies on the administrator to fulfill such requests, so teachers' level of professional consideration is given considerable attention (Smet, 2022).

Quality of Relationships

Emotionally intelligent administrators can gain traction regarding the vision and mission of the collective school organization by connecting with people on an interpersonal basis stemming from attentive listening, inclusive decision-making practices, and recognizing the human element evident in teachers (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). Through self-awareness of one's own emotions and letting one's presence serve as a reminder of the realities of an administrator's stressful and diverse role allows for there to be consideration given to the potential impact of such emotions, which can lead to regulation and ultimately control of those emotions, so both the administrators and the teachers overseen are not negatively affected (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Secondly, when administrators can monitor and regulate emotions, administrators are equipped to pay close attention to what others think and feel (De Nobile, 2018). Not every teacher is motivated by the same things, nor are teachers' socioemotional needs the same hence the importance of an administrator embracing the innate differences of teachers so administrators can better serve teachers' individual needs and help them become the best possible educator

(Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). It is from these high-quality interpersonal relationships cultivated from the trust that administrators are then able to inspire teachers to pursue the organization's collective goals while ensuring teachers feel supported to individually thrive (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). When teachers feel tangible administrative support and recognize a consistent effort is being made to have teacher input heard, feedback received, and emotional needs met, there is a cyclical effect that leads to increased motivation, higher satisfaction, and more resiliency when the daily demands of the job become difficult (Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). Teachers stick around even when the stress seems infinite and there is a vicious cycle of unreasonable work demands brought on by external factors because teachers trust the administration and understand that feelings are not subdued but validated as worthy factors in how teachers attempt to educate the youth (De Nobile, 2018). Ultimately, influential school leaders see the inherent and intangible value each individual possesses and make a concerted effort to embrace differences while dedicating the time to listen, learn, and support those individuals so trust serves as the catalyst from which teachers decide to stay no matter how arduous the daily demands become (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018).

Embedded into the essence of the connection between teacher job satisfaction and the quality of relationships is how teachers view the attitude of the principal (Brezicha et al., 2020; Otrębski, 2022; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). A principal's attitude when it comes to decision-making, daily interactions, the manner in which meetings are conducted, and the dynamics of communication with various stakeholders all play a pivotal role in how a principal's attitude is viewed (Brezicha et al., 2020; Kaminskiene et al., 2021; Otrębski, 2022; Tsai & Antoniou, 2021; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). In turn, a principal's attitude directly affects the quality of

relationship with teachers (Brezicha et al., 2020; Otrębski, 2022). A positive attitude that is exuded and demonstrated through tangible actions by a principal serves as a cyclical effect from which teachers are inspired, influenced, and ignited to mimic that same positive attitude (Kaminskiene et al., 2021; Otrębski, 2022; Tsai & Antoniou, 2021). While some may contend that a principal's attitude is not a predominant factor in determining how a teacher views the quality of the relationship with the principal due to the vagueness that can accompany the descriptor *positive*, several reiterate that a positive attitude is contagious and possesses the inherent power to provide solace, support, and interpersonal satisfaction between a teacher and principal (Brezicha et al., 2020; Kaminskiene et al., 2021; Otrębski, 2022; Tsai & Antoniou, 2021; Van der Vyver et al., 2020).

The second underlying result of a principal's positive attitude is the extent to which the interactions and dynamics between colleagues exponentially evolves into a series of empathetic and supportive exchanges (Tsai & Antoniou, 2021; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). When teachers have a school administration that ensures the school culture is comprised of realistic optimism and makes a concerted effort to remain positive and optimistic even amid challenges, the ripple effect directly impacts how colleagues make it a habitual routine to brighten one another's day and genuinely try to collectively help one another (Brezicha et al., 2020; Kaminskiene et al., 2021; Otrębski, 2022). The results are often profound and serve as a reminder that even with systemic flaws and issues within secondary education, what keeps people satisfied, happy, and content to stay is the quality of relationship between all levels of school stakeholders (Brezicha et al., 2020; Kaminskiene et al., 2021; Otrębski, 2022; Tsai & Antoniou, 2021; Van der Vyver et al., 2020).

Professional Development and Growth Opportunities

While teacher job satisfaction is due in large part to feeling a sense of belonging and trust with an administrator, teacher job satisfaction is also influenced by the extent to which teachers feel professionally empowered to learn new techniques, improve old habits, and strive for growth in a rapidly changing educational landscape (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). Psychologically teachers gain confidence when practical training is afforded while simultaneously feeling a sense of validated empowerment by the administration providing relevant opportunities to teachers' initial concerns. (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Vekeman et al., 2018). The professional development and growth opportunities factor of teacher job satisfaction has a cumulative effect on teachers' instructional choices, pedagogical approaches, and open-mindedness to feedback (J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). Educators view a lack of training and inconsistent or irrelevant professional development opportunities as a sign of disrespect or even a lack of care for professional growth as educators (Smet, 2022). Educators want to feel valued and learn new things to improve students' well-being.

In addition to professional development, growth opportunities are vital to teacher job satisfaction. Such options include taking on leadership roles, whether spearheading a committee, departmental initiatives, or even school-wide activities that benefit the collective group (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Vekeman et al., 2018). Giving people a chance to take on more responsibility shows genuine belief in that person and further reiterates the trust between both respective parties (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). From this foundation of trust and a supportive working relationship, people want to do well when given a chance to effect positive change on a broader scale (Du Plessis et al., 2020). When a teacher trusts the administrator and vice versa, the educator often feels a sense of pride and gratitude for being given a chance to step outside the prescribed role. Teachers want to fulfill requirements outside the classroom to ensure the

administration is not disappointed (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). This cumulative effect of support, empowerment, and genuine desire to honor supportive administrators leads to an organizational culture that is emotionally healthy and conscientiously sensitive to the diverse needs of people (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018).

The emotional intelligence component of relationship management is highly prevalent within this context because it requires an administrator to remain empathetic of a teacher's desire to grow as a professional for not only the sake of students' well-being but a teacher's desire for higher individual aspirations (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). Administrators that remember previous experiences as classroom educators and make decisions based on such experiences end up fulfilling the professional development and growth needs of the teachers overseen because administrators understand that despite a teachers' stress there is still motivation to further serve the overall organization (Smet, 2022; J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020). Emotionally intelligent administrators demonstrate the necessary social skills to discern when a teacher is venting out of frustration or voicing desire to improve and to be given a chance to capitalize on additional opportunities (Vekeman et al., 2018). Consequently, teachers remain satisfied when administrators listen, genuinely help, and habitually afford opportunities for teachers to demonstrate inherent value (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022).

While several scholars agree that teacher job satisfaction is contingent upon educators receiving professional development and growth opportunities (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021), there is disagreement regarding what constitutes professional development (Smet, 2022). Within the broader concept of professional development, there are disagreements regarding the distinctions made between relevant, practical, and appropriate due

to differences in perceptions of what those terms mean within an educational setting (J., Zhang & R., Yuan, 2020).

School Climate

The varying nature of a school's climate has necessitated for decades a close examination of what constitutes a positive versus a negative school climate (Chen & Guo, 2020). Frequently associated with the concept of school climate and perhaps more fitting, is the term *culture* which signifies not only a school's systems and operational means, but more important the manner in which people function, interact, communicate, and collaborate with one another (Daniëls et al., 2020; Haiyan & Walker, 2021). A school's collective attempts to define organizational values, carry out the organizational mission, and identify areas for improvement while appropriately recognizing outstanding effort and achievement are some of the most pivotal factors that comprise schools that are not merely surviving but thriving (Gransberry, 2022; Hourani et al., 2021). When school climate is geared towards teacher-based initiatives and support while balancing the fulfillment of student achievement and development there is a cumulative effect balancing high expectations and prudent adjustments for the betterment of all stakeholders (Nguyen, 2021; Shehhi et al., 2021; Yadav & Lata, 2019).

Part of the difficulty within schools in maintaining a positive and uplifting culture resides in a lack of moderation or balance between holding teachers to a high standard so students can benefit in a multitude of ways with ensuring teachers' socioemotional and various professional needs are sufficiently fulfilled (Gransberry, 2022; Daniëls et al., 2020). Similarly, to students, teachers require explicit communication to succeed that articulates clear expectations and avoidable habits (Chen & Guo, 2020, Yadav & Lata, 2019; Haiyan & Walker, 2021). When a school's climate is one of tension, apprehensiveness, and isolation there is a lack comfortability

for both administrators to reiterate what is and isn't working from the administration's perspective regarding teacher's performance and teachers' understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses within the organization as a whole (Nguyen, 2021; Shehhi et al., 2021). The lines of communication and chain of command in a positive school climate are clearly defined, interconnected closely, and used as a means of mutual reciprocity and not punitively (Gransberry, 2022). Additionally, a school's inclusiveness derives from administrators allowing for teacher feedback and vice versa, is one of the most critical components in ensuring fairness, equity, and a collective vision being pursued where all stakeholders want what is best for both the group and individuals (Chen & Guo, 2020; Hourani et al., 2021).

High School Administration Characteristics

Not every school administration operates in the same manner collectively which can convolute the entire school's climate and in turn lead to complexities within the levels of perceived administrative support teachers feel (Vekeman et al., 2018; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). While there are several different leadership styles in an educational context that have provided fruitful results, there are several ambiguities regarding what set of administrative characteristics have the most profound impact on teachers feeling multifaceted support (Maas et al., 2021; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). The challenge for high school administrators often resides in not only supporting teachers' professional needs but finding the right ways to support those very same teachers personally (Baker et al., 2022; Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Consequently, such a balancing act is not the ideal form of supervising for every administrator due to differing personality traits, work preferences, and varying levels of pre-existing emotional intelligence (Chen & Guo, 2020, Haiyan & Walker, 2021; Lumpkin & Achen, 2018). The comparison must be made to the student and teacher relationship because it is strikingly similar. Just as students

need to have socioemotional needs met in order to even have a chance of academic success,
teachers must have consideration given to personal lives as well as professional responsibilities
(Leithwood et al., 2020; Maas et al., 2021; Wirawan et al., 2019). There cannot be a direct
disconnect between the two different environments because the reality remains both contexts
often affects the other. High school administrations that recognize this foundational need of
teachers are able to better execute both the official and unofficial duties within the role.
Additionally, some of the most influential administrative characteristics that comprise influential
school climates are those of teacher-first mentalities defined through empathy amid change
(Shehhi et al., 2021; Tai & Kareem, 2019). Within secondary education, there is seldom a
reprieve from new directives and initiatives being thrust upon teachers, whether the new
initiative involves pedagogical shifts, new instructional techniques, or curriculum adjustments
(De Nobile, 2018; Harris et al., 2019). This onslaught of constant change results in a sense of
instability, chaos, and even resentment. High school administrations that are empathetic of the
side effects of such change that come from both district and state entities are able to better
recognize and proactively prepare teachers to traverse through the uncertainty (Tai & Kareem,
2019).

Organizational Communication Culture

Evident in the most positive aspect of school culture is the manner in which
communication occurs (Morris et al., 2020; Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon &
Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). From the systems that function within a school, the procedures
in place, and the way employees from all organizational levels perceive the very nature of
communication matters (Morris et al., 2020; Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon &
Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). The reality is that not every school fosters a culture in which

communication is encouraged or even supported (Morris et al., 2020; Woods et al., 2018). Several schools refrain from open channels of communication due to a mindset predicated on a top-down approach where the administration oversees decision-making and teachers are viewed as the mechanisms to carry out such decisions (Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019). While some scholars contend that such a rigid and clearly defined structure can have momentary advantages, the vast majority of the literature leaves little doubt that participative decision-making, open communication, and consistent messaging among all organizational levels ensures multifaceted stakeholder fulfillment and a positive school climate (Morris et al., 2020; Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018).

A school's approach to communication necessitates that all levels, whether it is the administration or classroom teachers remain consistent (Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019). Consistency leads to the comfort of routines and within such comforting routines there are impactful conversations that occur even in the most trying of circumstances (Morris et al., 2020; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). A school that is only willing to talk about the positive occurrences or the glowing accomplishments of individuals or the collective group often fails to address in a meaningful and thoughtful manner the difficulties that arise when there are setbacks (Morris et al., 2020; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). In turn, silence can be detrimental to both morale, efficacy, and the trust between teachers and administrators (Morris et al., 2020; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). Proactive, consistent, and intentional communication regardless of the context in which the discussion occur ensures that empowerment is the driving force behind listening and implementing (Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019). Ultimately, involvement of all organizational members is the key to genuine inclusivity which signifies a school culture of

cohesion and cooperation (Morris et al., 2020; Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018).

When a school can carefully craft and cultivate a culture of communication there is a cyclical effect that results in colleagues further appreciating and understanding the various needs of one another (Morris et al., 2020; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). Consequently, interpersonal interactions become more authentic, engaging, and meaningful both in a professional and personal context which further contribute to the collective group's morale and organizational efficacy (Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). There is a dualistic effect to this as well that culminates the combination of increased communicative effectiveness among colleagues and opportunities for administrators to observe and take note of the individual communicative preferences each teacher possesses which increases the likelihood of the administrator-teacher relationship transcending the proverbial lines of power (Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018). Whether it is classroom teachers or administrators, all organizational levels are happier and fulfilled when communication reflects careful forethought in the interest of respect and minimizing unnecessary confusion (Morris et al., 2020; Schad, 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Woods et al., 2018).

Teacher Burnout

The phenomenon of teacher burnout has been an ongoing crisis within the educational field for decades. However, retaining high-quality teachers has become harder than ever due to a variety of contextual and environmental factors that have revealed common threads across all levels of school regardless of geographic location (Baker et al., 2022; Maas et al., 2021; Szempruch, 2018). While the daily challenges of being a secondary educator are inherent within

the profession, the demands being placed on teachers in recent years has drastically shifted from

content-centric to a holistic approach that continuously adds to the set of expectations and

considerations an educator must keep in mind while performing the prescribed duties of the role

(Tai & Kareem, 2019; Vekeman et al., 2018). Test scores and standardized testing are vital to

evaluating teacher performance but in addition to this long known tradition of judging a teacher's

effectiveness by test scores and student grades is the quality of classroom management, number

of referrals, frequency of parent-guardian communication, adaptability to weekly observations,

and attending to mental health issues that the vast majority of teenagers are enduring (Y., Zhang

et al., 2019; Viano et al., 2020; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Daniëls et al., 2020). When one

combines all of the daily responsibilities a teacher is tasked with, both the explicit and implicit,

teacher's responsibilities quickly add up to what feels like an insurmountable amount on the best

of days, let alone for the educators who do not feel supported, part of a positive school culture, or

letting the tangible realities of the job diminish the joy that was once felt (Frahm & Cianca,

2021; Nguyen, 2021).

In order to understand why so many educators, leave the profession within five years, one

must pinpoint the reasons why some educators choose to stay. Secondary teachers that are

inspired by administrators and believe in the school's mission maintain the drive and motivation

to withstand the array of challenges because it is ultimately worth enduring (Nguyen, 2021;

Viano et al., 2020). On the other hand, teachers who do not believe in administrators and who are

left unfulfilled succumb to the pressure and view the daily stressors as an unnecessarily

cumbersome burden (Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Szempruch, 2018). Likewise, teachers who view

administrators as ineffective communicators feel confused, stressed, and disheveled due to the

unnecessary chaos and pressure administrators cause (Baker et al., 2022; Crisci et al., 2019).

Lastly, teachers who deem the administration as inflexible begin to feel trapped in a cycle of rigid standards that are not reflective of the fluid reality that so often accompanies the daily reality of a secondary educator (Blaik et al., 2021; Daniëls et al., 2020).

Stress Overload

Whether a teacher feels there is a lack of time to get everything done, the combination of the prescribed and unofficial duties of a secondary educator are too much to effectively carry out, or that the daily grind as a whole does not justify the psychological and mental side effects, stress is the one commonality that cripples educators and pushes them to the breaking point (Baker et al., 2022; Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Maas et al., 2021; Y., Zhang et al., 2019). Secondary teachers that reach the point of no return regarding the mindset and unwillingness to stay within the profession are not only feeling stressed but are often not feeling supported by administrators (Y., Zhang et al., 2019). The same intentional effort to ensure that students' emotional and social needs are being met needs to be duplicated for the very same teachers tasked with providing students with an education (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Daniëls et al., 2020). High school educators in particular are depleted of emotional energy for the sake of students resulting in little to non-existent emotionality remaining for the responsibilities being thrust upon teachers (Nguyen, 2021; Szempruch, 2018; Y., Zhang et al., 2019). When this vicious cycle of emotional exhaustion is combined with a lack of perceived support from administrators there is a cumulative effect of despair, disgust, and isolation. (Maas et al., 2021; Vekeman et al., 2018). Ultimately, teachers need to feel supported emotionally by administrators so that the unavoidable stress and exhaustion doesn't necessarily go away but becomes bearable because teachers know someone in a position of authority care for educator wellbeing (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). The snowball effect of stress overload and emotionally exhausted

teachers gives credence for the need for high school administrators to exhibit, develop, and refine

the various emotional intelligence skills needed to alleviate the downward trend of teacher

burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion

One cannot grasp the full extent of teacher burnout without mentioning the impact of

emotional exhaustion on this rapidly increasing trend within secondary education (Baeriswyl et

al., 2021, Cui, 2022; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et

al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019). Due to the daily demands of classroom teachers that are both

explicitly and implicitly prescribed the very nature of teaching has transcended into a

multifaceted role that seldom has boundaries or clearly defined measures in place for self-care

(Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023). Emotional exhaustion is a physical

and mental manifestation that derives from an individual exercising every ounce of emotional

energy within possession for the sakes of others' betterment to the point that the individual no

longer has any left to take care of personal emotional needs (Ford et al., 2019; Shackleton et al.,

2019; Taxer et al., 2019). The very nature of teaching in the modern landscape requires that

educators are not merely regurgitating miscellaneous content related information but tending to

the socioemotional needs of students while maintaining high levels of student achievement,

consistent communication with parents, keeping administrators appeased amid weekly

observations, and finding the time to take professional development towards re-licensure (Cui,

2022; Lee et al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019). The array of such responsibilities gives credence to a

wide range of feelings including but not limited to frustration, hopelessness, isolation, and

resentment (Baeriswyl et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2019). Those unpleasant feelings over time fester

and lead teachers to feel emotional exhaustion to the point that previously held instructional

standards, quality lessons plans, and motivation to inspire students drastically plummets (Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019). Emotionally intelligent teachers though are better prepared to combat the adverse side effects of emotional exhaustion due in large part to an individual's proclivity for self-regulation and self-awareness (Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019). Having the awareness to proactively identify one's feelings and not let oneself become the victim to negative emotions is the key difference between teachers that can cope and overcome the emotional exhaustion versus those teachers that are unable to remain aware and regulate the onslaught of burnout symptoms (Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019). While the presence of negative emotions are a forgone conclusion for all teachers at one point or another due to the increased workload and expectations being placed on teachers, the ability to recognize the presence of such emotions is the first step towards gaining control against the wrath of emotional exhaustion which continuously is contributing to the ongoing trend of teacher burnout within secondary education (Baeriswyl et al., 2021, Cui, 2022; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019).

It is important to note the specific factors that influence the severity of teacher burnout regarding emotional exhaustion (Cui, 2022; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019). One must keep in mind that it is seldom one source for emotional exhaustion but rather a culmination of consistently negative experiences that over the course of time result in a breaking point for teachers (Baeriswyl et al., 2021, Cui, 2022; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019). Whether it is student misbehavior, multifaceted tension with parents, excessive workload, or poor relationships with administrators, the combination of such tainted experiences creates a habitual bitterness that not even the most

qualified of teachers can remain sufficiently satisfied (Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Shackleton et al., 2019). While these challenges are common across secondary education for classroom teachers, one of the biggest differences between teachers that can withstand and overcome the emotional exhaustion versus those that choose to switch schools or leave the profession entirely is the perceived level of support from administration (Baeriswyl et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023). Just knowing that one's direct supervisor has the professional interest of the teacher at heart lessens the burden of emotional exhaustion (Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Taxer et al., 2019). Eradication of such unpleasant feelings takes time, but to help expedite that process is having an assistant principal who can empathize and take into consideration the variety of factors working against a classroom teacher (Baeriswyl et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Taxer et al., 2019).

Summary

Although emotional intelligence has been regarded as an integral part of effective leadership, the extent to which emotional intelligence positively influences the duties of secondary administrators is relatively non-existent as emotional intelligence pertains to perceived support of classroom teachers and the reduction of teacher burnout (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Welch & Hodge, 2018). There are ample instances of scholarly attention to emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence's prevalence within leadership theory, yet there is not a consistent body of work to narrow down the specific ways in which emotional intelligence influences, if at all, the support-oriented duties of high school administrators (Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019). When an individual possesses enough self-awareness of their own thoughts and feelings the consistency with which that individual can self-regulate exponentially increases the likelihood that the quality of their interactions, routines, and manner

in which they conduct their work will significantly benefit (Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2000). With this understanding of the cyclical effect of the emotional intelligence competencies it is critical to identify the extent to which, if any, an administrator's emotional intelligence influences classroom teachers' perception of administrative support (Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2000; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Hourani et al., 2021). The combination of self-awareness and self-management could potentially heighten the quality and impact of an administrator's social awareness when delegating, evaluating, and collaborating with classroom teachers (Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2000; Gómez-Leal et al., 2022; Hourani et al., 2021).

It is imperative to prioritize the most critical responsibilities that secondary administrators are tasked with to help establish what factors lead to effective school leadership (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020). Despite the abundance of scholarly research on emotional intelligence and the impact emotional intelligence has on effective leadership, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the tangible and specific ways in which the role of emotional intelligence impacts high school administrator's perceived support of classroom teachers (De Nobile, 2018; Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). In particular, the proposed study would explore the role of emotional intelligence in high school administrator's perceived support of classroom teachers in influencing classroom observations, providing feedback, and mitigating the effects of teacher burnout. Understanding the role of emotional intelligence within this educational context regarding the responsibilities mentioned above of high school administrators could potentially not only address the educational field's systemic problem of ineffective school leadership but help to alleviate the continued phenomenon of teacher burnout by cultivating supportive habits for high school administrators to use in daily attempts to alleviate the challenges classroom teachers are enduring. Whether it is a school's culture and the

general climate in which systems and procedures operate, or the dualistic nature of stress

overload and emotional exhaustion teachers face as a result of burnout, the underlying factors of

teacher job satisfaction and supportive school leadership need to be further examined (Baeriswyl

et al., 2021; Markkanen et al., 2020; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Thornton et al., 2019). The

systemic issues plaguing secondary education while complex and deeply engrained, are not

deterring all teachers which further reiterates the questions as to why some are able to withstand

or tolerate the demands of a high school classroom teacher as opposed to those that succumb to

the pitfalls of the profession (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Hitt & Player,

2019; Markkanen et al., 2020; Rincon-Gallardo, 2020; Thornton et al., 2019). Ultimately,

pinpointing specific aspects of a school's climate such as organizational communication culture

and administrative characteristics could be pivotal in comprehending the ways it affects teacher

job satisfaction and burnout (Cui, 2022; Ford et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Morris et al., 2020;

Nyamugoro et al., 2023; Schad, 2019; Shackleton et al., 2019; Sullanmaa et al., 2019;

Tampubolon & Harati, 2019; Taxer et al., 2019; Woods et al., 2018).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover the influence of high school administrators' emotional intelligence on classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware. The rationale was provided for the study's research method as qualitative, as well as justification for why a phenomenological study was the most suitable research design. The study used a transcendental research design type, ensuring that each classroom teacher that served as a participant in the study was made well aware of the researcher's biases and preconceived notions regarding the array of high school administrators' support-centric duties. The chapter explains the study's site, participants' demographics, and the researcher's positionality, accompanied by various philosophical assumptions. A detailed breakdown of the methodological procedures is also included to ensure the study was transferable and transparent. The shared experiences of classroom teachers' perception of administrator support served as the basis from which data was produced focused on ensuring each participant's experiences were analyzed into thematic elements amid data synthesis after individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts served as the data collection methods geared towards securing triangulation. Lastly, the author provided specific reasons as to the trustworthiness of the study as well as various ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study explored the role of high school administrators' emotional intelligence and the influence it has on classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support. The study's perception component necessitated that it was conducted in adherence to qualitative standards

due to its reflective nature (Patton, 2014). Qualitative studies are also predicated on why a

phenomenon occurs (Patton, 2014). In this instance, the study had to be qualitative because it

was focused on ensuring that data was produced by vividly describing and capturing the shared

experiences of classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support (van Manen, 2016).

     A phenomenological approach was the most appropriate research design for this study

since it was concerned with describing what classroom teachers perceived and felt regarding

administrative support (van Manen, 2016). The participants had a unique sense of the

phenomenon occurring, and as a result, data could only be construed by what classroom teachers

were willing to share regarding each facet of participants' shared experiences with administrators

(Moustakas, 1994). Following participants' sharing of the lived experience, the author began to

provide an unbiased and objective description of the raw data (Patton, 2014). Phenomenology is

based on the foundational premise that meaning can only be made when it is discovered through

others' retelling of what classroom teachers have endured which was directly aligned with the

research design of the study (Moustakas, 1994). A transcendental phenomenological approach

was the most appropriate research design due to the nature of the phenomenon being investigated

as well as the author's own proximity to the research topic (Moustakas, 1994). The author's own

perspectives and interpretations regarding administrator support, administrator's emotional

intelligence, and the potential relationship between the two were not the focal point, but rather

qualitatively and phenomenologically striving to convey what high school classroom teachers

constituted as support and the extent to which, if any based on individual experiences, had

classroom teachers felt more supported due to an administrator's emotional intelligence

(Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, the qualitative study used a transcendental phenomenological

approach through bracketing and epoché in an attempt to explicitly identify all biases of the

author in relation to classroom observations, feedback, and the effects of teacher burnout as all three directly to an administrator's main supportive responsibilities with teachers (Moustakas, 1994).

The transcendental phenomenological approach necessitated that it was about participants' experiences and from that raw data meaning was made rather than incorporating personal opinions of the author to assist in interpretations and meaning making (Moustakas, 1994). Prior to data collection, the foundational process of epoché occurred first in order to proactively identify and communicate any preconceived notions or varying perceptions regarding the research topic of the study (Husserl, 1967). Additionally, epoché was essential to a valid and reliable transcendental phenomenological study because it provided an opportunity to establish trust and rapport with participants (Schmitt, 1967). The participants needed to know the judgments that the author carried with them as a researcher so that the author could listen to their beliefs and knowledge of the phenomena being studied with an open-mindedness focused on their understanding of the shared experience (van Kaam, 1966). Following epoché, transcendental-phenomenological reduction occurred which involved the researcher capturing every element of the shared experience so the researcher could produce a textual description that embodied what the participants had endured rather than merely interpreting what seemed to be happening (Moustakas, 1994). This included but was not limited to what participants' shared experience felt like, looked like, and even sounded like (Moustakas, 1994). After the transcendental-phenomenological reduction was the imaginative variation which consisted of identifying and comprehending the structural essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). It was the researcher's job to thrust themselves into the imaginative variation so the researcher could offer insight into the various feasible possibilities under the realm of the central research

question (Moustakas, 1994). The structural description that derived from that articulated what caused the varying conditions of the phenomenon and how the multitude of experiences were related to it (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What influence does the emotional intelligence of high school administrators have on classroom teachers' perceptions of the administrator's support?

Sub-Question One

How do high school classroom teachers describe administrator's support?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of high school classroom teachers who perceive administrators as supportive?

Sub-Question Three

How do high school administrators' emotions and feelings influence classroom teachers' perception of the quality of interactions?

Setting and Participants

The site within the study was a public high school that possessed an organizational structure in which there was one principal in sole charge of the school who oversaw three assistant principals that comprised the overall administration. Each assistant principal was responsible for supervising specific subject areas and the classroom teachers of that subject area which consisted of conducting classroom observations, providing feedback, and providing additional multifaceted forms of support. However, the role of a high school administrator's

emotional intelligence in classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support remained to be seen. The classroom teachers made up the participants in the study. The criterion for participant selection was determined by administering a voluntary survey via email. Classroom teachers were included from different subject areas to ensure that multiple perspectives were given a voice and credence to the role of high school administrators' emotional intelligence and the influence it had on classroom teachers' perception of administrator's support. Randomization of participant selection for the study was determined by the professional proximity and any external contexts in which the author of the study and potential participants had similar or closely associated affiliations minimized bias and subconscious pressure for volunteering in the study.

Site

The study occurred at a high school in a public school district in northern Delaware. The high school's administration consisted of one principal and three assistant principals. The high school is situated within a public school district that has three public high schools and is governed by a school board. The high school had 58 classroom teachers with three or more years of experience for the 2023-24 school year. The chosen public high school had roughly 1,107 students this school year. This high school was chosen as the site for this study due to its reputation for retaining teachers since the school's inception four years ago. The rationale for choosing this site for the study was that despite the abundance of fiscal, resource, and personnel challenges the district was experiencing the high school chosen for the study had a 93.7% retention rate for classroom teachers which warranted an in-depth examination as to which environmental and contextual factors within the school had kept classroom teachers from leaving the school or profession entirely.

Participants

Participants in this study were high school classroom teachers with more than three years of experience as teachers. Teachers who fit this criterion were chosen since novice teachers garner even more stringent observation protocols and may not understand how the administrator-teacher relationship fully works. Teachers with three or more years of experience have achieved professional status indicating from the perspective of the Delaware Department of Education are no longer inexperienced and therefore tenured. Tenured teachers typically have a deeper understanding of what encompasses the accountability measures for teachers and the various responsibilities the administrator has. It was imperative that classroom teachers were participants in the study rather than teacher aides or paraprofessionals because the standards and rigor of the accountability measures are often vastly different with more emphasis and attention being placed on what are referred to as lead instructors or special-education co-teachers. The classroom teachers ranged from 25 – 65 years of age. All participants were randomly selected based on participation in a voluntary survey that was sent via email. The author determined from the responses to the voluntary survey which potential participants knew the author outside of a professional context and a result could potentially feel added pressure or bias. From there, participants were randomly selected after the initial filtering had occurred to ensure fairness and objectivity. There were contexts in which such participants and the author of the study may potentially have had similar affiliations outside of the professional environment in which both parties were situated including but not limited to attendance within the same church, participation in the same recreational leagues, and/or children attending the same daycare. It was imperative to avoid the potential for additional bias from potential participants who felt subconscious pressure or added layers of loyalty to participate in the study due to the relationship

or interconnectedness with the author outside of the professional context. The participants'

ethnicities included but were not limited to white, African American, Asian American, Hispanic,

and/or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. There were at least four different subject areas

represented from classroom teachers within the high school and a total number of ten

participants, which allowed for the identification of data saturation, data variability, and

thoroughness of the phenomenon investigation (Guest et al., 2006). Ten participants not only

ensured triangulation of the data but allowed for the author of the study to avoid having too few

participants and therefore limited data to analyze yet did not have an excessive amount of

participants which diminished the likelihood of errors and flaws within the data analysis due to

excessive quantity to take on individually as a researcher.

Researcher Positionality

The transcendental phenomenological study had one public high school as the site and a

total of ten classroom teachers as participants, with at least four different subject areas included.

I am employed by the state of Delaware and work specifically at this high school for the study's

site. It is important to note that since I am legally and contractually a general education teacher

certified in English Language Arts, I was not in a position of authority over the participants in

this study. I was neither a department chair nor served in any supervisory role concerning the

participants in the study. The author did not utilize this high school or school district to further

their administrative advancement nor worked towards a terminal degree to then enter into an

administrative position within the district. While there was the possibility that other English

classroom teachers were to become participants in the study, my relationship with my fellow

English department members was professional. It did not constitute what would be considered a

friendship or nature comprised of either implicit or explicit bias. Given the qualitative nature of

the study, I recognized that my role as the human instrument in the study increased the delicacy and need for ethicality in the study's tangible execution. The fact that I am a classroom teacher gave credence to my role as emic, which allowed for a higher level of understanding and familiarity to empathize with what my participants had experienced regarding the perceptions of administrator support (Punch, 1998). Despite my insider perspective, I conducted a thorough epoché to critically and authentically capture the essence of the phenomenon my participants experienced to ensure that the set of contextual and environmental factors that were contributing to such a high retention rate among classroom teachers within the study's high school (Punch, 1998).

My interpretative framework as a researcher was that of constructivism. Learning has most often occurred within the context of my life when I was able to reflect on my various experiences. I have found over the course of several years of teaching that connection before content is a foundational premise from which students truly learn and can have an increased chance of retaining the information they receive (Knapp, 2019). Embedded in my pedagogical practice is the notion that students lead diverse lives and have many experiences impacting their worldview and understanding of how the world works. Whether I am a teacher, learner, or in this instance, a researcher, constructivism guided my qualitative study due to the firm belief that it was my responsibility to interpret and discover meaning through the experiences and backgrounds of others in this world in hopes of providing insight regarding a shared phenomenon (Knapp, 2019). In the end, I wanted to hear what others had to say so I could learn more about what they had gone through.

Philosophical Assumptions

My Godly worldview is grounded on some of the main principles that are found throughout the Bible, including but not limited to integrity, honor, humility, and accountability. Without God, I cannot even have the opportunity to make sense of my research, let alone be blessed with the privilege of interacting with others who are God's creations (Guthrie, 2019). While there is knowledge to be discovered and information that the world needs to know, it requires scrupulous levels of ethicality that remain forthright and consistent (Guthrie, 2019). As stated in Proverbs 11: 3 (NIV), "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them," we are reminded of the eternal significance of holding ourselves to a higher standard and understanding the responsibility we have to uphold the gift of life we have been given.

Ontological Assumption

My ontological assumption is that reality is different for everyone because one's reality is constructed based on personal experiences. Embedded into this ontological assumption is the foundational premise that in addition to one's life experiences shaping their reality, one must consider one's social interactions and the dynamics that comprise one's various relationships (Zembylas, 2017). This dualistic effect of one's interactions with people and their life experiences culminates to create an individual's reality that is unique to them or potentially very similar to others. My ontological position as a researcher was that meaning is derived from social interactions and experiences. Some issues and problems are not quantifiable or measurable in the traditional sense, but rather complex experiences based on what is happening to a particular person or group of people (Zembylas, 2017). It is through such an experience or event that meaning is given credence. Consequently, it was the researcher's job to articulate what other people had endured as vividly as possible to accurately share their lived experience of a

phenomenon so the world could understand their reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ultimately, a researcher must closely examine the processes individuals go through and delve into the experiences they endure to learn meaning rather than going into things with preconceived notions about what constitutes valuable information worthy of transmitting (Zembylas, 2017).

Epistemological Assumption

My epistemological assumption is that people create knowledge, and that true learning can only occur when people are active participants in the process of information absorption (Dorota, 2020). Knowledge is justifiable when it derives from one's personal experience or encounters with others in varying degrees of interaction. Based on one's experiences and interactions, a personal reflection and interpretation of such experiences ensues, which develops their personal view or perspective (Dorota, 2020). As a result of this knowledge construction process, people are equipped with active and personal knowledge that is not generalized. Likewise, within this same notion, people's views or knowledge is highly susceptible to change due to the constantly evolving nature of one's interactions or experiences (Dorota, 2020). My epistemological position as a researcher was that knowledge could only be created by immersing oneself in the thorough collection of data and extensively gathering multiple forms of data to ensure that an individual or group of people's experiences could be accurately described (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A researcher's epistemological responsibility is to ensure that people's interactions and experiences are broken down scrupulously so that their knowledge of a phenomenon is shared with the intent that they can be empowered and properly acknowledged by spending significant time with them (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Axiological Assumption

My axiological assumption is that an individual's values are influenced by their personal experiences and what they have gone through. As a Christian and white male from a middle-class family, I have been afforded certain privileges that others have not due to various reasons. Additionally, due to my faith and relationship with God, I deem certain qualities within individuals to be unflattering and shameful, such as a lack of integrity, faithfulness, honor, and self-respect. Due to my religious upbringing and how my parents raised me, I will readily admit that I struggle to accept those who are full of hate and ignorance. However, as a Christian and from a Biblical worldview, I recognize forgiveness's inherent and eternal value. As it states in Matthew 6:15 (NIV), "But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," a prudent lesson is provided in the need for constant humility in judging others and being honest with our shortcomings. Additionally, due to my inclination to the social constructivist paradigm as an educator, learner, and researcher, I had to recognize that my explicit and implicit biases could impact my research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I did everything within my power to mitigate these by constantly being forthright and upfront about the value-laden nature of research and identifying the contextual factors of my study so I could better "position myself" to conduct a valid and reliable qualitative study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21). In the end, the key was to ensure that my interpretation of my participants' experiences was done authentically and genuinely and honored their voice and experience of the phenomenon in hopes of ultimately empowering them (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher's Role

I have always believed that it is important for an individual to interpret or, at the very least, attempt to make sense of the complexities and varying outcomes that accompany one's personal experiences. As a lifelong learner, my understanding of the world in which I live has

been shaped and evolved based on what I have endured or encountered, whether personally or professionally. Similarly, I have found it imperative to take this framework and lens with which I view the world into my role as a secondary educator. Social constructivism was the research paradigm that guided the study to act on the foundational belief and premise that people acquire multifaceted knowledge from varying degrees of interactions and experiences with others (Knapp, 2019).

Procedures

The procedures section contains a breakdown of the permissions that were necessary for the study to take place as well as the sequential order in which specific permissions were granted prior to data collection. The recruitment plan is detailed stating how participants for the study were chosen and communicated with prior to the study's launch.

Permissions

Before submitting my Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, I directly contacted the human resources (HR) department of the proposed study's public school district to get in touch directly with the superintendent as well as the board of education to obtain approval to conduct the study due to its employees being proposed as participants as well as one of its high schools being used to conduct the individual interview and focus group sessions as the study's site. Once the approval was officially on record, I submitted my Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. After I received IRB approval for my study, I then proceeded to begin communicating with the high school's principal to communicate the purpose of the study. After that IRB approval was obtained, I then needed to obtain IRB approval from the school district before I could officially communicate and meet with the high school's assistant principals and

department chairs to further explain the study's purpose and address any questions or concerns before the study occurred.

Recruitment Plan

The transcendental phenomenological study sought to explore the role of high school administrators' emotional intelligence in classroom teachers' perception of administrator support. There was a sample pool for the high school of 58 classroom teachers with three or more years of experience. The sample size for the study was ten classroom teachers to provide enough data yet not too overwhelming in quantity (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The decision to focus exclusively on high school classroom teachers was to narrow the focus of the study to capture the essence of the phenomenon being investigated at a specific level within secondary education so that the participants shared experience could provide tangible and detailed insight (Moustakas, 1994). Purposive sampling was used, specifically criterion sampling, because all participants in the study had experienced the same phenomenon of perceiving various experiences regarding administrator support (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposive sampling was appropriate for the study because I had decided which specific site to utilize for the study, which specific participants were needed to produce rich and meaningful data regarding the phenomenon in question, and the exact number of participants that led to a rigorous and thoroughly implemented phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Criterion sampling, in this instance, was used to ensure that there was quality assurance in the study by initially seeking participants via classroom teachers' work emails (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

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Data Collection Plan

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The three data sources for the qualitative study were interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts. The study implemented a transcendental phenomenological approach which

was predominantly concerned with authentically articulating the elements that comprised a phenomenon to determine essences and meanings (Moustakas, 1994). It is important to note that no data collection occurred until I received IRB approval from Liberty University and the school district's IRB approval before obtaining data from the participants at the public high school site. The foundational epoché process occurred first in order to proactively identify and communicate any preconceived notions or varying biases regarding the research topic of my study (Husserl, 1967). Additionally, epoché was essential to ensure this was a valid and reliable transcendental phenomenological study because it provided an opportunity to establish trust and rapport with participants (Schmitt, 1967). My participants needed to know what judgments I carried with me as a researcher so I could, in turn, listen to their beliefs and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied with an open-mindedness focused on their understanding of the shared experience (van Kaam, 1966). The data collection strategies occurred in the order of interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts based on each data collection method's ability to assist in triangulating the data as well as increasing the chances of participants' authentic perspectives of the phenomenon being told (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990, 2014).

Individual Interviews Data Collection Approach

According to Patton (1990), individual interviews allow a researcher and participants to engage in a more personal and private conversation that often gives credence to authentic answers necessary to fully understand the lived experience of those individuals within the phenomenon. Additionally, interviews that are comprised of open-ended questions allow for the researcher to acquire richer responses and meaningful answers that encourage participants to reflect critically and thoughtfully on what they have experienced in a way that closed-ended questions cannot accomplish (Patton, 2014). Each interview question directly related to the

central research question exploring the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence in classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support. It is important to note that before delving into these individual interviews, trust and rapport was established through epoché and a grand tour question. According to Marshall and Rossman (2015), a researcher must utilize a grand tour question to ensure that their participants understand the varying dynamics of the interview questions that will follow as well as the overall tone for how the interviews will be conducted.

All the semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in one way with a secondary option in place as a backup plan. The ideal first option was on-site at the high school in an empty classroom or empty office room. The interviews were recorded on my laptop, which was password-protected using Otter.ai, an artificial intelligence platform that records voice meeting notes. There were no schedule or time constraints, so Zoom interviews were not necessary. However, this was a secondary option in order to maintain the face-to-face dynamic, which was essential in transcribing what was said and conveyed through facial expressions, posture, and other forms of body language. The second option for conducting individual interviews would also demonstrate additional respect for my participants' time by accommodating schedules conveniently. The semi-structured personal interviews consisted of 13 questions, with a breakdown of one for the central research question and four for each of the three sub-questions. Each interview's duration lasted no longer than one hour out of respect for my participants' time and the reality that each interview took considerable time to transcribe and reflect upon following it. Lastly, it was essential to note that, if needed, depending on the quality of the responses regarding their level of brevity, vagueness, or relevancy, the second round of semi-structured interviews would've been conducted with revised open-ended questions.

Ultimately, the goal was for every participant to feel confident, calm, and comfortable enough to give honest answers and accounts of their story about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Table 1

Individual Interview Questions

1. Hello. How are you today? Thanks for agreeing to this interview. We are discussing how supportive you perceive your administrator to be and the role emotional intelligence plays in this. Describe your relationship with your assistant principal regarding how they make you feel as a classroom teacher. CRQ

2. Describe the challenges you face as a classroom teacher responsible for core content at the high school level. SQ1

3. Describe a time when a lesson didn't go well during a classroom observation. How did your administrator handle the situation? Consider the feedback they provided, how they communicated with you, and how they made you feel. SQ1

4. Talk about a time when you did not feel supported by your administrator. Consider specific lessons, behavioral issues with students, parent concerns, ineffective means of providing feedback, and/or irrelevant professional development training. SQ1

5. Describe how much you trust your administrator when it comes to sharing your struggles as a core content teacher, your professional development needs, and concerns over curriculum choices. SQ1

6. Describe a time when your administrator "had your back." What did they do to make you feel supported? SQ2

7. Talk about a time when you felt your administrator empowered you to become a better educator. SQ2

8. Describe the frequency and nature of your interactions with your administrator that you perceive to be *positive.* SQ2

9. Considering the challenges, you face as a core content teacher at the high school level. What are the ways your administrator helps you to overcome some of these challenges? SQ2

10. Describe a time when your administrator was visibly upset or frustrated and how it affected your interaction with them. SQ3

11. Describe how your administrator handles unexpected situations or when things don't go accordingly. SQ3

12. Considering your experiences with your administrator, how would you describe their level of professionalism? Provide a specific example to support your perception of their professionalism. SQ3

13. Describe how you feel about interacting with your administrator. How do the vast majority of these interactions make you feel? Please explain why. SQ3

  The interview questions were included in the interview protocol due to their direct relationship to the study's problem and purpose statements. Each individual research question derived from either the central research question of the study or one of the three sub-questions. The interconnectedness of each individual interview question stemmed from the essential concepts within the empirical literature as well as the theoretical framework as the foundation for the study. The culmination of these individual interview questions intended to acquire rich data produced by classroom teachers which shared the various experiences with administrators in order to capture the essence of what affected perceptions of administrator support and the extent to which, if any, administrator's emotional intelligence had on those perceptions.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

After the interviews were transcribed, I performed an initial round of inductive coding, specifically open coding, which was concerned with breaking down participants' responses into a label or subcategory that was more manageable and concise (Saldaña, 2016). These codes were not overly specific nor too detailed but served as a starting point that was subject to change as I coded in additional rounds. These initial open codes were determined based on the raw data from each participant (Saldaña, 2016). After the initial round of open coding, I used in vivo coding because it focused exclusively on using participants' own words and leaving out any of my interpretations as a researcher (Saldaña, 2016). Since the study followed a transcendental phenomenological approach, it was a relevant and appropriate form of coding that allowed for every participant's response's intended and original meaning to stay intact (Moustakas, 1994). In short, I wanted to be as close to the data as possible and hands-on with my data analysis, so I printed off every interview transcript and went through line by line with various colored highlights to markup and code the data so I could successfully move onto the next round of coding which was concerned with thematic analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Within this coding round, I identified patterns or repetitive aspects of the data based on similarities, differences, and/or frequencies (Saldaña, 2016).

The fourth step within the data analysis consisted of clustering the codes from the first three rounds of coding into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Themes comprise "broad units of info that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 328). After the themes were established, both a textural and a structural description were created which encapsulated the experiences shared by participants (Moustakas, 1994). The descriptions aimed described the "what," and the structural description described the "how" of the

phenomenon participants shared (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, a cumulative description of my participants' experiences with the investigated phenomenon was composed to encapsulate the essence of what they went through that reflected the entire group (Moustakas, 1994).

Focus Groups Data Collection Approach

Following the individual interviews, focus groups allowed teachers to interact with fellow teachers and me to increase their willingness to engage further and share their stories. The focus groups consisted of classroom teachers with at least four different departments or content areas represented which maximized the benefits of a heterogenous group which signified different viewpoints and perspectives based on that teacher's experience with their administrator in their subject area. The goal was to provide an opportunity to increase the chances of a diverse set of responses regarding the phenomenon being examined. Additionally, with ten participants in the study, there were two focus groups, each consisting of an even number of classroom teachers who were responsible for various subject areas. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), focus groups can be advantageous within transcendental phenomenological studies because they allow data triangulation and increase the variety of evidence sources. Additionally, focus groups saved time in the research and eliminated the logistical challenges of scheduling individual follow-up interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

While I was aware the focus-group questions would follow a similar approach as the individual semi-structured open-ended interview questions, there was a concerted effort on my part to avoid sounding repetitive or simply rephrasing previously used questions to ensure that new and rich data was produced in a different manner (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I asked only five broad questions that served as a conversation starting point more than anything else that revolved around the central research question. Besides attentively listening to my participants' responses,

my primary role was facilitating the discussion and ensuring that the group remained on task for the time spent together.

The focus groups were utilized after the individual interviews because I wanted to hear what people had to say on their own before each participant heard what others had to say. I wanted to mitigate the risk of a lack of representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In short, it helped enrich the data by reviewing what the participants said on their own first and how the focus group experience influenced their responses, whether they remained the same, completely changed, or were expanded further. Lastly, the first option for conducting the focus group data collection portion was on-site at the high school. These interviews were recorded on my laptop, which was password-protected using Otter.ai, an artificial intelligence platform that records voice meeting notes. There were no schedule or time constraints. However, Zoom interviews were provided as a secondary option in order to maintain the face-to-face dynamic, which is essential in transcribing what is said and conveyed through facial expressions, posture, and other forms of body language.

Table 2

Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe your administrator's personality? What specific characteristics, qualities, and traits come to mind? SQ3

2. What do you like best about your administrator? Explain what they do well. SQ2

3. What do you feel your administrator struggles within their role? Explain the challenges you perceive them as having. SQ1

4. Suppose you had an opportunity to provide feedback to your administrator. What would you say or tell them? CRQ

5. What can your administrator do to make you feel more supported? SQ1

6. Given what you know about emotional intelligence, what specific components do you feel your administrator is best at exemplifying consistently with you? CRQ

7. Given what you know about emotional intelligence, what specific components do you feel your administrator could use additional training or to better support you? CRQ

The focus group questions served as a continuation of the individual interview questions. While there were similarities between the focus group questions and individual interview questions, the biggest difference within the focus group questions was that they tended to focus on inquiring as to what classroom teachers felt and thought of regarding the human elements that comprised their administrator. Meaning, each administrator possessed unique strengths and weaknesses, as well as diverse backgrounds and an innate set of personality traits that gave them a wide array of skills and tendencies that directly affected the type of support, they were able to provide. The focus group questions extended even deeper into examining the study's problem and purpose statements which offered insight into the shared experiences within the phenomenon. Lastly, it was important to note that focus groups questions allowed for the researcher to assess the extent to which, if any, participants' various answers changed or evolved in comparison to the individual interview question responses which served as another form of triangulation.

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Each focus group session was transcribed verbatim to acquire a more extensive and accurate form of raw data from each participant. Focus groups were in-person, face-to-face because participants' schedules allowed for it. Zoom was presented as an alternative. I recorded each focus group with not only my cell phone but also Otter.ai, which is an artificial intelligence

transcription service. I used this third-party software due to its efficiency and the fact that it was free to use. However, no transcription service is ever one hundred percent accurate, so I recorded the focus group simultaneously with my cell phone to check for accuracy. I went through the transcription produced by Otter.ai line by line while playing the audio recording from my cell phone which ensured both aligned with the content from the participant's responses.

Since there were two focus groups of classroom teachers from the high school within the study, a constant comparison analysis was utilized to analyze the focus group data appropriately and thoroughly (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first stage within the constant comparison analysis consisted of open coding, in which I did a breakdown of the focus groups' responses into smaller pieces of information by labeling them with relevant descriptors (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The second stage of the content comparison analysis consisted of axial coding, in which I took the data and initial codes chunked based on descriptions and placed them into more specific sub-categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The third and final stage of the content comparison analysis focused on selective coding, which expanded upon the sub-categories and established a set of themes from the data produced by the three focus groups (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Focus group data analysis benefitted from this specific approach because it allowed me to consider the extent of saturation within each focus group and across all groups collectively (Strauss & Corbin). Each focus group had its data analyzed one at a time following the procedures mentioned above. After each set of focus group data was analyzed following the three stages, it allowed for an examination of any emergent themes that were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Journal Prompts Data Collection Approach

Lastly, journal prompts were used as the final data collection method due to their connectedness regarding the initial individual interviews and expanded upon the focus groups.

Additionally, journal prompts provided a reflective and meaningful opportunity for participants to reflect not only on their previous individual responses within the interviews but the conversations and interactions among their focus group members as they answered journal prompts that allowed for synthesis of their knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), it is essential to be cognizant of participants' time and the business of their lives when creating such prompts. Therefore, I was mindful and intentional in providing journal prompts that took no more than fifteen minutes to answer fully. Lastly, based on the recommendation and guidance of Creswell and Poth (2018), I kept the number of journal prompts to four, which provided enough new data that was manageable and respectful of their time. I didn't want to use journaling because it would have been time-consuming and far too demanding to ask my participants.

Each journal prompt was specific and corresponded to the central research question and each of the three sub-questions. Making the journal prompt questions direct, specific, and related to one another allowed my participants to express themselves in a different medium and new manner that led to breakthroughs and refined conclusions regarding their thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon being investigated. Lastly, the first option for completing these journal prompts was digital via Google Docs, in which each participant had a private link for each prompt. Participants were provided with the option of Microsoft Word or even handwritten journal prompts responses as an alternative but no participants chose either of those options.

Table 3

Journal Prompt Questions

1. Reflect on the quality of your relationship with your administrator. Describe both positive and negative experiences you have had with them and their effect on your performance as a classroom teacher.

2. Reflect on the dualistic nature of the relationship between you and your administrator. What are the things you do well? What things do you need to improve on? Describe your administrator's role and influence on your strengths and weaknesses as a high school educator.

3. Consider your specific content area. What are the challenges that are unique to your subject? How does your administrator address those subject-specific challenges you encounter?

4. Reflect on how emotionally intelligent you perceive your administrator to be. How do they respond to your varying emotions and feelings? Likewise, share how your administrator handles their emotions and feelings. What role do both respective party's emotions and feelings play in the overall professional relationship?

The journal prompt questions allowed for each participant to take the necessary time to reflect on a deeper level about the wide variety of thoughts and feelings they had experienced regarding the study's phenomenon. Additionally, each journal prompt question directly related to the central research question and sub-questions. The cyclical effect of the journal prompt questions was based on the connection to the study's problem and purpose statements as well. By asking participants the journal prompt questions it ensured that triangulation within the data collection methods was fulfilled.

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

After the journal prompts were completed, I performed an initial round of inductive coding, specifically open coding, which was concerned with breaking down participants' responses into a label or subcategory that was more manageable and concise (Saldaña, 2016). These codes were not overly specific nor too detailed but served as a starting point that was subject to change as I coded in additional rounds. These initial open codes were determined based on the raw data from each participant (Saldaña, 2016). After the initial round of open coding, I used in vivo coding because it focused exclusively on using participants' own words and leaving out any of my interpretations as a researcher (Saldaña, 2016). Since the study followed a transcendental phenomenological approach, this was a relevant and appropriate form of coding that allowed for every participant's response's intended and original meaning to stay intact (Moustakas, 1994). In short, I wanted to be as close to the data as possible and hands-on with my data analysis, so I printed off every journal prompt response and went through line by line with various colored highlights to markup and code the data so I could successfully move onto the next round of coding which was concerned with thematic analysis (Moustakas, 1994). Within this coding round, I identified patterns or repetitive aspects of the data based on similarities, differences, and/or frequencies (Saldaña, 2016).

Data Synthesis

The fourth step within the data analysis, which directly related to synthesizing the data, consisted of clustering the codes from the first three rounds of coding into themes (Moustakas, 1994). Themes comprise "broad units of info that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 328). After the themes were established, both a textural and a structural description was created which encapsulated the experiences shared by participants (Moustakas, 1994). The description aimed to describe the "what," and the structural

description described the "how" of the phenomenon participants shared (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, a cumulative description of my participants' experience with the investigated phenomenon was composed which encapsulated the essence of what participants went through that reflected the entire group (Moustakas, 1994).

It is important to note that I did not use any qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) due to the fact it tends to focus less on meaning and is more concerned with quantity, which could have negatively affected the way I broke down the data in a way that would not have been appropriate with my research design and could have increased the proximity with which I interacted and delved into the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on the three forms of data collection I incorporated into the study; I triangulated the data due to the order in which each data collection method occurred. Individual interviews had to occur first because it was imperative that each participant was not skewed, influenced, or exposed to any potential peer pressure (Moustakas, 1994). I wanted to provide participants with an opportunity to voice opinions and share experiences with the phenomenon without hearing what anyone else had to say (Moustakas, 1994).

Focus groups occurred next because participants were allowed to communicate and have a group discourse regarding the shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, it allowed for a second form of data to expand, corroborate, or diversify the initial thematic elements that arose from the individual interview data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I wanted to be able to assess the extent to which, if any, at all, participants changed initial responses or perceptions of administrator support. Additionally, the focus group data produced new emerging themes that participants did not even consider on their own individually (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Lastly, data triangulation was completed by implementing journal prompts as the third and final data collection form. This allowed participants to reflect on what was shared individually and within the focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a result, the journal prompts allowed for deep reflection in an untimed manner that further increased the validity of the results produced by the first two data collection forms and provided additional insight before the study concluded (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data triangulation ensured the validity of the results and allowed me to fully develop the textural and structural descriptions of the participant's experience with the phenomenon before the final description of its essence was finalized (Moustakas, 1994).

Trustworthiness

Due to increasing criticism from positivists regarding the extent to which qualitative research could be considered objective and reliable enough, Lincoln and Guba (1985) established terminology to address such components in the field of qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This section details the measures implemented that ensured a rigorous and thorough study was conducted through the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba. Although these four terms, in numerous instances, are synonyms for terminology within quantitative research, these do not have the same meaning nor impact on the validity and quality of a qualitative study. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability all directly impact how a qualitative study can maintain a heightened sense of transparency while adhering to scrupulous and uncompromising ethical standards that ensured the safety of all participants as they provided an opportunity to divulge personal information regarding the phenomenon being investigated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility indicates the level of accuracy of a study regarding the findings and the ability to describe participants' perceptions of reality as an interpretation of the truth within the context of the phenomenon under investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I achieved credibility in three ways: (a) triangulation, (b) peer debriefing, and (c) member-checking. Through these three forms of credibility measures, I ensured the findings of my study were correct and accurate while also providing invaluable insight and increasing scholarly knowledge regarding the phenomenon being examined (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation was ensured with multiple forms of data collection, critically reflective conversations, accountability measures with peers, and consistent member-checking. Each form of triangulation increased the likelihood that the findings were accurate of the shared phenomenon among participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2015).

In this study, I implemented a triangulation of qualitative methods, data collection methods, scholarly sources, and theories to explore the role of emotional intelligence in high school teachers' perceptions of administrator support. The methods included core facets of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) and intentionality (Husserl, 1967), a core component of phenomenology indicating one's awareness that everything is intentional, meaning an experience or perceptions by others within a specific context. Data collection methods triangulation were obtained by using individual semi-structured interviews of high school classroom teachers, focus groups of high school classroom teachers, and journal prompts that required thoughtful responses that synthesized both what was discussed and revealed amid the individual interviews and focus group questioning on the phenomenon of the role of emotional intelligence in high school teachers' perception of administrator support.

I consistently utilized peer debriefing as a technique during the proposed study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015), which allowed me to converse with my Liberty University colleagues and

they attested that my analysis was sound and data-driven. There was some data that exists in the literature that supported my findings in addition to my Liberty University peers in my Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program who were well versed with my research to the point they were able to provide relevant insight and significant opinions that assisted in my explanation of the study's findings.

Given my familiarity with the responsibilities that accompany high school administrators regarding their supervision of classroom teachers (the role I am currently in), there was a proximity to this topic and a unique sense of understanding regarding what both sides were required to do within the site chosen for the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). I was able to use this insider perspective (Rossman & Rallis, 2016) and maximized my familiarity with the environment and site in which the phenomenon was studied by advantageously using such familiarity to thoughtfully assess and delve into what my participants said in the interviews and focus groups as well as their responses to the journal prompts. I further implemented member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by asking my participants diverse open-ended questions derived from multiple perspectives to ensure the essence of the phenomenon being studied was fully captured. I exercised caution and diligence here by holding myself accountable by legitimately explaining my participants' answers. Furthermore, after I finished transcribing the interviews and focus groups, I went through specific areas of their responses to ensure that I accurately and authentically transcribed their account of the phenomenon, which was another form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lastly, in the interest of full transparency, I provided each of my participants with a verbatim copy of their transcript, which they were encouraged to double-check for full proof accuracy which ensured the main form of member-checking was successfully implemented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) reiterate that transferability demonstrates that the findings of a research study possess the potential to be relevant in additional situations other than the one being investigated. For one's research study to be transferable, there must be vivid and highly rich descriptions amid the findings phase of the study (Geertz, 2008). I provided both structural and textural descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated which ultimately produced a culminating description of the essence of the lived experience of my participants in a manner that was scrupulous and authentic to what participants said in all phases of data collection. There was alignment across both focus groups at the site within the study which ensured consistent participant testimony was being provided and upheld. The alignment of participant testimony for all participants at a public high school in northern Delaware within the study helped to determine whether transferability was possible depending on the specific findings that occurred. The literature to date does not clearly indicate if emotional intelligence plays a role in high school classroom teachers' perception of administrative support, meaning this study proved invaluable in providing the first insight into increasing the understanding of emotional intelligence and teachers' perceptions of their administrator support.

Dependability

A study is dependable when it can be replicated, and the findings are relatively consistent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I provided highly detailed descriptions of my procedures and the methodology used within the study to ensure that there was in fact, enough detail for future researchers to conduct the same study. The literature supported the methods I implemented within the study and, as a result, were rather straightforward and logically constructed regarding the core components of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). My dissertation chair

and committee reviewed my study's procedures which ensured that they were detailed enough to demonstrate mastery of the research design methodology.

Confirmability

Confirmability necessitates a research study's findings are determined by participants' responses and data produced through their stories and not by the researcher's bias or multifaceted motivations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure confirmability, I made sure to produce a detailed audit trail in which my procedures, raw data, analyzed data, and findings were openly and transparently portrayed if needed. Additionally, I utilized various forms of triangulation, as referenced above. Lastly, I was consistently and wholeheartedly reflexive in the execution and implementation of the study. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) emphasize reflexivity as a mindset that systemically holds the researcher accountable when knowledge is discovered and constructed in the meaning-making process.

Ethical Considerations

Obtaining site approval started with filing the formal application to the IRB because my study involved human participants, and highly private and sensitive information was disclosed. The participants in the study consisted of high school classroom teachers and no students in any capacity, so there wasn't any need for informed consent from parents of minors. Every participant was made fully aware of the voluntary participation in the study and that for any reason it was within a participant's right to withdraw from the study. Additionally, each participant was guaranteed that actual names and the high school's name were hidden; instead, pseudonyms were referenced.

Information received from participants was stored electronically on a password-protected personal device. Additionally, there were handwritten notes and printed-out copies of

information that served as a backup that was stored in an electronically locked storage device whose password were only accessible to me. The content of the data will be stored until my doctoral program is complete and my dissertation is approved and published. Upon conclusion of the program, all data will be stored safely and destroyed after three years in the interest of permanently preserving each participant's identity and maintaining their safety.

There were minimal risks to the participants due to the confidentiality and security measures in place. While the questions directly asked about the conditions of their work environment and classroom teachers' perception of their administrators' support, every answer and form of data collection used pseudonyms and was locked, and password protected with no access to anyone other than me. No participants had to fear their work conditions or job security due to the individual interviews, focus groups, or journal prompts. To mitigate any potential conflicts of interest, I sought IRB approval within my school district as well. It is important to note I am a classroom teacher as well and in no capacity was I in an authority or leadership role that supervised any of the participants.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to ensure a detailed outline was provided as to the research methodology that was used to answer the research questions. A discussion of the study's procedures, participants in the study, methods of data collection, and data analysis plans were included to provide details as to the tangible plan for the implementation and execution of the study. The study was of a transcendental phenomenological nature to explore the role of emotional intelligence in high school classroom teachers' perceptions of administrator support. Through individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts, data triangulation ensured that

the study met the ethical considerations of a qualitative study necessary for capturing the essence

of the participants' lived experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to discover the perceptions of administrative support from the viewpoint of classroom teachers and the role that administrator's emotional intelligence plays within teachers' perceptions of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware. The chapter will include detailed descriptions of the high school classroom teachers that served as participants in the study. Additionally, the chapter reveals that administrator's approachability, mutual respect and trust between administrators and teachers as well as teachers needing to feel heard as the three themes produced from the data accompanied by tables to illustrate the results. Lastly, the chapter will include responses from the data to the research questions.

Participants

Ten classroom teachers volunteered to participate in the study. Each participant expressed interest over the course of a two-week span after the initial email was sent informing the entire high school of the study with a consent form attached and the requirements necessary to voluntarily participate. The intended range for participants for the study was between ten to twelve in order to increase the likelihood of more rich and meaningful data collection opportunities within a transcendental phenomenological approach. Obtaining ten classroom teachers that met the study's participant requirements of having three or more years of classroom teaching experience meeting veteran status according to Delaware's Department of Education allowed for the intended range of participants to be fulfilled. Below is a table indicating each classroom teacher as a participant with a number from 1 – 10, and their number of years taught, highest degree earned, content area, and grade levels taught:

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Participant	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Content Area	Grade Level
1	18	Masters	English Language Arts	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
2	13	Masters	Science	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
3	26	Masters	Science	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
4	14	Masters	Special Education ~ All Content Areas	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
5	15	Masters	English Language Arts	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
6	13	Masters	Science	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
7	15	Masters	Social Studies	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
8	17	Masters	Mathematics	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
9	16	Masters	English Language Arts	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$
10	13	Masters	English Language Arts	$9^{th} - 12^{th}$

Below is a table providing the results of the study's themes and sub-themes as revealed from participants' shared experiences of the phenomenon being examined that were clearly described amid all three forms of data collection. Each theme from the data includes two sub-themes to provide an extensive breakdown of participants' collective experiences when it comes to the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence in classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. The three themes of the study included administrator's

approachability, mutual respect and trust between administrators and teachers and lastly teachers

need to feel heard. From these three themes there are two sub-themes making a total of six sub-

themes derived from data analysis of the participants' testimony based on all three forms of data

collection.

Results

Table 2

Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Administrator's Approachability	(1) Administrator's Self-Awareness (2) Administrator's Self-Regulation
Mutual Respect & Trust Between Administrators & Teachers	(1) Willingness to be Vulnerable (2) Transparency & Consistency in Communication
Teachers Need to Feel Heard	(1) Empathy (2) Teachers Take Risks When They Feel Empowered

Administrator's Approachability

Classroom teachers who perceive their administrator as more approachable feel more

comfortable going to their administrator for both personal and professional matters. An

administrator's approachability often dictates the extent to which the relationship between an

administrator and teacher is one of an obligatory nature or one comprised of consistent voluntary

attempts to interact in a multitude of ways. When participant 6 spoke of her administrator's

approachability she affirmed in her individual interview, "When I have an issue or concern, I can

approach her to talk it through and come up with a solution that fits everyone." On the other

hand, when classroom teachers do not perceive their administrators as approachable, they are

less inclined to interact with their administrators unless it is a professional requirement. A lack of

approachability with administrators drastically diminishes the desire for teachers to open up on a personal level which can be detrimental to the dynamics of the working relationship between respective parties. When participant 9 spoke of his administrator's approachability in comparison to others in years past, he concluded in his journal prompt, "She's honest, communicative, and caring. She validates my strengths and prods my areas of growth."

Administrator's Self-Awareness

Teachers agreed that administrators who exhibit self-awareness of their own emotions are consistently perceived as more approachable. Administrators who lack self-awareness can come across as unapproachable and as a result distance is felt between both respective parties. Additionally, teachers reiterated how self-awareness within administrators provides a tangible sense of approachability. However, an administrator's failure to demonstrate self-awareness can result in a lack of approachability. Participant 8 emphasized in the individual interview, "And like last year, I didn't feel going to talk to my administrator at all. I actually felt like attacked a couple of times."

Administrator's Self-Regulation

Teachers agreed that embedded into an administrator's approachability was an administrator's ability to self-regulate their own emotions. Teachers felt that self-regulation in administrators served as a key determining factor in their administrator's ability to remain professional in both positive and difficult situations. Administrators who self-regulate their own emotions in a mature and healthy manner are consistently perceived as more approachable. Participant 10 declared in one of their journal prompts, "Most of my experiences have been simple one-on-one conversations that have felt productive but not at all overwhelming. Having

an administrator who I can trust and who seems to trust me has made me feel more comfortable as a teacher."

Mutual Respect and Trust Between Administrators and Teachers

Teachers agreed that mutual trust and respect are the foundational components that allow for the relationship between an administrator and teacher to thrive. A lack of trust and little to no mutual respect compromises the integrity of the relationship between an administrator and teacher as well as the chances of positive interactions occurring in a plethora of contexts. Administrators who earn the trust of classroom teachers are in turn respected highly by those same teachers which culminates into a mutually beneficial relationship predicated on feeling heard and validated as a professional educator. When speaking to how much he trusted his administrator, participant 7 revealed in one of the focus group sessions, "I think one of the strong things is when he feels it's important to follow up, there's follow up and again, just being able to like go to him and being able to trust that like I'm not going to have a bus roll over me is good." On the other hand, participant 4 indicated that at times it felt like targeting was occurring and that there was no mutual trust and respect felt with their administrator. When asked to describe how much they trusted their administrator participant 4 confessed in one of the focus group sessions the extent to feeling overloaded by their administrator, "Sometimes I don't want to do this. It's like try this and try that. Like I shut down and I can't do all of it."

Willingness to be Vulnerable

Teachers agreed that the inherent authority that comes with the prescribed duties of an administrator can be intimidating from a teacher's perspective. However, an administrator's willingness to show vulnerability serves as the catalyst from which trust is earned and respect is shown towards an administrator for not being afraid to either show emotions or even receive

feedback or questions from the teacher. Consequently, from an administrator's willingness to show vulnerability there is a newfound respect teachers gain for their administrator due to the perception that it takes courage, strength, and humility to do so. Participant 3 proclaimed in the individual interview, "Not all administrators appreciate being questioned. I think my current one accepts being questioned even if she doesn't always care for it."

Transparency and Consistency in Communication

Teachers agreed that administrators who consistently communicate in the same manner and remained transparent with the nature of their communication were more trustworthy. Likewise, teachers shared in the sentiment that an administrator's effort to remain cognizant of how and why they were communicating certain things made it all the easier to respect their administrator. However, inconsistent means of communicating and a lack of transparency results in little to no mutual respect and trust. Participant 1 asserted in the individual interview, "If they knew what was happening in classes now versus several years ago, they might be better off because they wouldn't come across so tone deaf."

Teachers Need to Feel Heard

Teachers agreed that administrators are often limited at times within their role when it comes to controlling or changing district policies regarding curriculum and contractual obligations such as allotted planning time and teacher coverage during prep periods However, teachers reiterated that being able to vent frustrations and express a variety of opinions was a necessary outlet for their mental health. Furthermore, teachers stated that feeling heard also signified that concerns or questions posed to their administrators were sufficiently addressed and sincerely considered. Administrators who fail to hear the teachers they oversee leaves teachers with feelings of isolation, resentment, and burnout. When asked about a time his administrator

was visibly upset after he reported an ongoing issue with a student, participant 4 declared in the individual interview, "It always seems to be me as the target and it's the fault of the person that is lowest on the totem pole."

Empathy

Teachers agreed that empathy from an administrator was the core premise from which the relationship between an administrator and teacher could either flourish or flounder. Empathy was directly associated with teachers feeling heard and supported. While administrators are prescribed within their role to hold teachers accountable professionally empathy was a non-negotiable from teacher's perspectives especially in challenging situations or extenuating circumstances encountered within the workplace. Participant 5 exclaimed in the individual interview, "With good admin it's always fine because when it comes to problems you know it's solution oriented. And problem solving and trying to understand is the main point of conversation rather than blaming."

Teachers Take Risks When They Feel Empowered

Teachers agreed the extent to which they were willing to try new approaches in the classroom and take risks without guarantee of success was due predominantly to feeling supported and empowered as an educator by their administrator. Teachers were less inclined to step out of their comfort zone if they felt as if their administrator would be punitive or narrowminded to new techniques being implemented. When teachers feel empowered it stems from trust and mutual respect as well as the comfort in knowing that their administrator recognizes that in order for teachers to grow and develop professionally new approaches must be taken periodically. When participant 1 reflected on trying to flip her classroom's layout to

increase student discourse and stated in the individual interview, "My administrator was super supportive and like yes, we can try this absolutely, no problem regardless of how it turns out."

<p style="text-align:center">Research Question Responses</p>

This section offers the reader concise responses to the research questions in order to facilitate the discussion that will follow in Chapter Five. This section supplies short and direct narrative answers to each of the research questions using primarily the themes developed in the previous section. Select participant quotes are chosen that are appropriate to support the responses to the research questions.

Central Research Question

What influence does the emotional intelligence of high school administrators have on classroom teachers' perceptions of the administrator's support? The participants' perspective is that the emotional intelligence of high school administrators has a direct impact on classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. Emotionally intelligence administrators are able to process the array of complex variables that have a wide-ranging effect on teachers' effectiveness and decision-making. Participant 7 reflected in his journal prompt, "I have found that he really does try to address concerns that I've had and responded appropriately to my own frustrations and successes. He himself is very level-headed and does not show strong emotion, which I believe is an asset as an administrator, and is a strength of his."

Sub-Question One

How do high school classroom teachers describe administrator's support? Participants' perspective is that administrative support is comprised of consistently effective social skills and administrators self-regulating their own emotions, so it does not inhibit the working relationship nor impede chances for teachers to grow as educators. Additionally, participants agreed that

administrative support is based largely on the effectiveness of feedback and valuing a teacher's need for their time to be respected given the lengthy set of responsibilities they have. Participant 6 asserted in the individual interview, "My administrator is 100% supportive and consistently gives me feedback on how to incorporate things into my lessons. She does this in a way that does not feel like one more thing."

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of high school classroom teachers who perceive administrators as supportive? Participants' perspectives are that administrators who are perceived as supportive consistently communicate expectations and remain open-minded for both parties to ask questions and challenge one another in a multitude of contexts. Furthermore, classroom teachers who perceive their administrators as supportive agreed that support is attributed to being trusted enough to maximize each educator's individual strengths and skillsets with the absence of micromanaging. Participant 5 reflected in the individual interview, "My administrator has been helpful whenever there was needed time to plan forward and allow for teachers to create the best units possible when the direction from the district office hasn't been provided to teachers."

Sub-Question Three

How do high school administrators' emotions and feelings influence classroom teachers' perception of the quality of interactions? The participants agreed that an administrator's ability to remain aware and in turn regulate their own emotions in a variety of situations proves to be invaluable. Administrators who can recognize how they feel towards an individual, group, or particular situation are better equipped to leave all parties involved feeling supported. The quality of interactions between classroom teachers and administrator is significantly influenced by an administrator's ability to respond and exercise emotional intelligence. Participant 8

emphasized in the individual interview, "She listens, is understanding, and reasonable in her responses, even when the person she is talking to is experiencing distress. She remains calm and does not dismiss the person she is talking to even if she doesn't fully agree with the person."

Summary

Classroom teachers consistently agreed that the emotional intelligence of administrators majorly affects perceptions of administrative support. Embedded into positive perceptions of administrative support from the perspective of classroom teachers is the culmination of an administrator's approachability, mutual respect and trust between administrators and teachers as well as teachers needing to feel heard as demonstrated across all three forms of data collection. These three themes were consistently reiterated by participants signifying similar experiences of teachers who perceived administrators as supportive. Likewise, instances in which teachers did not perceive administrators as supportive attested to similar absences of key emotional intelligence components including but not limited to social skills, empathy, self-awareness, and self-regulation as expressed across all three forms of data collection. Participants agreed both individually and collectively that the emotional intelligence of administrators directly affected perceptions of administrative support. Ultimately, administrators who are perceived as supportive are able to demonstrate a heightened sense of awareness and self-control in a multitude of professional contexts while demonstrating empathy in carefully sensitive moments when personal struggles of teachers outweigh professional concerns. Positive perceptions of administrative support are a testament to administrators who value the inherent influence of the role to professionally empower, personally validate, and holistically help educator improve both as teachers and human beings.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

    The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to discover the perceptions of administrative support from the viewpoint of classroom teachers and the role that administrator's emotional intelligence plays within teachers' perceptions of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware. The chapter will contain five discussion subsections: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) implications for policy and practice, (c) theoretical and methodological implications, (d) limitations and delimitations, and (e) recommendations for future research. Within the chapter through the interpretations of the findings and extensive analysis of the theoretical and empirical implications that the essence of the participant's lived experience with the phenomenon are accurately captured culminating into a plethora of newfound insight and knowledge on the role of specific emotional intelligence components of administrators that significantly influence classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support in hopes of addressing secondary education's undeniable challenges of teacher burnout.

Discussion

    The findings of the study revealed three thematic elements derived from participants' shared experiences with the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence in affecting perceptions of administrative support. Within each thematic element from the data there are two sub-themes further breaking down into detail the common elements of participants' varied testimonies on the role of high school administrators; emotional intelligence affecting perceptions of administrative support. The data drew ample attention to the commonalities of perceived support and likewise what constitutes a lack of perceived administrative support from classroom teachers' perspectives. From the data's themes and subthemes, the researcher arrives

at three critical interpretations that have the potential for numerous and multifaceted implications for both policy and practice.

Interpretation of Findings

The three themes produced from the data are administrator's approachability, mutual respect and trust between administrators and teachers as well as how teacher need to feel heard. Within the theme of administrator's approachability are the subthemes of an administrator's self-awareness and an administrator's self-regulation. Within the theme of mutual respect and trust between administrators and teachers are the subthemes of a willingness to be vulnerable and transparency and consistency in communication. Lastly, the third theme teachers need to feel heard had two subthemes consisting of empathy and teachers take risks when the feel empowered.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Embedded into each of the three themes the data produced as well as the six subthemes it is evident that various emotional intelligence components play a critical and essential role in classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. Whether it's demonstrating appropriate social skills, controlling one's own feelings in difficult situations, or showing empathizing with teachers amid the array of daily challenges faced, an administrator's level of emotional intelligence directly affects both positive and negative perceptions of support from classroom teachers' perspective (Du Plessis et al., 2020; Goleman, 1995; Gómez-Leal et al., 2020; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Failure of an administrator to exhibit emotional intelligence can prove to be detrimental to professional growth and personal fulfillment for classroom teachers (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; & Pashiardis & Johansson, 2021). Emotionally intelligent administrators, as described by participants in their experiences agreed

on common elements that encapsulated the shared phenomenon. Classroom teachers perceive administrative support when there is the right combination of being valued, feeling secure, and knowing attentive listening rather than pre-determined blaming is the manner in which problems are dealt with (Baker et al., 2022; Chen & Guo, 2020; Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Haiyan & Walker, 2021; & Lumpkin & Achen, 2018).

Treating Teachers as Equal Partners. Participants agreed that administrators who they perceived as supportive frequently made it abundantly clear that they valued not only what teachers brought with them that made them unique assets as educators in high school but for the inherent values and personality traits that made each teacher so special as a person (Leithwood et al., 2020; Maas et al., 2021; Wirawan et al., 2019). Participant 5 commented on the importance of being treated as an equal partner and declared, "It helps in scenarios where problems must be solved. It also matters that people understand each other on a base level to ensure we trust one another and have a productive professional relationship." Without question, participants reiterated that experiences with administrators who yield the power and influence of their role in a punitive nature or one of a superior-subordinate nature perceived less administrative support. Participant 8 emphasized the mindset and consequences of administrators who do not value teachers as equal partners: " These people have one common trait – they feel as if they are above teachers in education and must overrule with their authority. They are out to catch teachers doing even the most minor of things wrong." Administrators who treat teachers as equal partners are able to exercise a balance between both professional and personal support for teachers in a manner that is genuine and tangible (Leithwood et al., 2020; Maas et al., 2021; Wirawan et al., 2019). When classroom teachers know they are viewed as an equal stakeholder, a valuable asset, and a critical part of decision-making process it instills a sense of confidence and comfort that

creates a working relationship predicated on pursuing necessary improvements while recognizing positive moments worthy of praise. Participant 3 commented on the need for such dynamics to allow for breakthroughs and meaningful progress amid arduous moments: "Almost none of our interactions are negative and if they ever are there's a reason they are. It's a communication issue. And it's usually because of me but my role as a department chair and because I have the trust and relationship with my admin it usually ends up being neutral to a positive outcome because it leads to constructive discussion." Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence postulates that the combination of self-awareness, self-management, and empathy culminate into an individual demonstrating a willingness to be mindful of not only themselves but those they work closely with so that when inevitable challenges arise there are solutions and healthy response so that all parties involved can thrive and learn together (p.136). Salovey and Mayer (1990) assert that individuals who pay attention to one's feelings and others are able to give meaningful consideration for one's actions and thoughts which directly relates to the participants shared experiences within the phenomenon of perceiving positive administrative support when teachers know their skills, talents, and perspectives are being leveraged to benefit multiple stakeholders at the secondary level (p. 203).

Safety as the Source of Professional & Personal Fulfillment for Teachers.
Participants agreed that the need to feel safe first and foremost was one of the core components of positive perceptions of administrative support from the perspective of classroom teachers. Each teacher that served as a participant was a veteran teacher with more than three years of experience and made it clear that they perceived administrative support when they knew they didn't have to be perfect but instead could have opportunities to take risks in the spirit of innovation both pedagogically and instructionally without fear of persecution or reprimand.

Participant 6 when asked how her administrator helps her to overcome some of the challenges of being a core content teacher at the high school level concluded, "Her openness to wanting to help when I face challenges and come up with a solution as a team is essential to helping me be comfortable in my teaching." Perceived administrative support starts with safety and from there teachers understand there is room to grow and improve all while being shown grace to make mistakes and potentially come up short but doing so with the best of intentions and a genuine mindset to avoid complacency. Administrators who fail to make teachers feel safe jeopardize teachers' feeling of not only professional usefulness and effectiveness bur personal notions of self-worth which can lead to increase symptoms of burnout such as heightened stress, physical fatigue, and even reduced motivation to perform at previously shown levels (Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Szempruch, 2018; Tai & Kareem, 2019; Viano et al., 2020). Participant 8 divulged her negative experience with an administrator who didn't make her feel safe and admitted, "I felt like I was always on edge with every move I made wondering if I was going to be interpretated in a way that would cause retaliation from this adult. I didn't feel safe to try new things in my classroom and remained stagnant due to a fear of not being perfect." Teachers cannot function let alone operate within the classroom if the necessary sense of safety is non-existent from the administrator. Effective school leadership is predicated on the reality that when trust, safety, and respect are felt between administrators and teachers feedback can be given honestly. Without those critical feelings in the working relationship there aren't enough opportunities for conversations to occur on what is going well and what could be refined in order for both parties to improve (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Harris et al., 2019; Daniëls et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020; & Welch & Hodge, 2019). Emotionally intelligent administrators understand that with empathetic interpersonal dynamics and a conscientious effort to reflect on

how they feel individually in a multitude of situations given their prescribed duties of the admin role that what they say, how they say it, and how they treat teachers can make or break teachers level of fulfillment both professional and personally (Leithwood et al, 2020; Maas et al, 2021; Wirawan et al., 2019).

    Reflective Authority Versus Reactive Authority. Participants collectively reflected on the significant differences between administrators who were perceived positively and negatively and determined that the mindset with which an administrator uses the authority of the role is one of the biggest factors involved in the relationship. Reflective authority within this phenomenon focuses on administrators who attentively listen, exercise empathy, remain self-aware of their own feelings regardless of the nature of the situation or conversation, as well an administrator's ability to manage those same feelings in the interest of considering how they might influence the quality of the interactions with the teachers they oversee (Crisci et al., 2019; & Smet, 2022). Administrators who approach the vast majority of situations and conversations with a desire to learn, listen, and understand rather than judge, scold, or insert influence often have a profound influence on how teachers perceive their level of support. Participant 7 described the level of emotional intelligence his administrator displays and declared, "He would likely admit that he wouldn't always be able to read a room in terms of how people are feeling but tends to want to know how and why people feel and think as they do and is truly in a position to learn from his teachers." On the other hand, administrators who exude reactive authority are more inclined to not self-regulate and not self-manage their emotions which often influence the quality of the interactions with the teachers they oversee (Crisci et al., 2019; Goleman, 1995; & Smet, 2022). Additionally, administrators who demonstrate reactive authority do not approach conflicts or conversations in general with an open mind, but rather let preconceived notions or external

circumstances clout their ability to be present in the moment and objectively listen to the concerns or opinions of teachers. Consequently, reactive authority embodies an accusatory tone and one of either hostility or narrow-mindedness leading to feelings of mistrust, insecurity, and even resentment by teachers towards their administrators. Participant 3 reflected on negative experiences with admin who demonstrate the concept of reactive authority and proclaimed, "The negative experiences tend to stem from knee-jerk reactions. A question is asked and the administrator gets defensive first instead of considering context or asking for clarification of a question. That defensiveness shuts down communication and I don't want to hear what comes next." The participants made it evident that meaningful conversations and growth that holds the potential for solutions and breakthroughs when administrators don't walk into situations with their mind already made up but instead approaching every conversation and interaction as an opportunity to learn from those they oversee and learn so they can better support them and fulfill their diverse set of needs in a drastically complex and rapidly changing educational landscape. Ultimately, perceptions of administrative support are influenced by administrators who treat the authority of the role as a privilege and not a means to penalize mistakes or imperfections of teachers.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The study demonstrates implications for both policy and practice that can directly benefit and improve high school administrators within the capacity of their role. Additionally, the secondary educational system as well as potentially education as a whole could benefit from designing professional development training for administrators on the components of emotional intelligence, specifically self-awareness, self-management, and empathy to more sufficiently prepare administrators to execute not only the prescribed duties of their role but also the

unspoken ones that revolve around supporting classroom teachers in a multitude of ways.

Furthermore, the interview process would stand to benefit from including a focused series of

questions on the emotional intelligence skills and traits necessary to differentiate between

administrators who already possess certain desirable emotional intelligence components versus

those that feel deficient in such areas and as a result will need exposure to training to develop

such skills. Implications for policy that derived from the study center on ideal best practices that

administrators should adhere to on a daily basis within the array of support-centric

responsibilities they are tasked with regarding their professional working relationship with

classroom teachers.

Implications for Policy

There are clear implications for policies for higher-level organizations or entities such as

public-school districts and even state departments of education. Specifically, the study shed

significant findings on the direct correlation between administrators who exhibit emotional

intelligence and classroom teachers who perceive administrative support. With the state of

secondary education in a crisis regarding teacher shortages and a severe lack of qualified

candidates it is directly impacting the quality of education students are receiving which also

affects other stakeholders such as parents and community members. As a result of this study, it is

clear that public-school districts need to require and implement emotional intelligence training

for administrators in order to better serve administrators in their capacity to remain self-aware in

the hopes of self-managing themselves so they can empathize with teachers. These critical

components of emotional intelligence could alter the trajectory of the teacher burnout

phenomenon and allow administrators to better support the complex emotional considerations

that teachers need fulfilled in order to perform the prescribed roles of their jobs. This cyclical

effect starts with changing the policies of school districts regarding training for administrators as well as the requirements that must be met in order to hire qualified administrators from the start. The interview and hiring process through human resources departments across statewide school districts needs to make it explicitly clear the extent to which administrator candidates already demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, and empathy via administering an emotional intelligence test. From the results of administering such tests human resources can determine the best fit and placement for each administrator based on their emotional intelligence skills. Likewise, seemingly qualified administrator candidates who do not possess each of the emotional intelligence components may receive conditional employment based on mandated emotional intelligence training. Embedded into these implications for policy is the notion that by requiring school districts to change the nature of the hiring and training process for administrators that the department of education for individual states will need to overhaul the transition process, establish specific policies addressing emotional intelligence for administrators, and ensure there are regulations in place to effectively address the systemic need to have emotionally intelligent administrators attempting to better support classroom teachers in an effort to mitigate the effects of teacher burnout and staffing shortages.

Implications for Practice

While it is clear that the emotional intelligence of high school administrators significantly influences classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support is an important finding for this school, it also may be effective for all school settings. Other school settings could potentially benefit by making a concerted effort to train and develop the emotional intelligence components of self-awareness, self-management, and empathy in administrators in the hopes of influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. As a result, implications for practice

may be effective for all school settings in ensuring classroom teachers feel more supported, less stressed, and more willing to withstand the plethora of pitfalls plaguing the secondary educational system in the hope of reducing teacher burnout and teachers leaving the profession entirely. While it was clear for this particular setting that the emotional intelligence of high school administrators positively influenced classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support, it is not clear due to external and environmental factors of other school settings if it would be as clear and definitive.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The study confirms that effective school leadership is predominantly based on recognizing the inherent value of each individual and utilizing the unique strengths that each individual possess so that they can not only perform at a higher level but consistently grow in both a professional personal capacity (Berkovich & Bogler, 2021; Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020 & Welch & Hodge, 2018). Additionally, the study corroborates that trust is the foundational premise from which quality interactions occur between administrators and teachers (Leithwood et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study confirmed that trust is the one key concept felt between administrators and teachers in which there is a healthy and fully functioning interpersonal relationship that can adapt and evolve in a rapidly changing and complex situations that comprise the current secondary educational landscape (Crisci et al., 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020; Maas et al., 2021; Smet, 2022; Wirawan et al., 2019). The study affirms the needs for administrators to see teaches as people first and professionals second and understanding that in order to truly support teachers within their role as educators that teachers must be respected and treated as human beings first who bring with them an array of diverse and complex emotional needs in an already exceedingly stressful and demanding role (Baker et al.,

2022; Chen & Guo, 2020; Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Haiyan & Walker, 2021; & Lumpkin &

Achen, 2018).

The study extends from previous research the idea that the foundational premise of

effective school leadership is tangible actions by administrators that can be constituted as

supportive by classroom teachers and introduces the notion that tangible actions is merely

listening even when no concrete actions or tangible solutions can be provide to teachers from

administrators. While it is ideal for parental concerns, curriculum deficiencies, lack of special

education help, behavioral issues with students, and limited planning time to be sufficiently

addressed with remediation or new policies that is often not feasible nor within the scope of

influence of an administrator. However, the study extended the previous research on effective

school leadership and drew necessary attention to the power of listening and classroom teachers

deem the act of attentively listening and letting administrators serve as a proverbial sounding

board to allow for venting to count as a form of perceived support. Teachers want to be heard

and when they feel like their administrator is willing to listen and let the concerns and

frustrations be vented even when both parties involved proactively understand nothing can be

done to remedy the situation that in of itself is effective school leadership providing

opportunities for teachers to express their emotions in a raw and honest manner necessary to

traverse through the often-dicey situations they are faced with. Emotionally intelligent

administrators understand the need for empathy and providing timely opportunities for teachers

to have a cathartic release of sorts of varying negative emotions where the stakes are low and

chances of handling whatever the issue may be professionally in the context in which the issue is

situated. The study extends the notion of previous research that effective school leadership can

directly be attributed to effective communication by shedding light on the fact that transparency

within communication is an underlying principle of effectiveness. Embedded into this insight is the extension of the idea that effective school leadership must be willing to receive feedback from teachers and instead takes it even further by commenting on the need for administrators to be receptive to questioning regarding justification and reasoning for decisions. Rather than merely receiving feedback this study extends this sentiment further by alluding to the significance of teachers being able to question and press administrators to be transparent and honest about why they did what they did, said what they said, or even why something wasn't done or wasn't said. This directly deepens the study's newfound understanding of effective communication as a culmination of consistency in tone, relevancy of message in specific moments, and transparency signified by the foundation of trust and respect within the working relationship.

While the quality of interpersonal relationships was confirmed as a key part of effective school leadership the study extended this further by concretely reiterating that when administrators demonstrate empathy there are firmly cemented positive feelings of perceived support from the perspective of classroom teachers. The emotional intelligence components of empathy, self-awareness, and self-management were collectively confirmed by participants as the most consistent influences in perceiving administrative support. The study shed light on how emotional intelligence and school leadership directly affected the nature of administrators within the duties of their role concerned with conflict resolution, feedback, and assistance in challenging situations such as behavioral issues, parental concerns, and curriculum choices teachers endure. The study extended previous theories of emotional intelligence and school leadership by emphasizing the need for a combination of respect and reward to dictate decisions and interactions between administrators and teachers rather than reactionary decision-making

and poorly contemplated responses to intricate issues teachers face on a daily basis. Additionally, the study shed light on empathy as the number one key determining factor among the emotional intelligence components that administrators demonstrate who are able to simultaneously address individual and organizational needs. Furthermore, the study extended the theories informing the topic by identifying participants shared consensus that administrators who show self-awareness and self-management when interacting with teachers allow for those very same teachers to function better in a mixed-variety of situations with an increased chance of positively supporting teachers' multi-layered effectiveness. The emotional intelligence components of empathy, self-awareness, self-management, and social skills were all stated by classroom teachers as significantly influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support regardless of the context or role within an administrator's duty that it pertained to including but not limited to providing feedback, conducting observations, casual conversations in daily interactions, solving classroom management issues, and appropriately responding to parental dilemmas.

The study's novel contributions add to the educational and school leadership field the reality that emotionally intelligent administrators who show empathy, self-awareness, and self-management are able to reduce if not mitigate the effects of teacher burnout. The consequences of emotionally intelligent administrators supporting classroom teachers by demonstrating empathy, self-awareness, and self-management are that teachers are more willing to tolerate the excessive demands that accompany their role and in turn are motivated to stay not only within the specific school setting but in the professional role as a teacher in the field of secondary education. In short, emotionally intelligent administrators can deter teachers from leaving that would have quit the field of education were it not for such multifaceted support due to administrators' empathy, self-awareness, and self-management. The study provided invaluable

and new insight into the extent of the role that high school administrator's emotional intelligence plats amid influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support due to the findings informed by the data that make it clear in such a complex educational landscape with an abundance of systemic issues and environmental challenges that emotional intelligence is the solution. Perceived support from the perspective of classroom teachers is directly affected by the emotional intelligence components that administrators harness to support the teachers tangibly and consistently they oversee. Furthermore, the study gained new knowledge from participants' shared experiences of the lived phenomenon that shed light on the reality that classroom teachers' basic needs of safety, trust, and respect must be fulfilled for any other part of the administrator-teacher relationship to have an opportunity to function, thrive and remain sustainable.

Transcendental phenomenology proved to be an appropriate choice for the study's methodology in examining the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. This methodology was appropriate due in large part to the fact that it authentically provided multiple opportunities for participants to share their lived experiences of the phenomenon both individually and in a group setting (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology holds such inherent value in examining a phenomenon such as this one because it made the study's focus on what participants had to say and what they had experienced rather than incorporating any of the researcher's biases or pre-conceived notions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Through the use of individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts data triangulation not only was ensured but categorically created rich data that produced clearly defined thematic elements and findings in which definitive interpretations could be made adding to the extant literature and theories. Future

use of a transcendental phenomenological study would find it interesting and prudent to incorporate identical forms of data collection to ensure not only triangulation but that the data produced is concerned only with participants' experiences of the phenomenon rather than the researchers (Moustakas, 1994). This methodology is necessary to better understand a share experience of participants and future instances of such a research method would increase the likelihood of acquiring rich, meaningful, and diverse data points to capture the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Limitations and Delimitations

All participants within the study actively and thoroughly participated and as a result there are no limitations to note. Delimitations within the study included only having classroom teachers as participants with three or more years of experience have achieved professional status indicating from the perspective of the Delaware Department of Education are no longer inexperienced and therefore tenured. Teachers who fit this criterion were chosen since novice teachers garner even more stringent observation protocols and may not understand how the administrator-teacher relationship fully works. Tenured teachers typically have a deeper understanding of what encompasses the accountability measures for teachers and the various responsibilities the administrator has. It is imperative that classroom teachers were participants in the study rather than teacher aides or paraprofessionals because the standards and rigor of the accountability measures are often vastly different with more emphasis and attention being placed on what are referred to as lead instructors or special-education co-teachers. Another delimitation of the study was the fact that all classroom teachers who served as participants in the study were from the same high school. Additionally, while each assistant principal at the high school has an

assigned content area that corresponds to what each participant teaches, the administration

remains the same for all participants involved proving to be another delimitation of the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are geared towards focusing on a different set of

participants of a similar study. Specifically, future research would benefit from examining the

shared experiences of the phenomenon from the perspective of high school administrators as

well as teachers. By including both respective parties' experiences it could greatly add to the

potential knowledge and insight of the phenomenon. Future research could approach a study by

either focusing exclusively on administrators or deciding to include both classroom teachers and

administrators to gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomena. Future research would

need to approach the study with a phenomenological approach and in particular a transcendental

lens in the interest of capturing the essence of the shared experiences of both classroom teachers

and administrators. A transcendental phenomenological study would be the most appropriate

approach because it makes the data collection and thematic analysis about participant's

experiences rather than a hermeneutical approach which would lend itself to considerable

influence and interpretations of the findings from the researcher's varied biases and pre-

conceived notions. A researcher's experiences likely would affect the manner in which the data

is not only collected but interpreted which would deter from capturing the essence of the

phenomena. Additionally, future recommendations include research studies including for

consideration multiple sites within the same school district rather than just one setting. The

reason being that it could increase potentially not only transferability of the study's findings but

open up the possibility that the role of high school administrator's emotional intelligence

influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support is not a site specific

occurrence but rather a system-wide phenomenon that may or may not have similar experiences dependent on specific emotional intelligence components influencing classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support (Moustakas, 1994). Future research studies that would choose to include multiple locations for the study's site would be encouraged to conduct a transcendental phenomenological approach for similar reasons mentioned above such as mainly the need to capture the phenomenon's essence through participant's experiences and not the researcher's views or opinions (Moustakas, 1994).

Conclusion

This transcendental phenomenological study explored the role of high school administrators' emotional intelligence and how it influences classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. Through intentional and specific participant requirements the study was able to produce relevant findings that directly address specific emotional intelligence components of administrators that significantly influences classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support. The triangulation of the data is successfully achieved after the individual interviews, focus groups, and journal prompts were completed to conclude based on participants experiences that empathy, self-awareness, and self-management on the part of administrators plays a critical role in positive perceptions of administrative support. Furthermore, this study was able to shed light and provide new insight into the role of emotional intelligence in administrators in the secondary setting when it comes to perceptions of administrator support from the perspective of classroom teachers. It is clear from the implications of the study's findings that treating teachers as equal partners, safety as the source of personal and professional fulfillment for teachers, and reflective authority versus reactive authority are the foundational premise that influence classroom teachers' perceptions of administrative support.

Ultimately, this study revealed two main novel revelations that have the potential for implications in both policy and practice within secondary education. First and foremost, administrators who demonstrate consistent empathy in a multitude of contexts within their support-centric roles as administrators are better able to support teachers both personally and professionally which speaks volumes to the need for a careful balance between considering classroom teachers' personal needs and in turn adhering to their complex professional needs. Secondly, the study drew newfound attention to the reality that administrators can only truly be perceived as supportive when they can consistently recognize and process their own emotions and feelings which undoubtedly affects the very nature of interpersonal interactions as well as professional work obligated duties. In the end, this study captures the essence of perceived administrative support from the perspective of classroom teachers while definitely pinpointing the specific emotional intelligence components of empathy, self-awareness, and self-management that will better equip administrators to help support teachers not only grow but stay within a profession that is currently plagued with the systemic issue of teacher burnout.

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Appendix A

IRB Application Approval Letter

February 15, 2024

James Weaver
Jerry Pickard

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-1122 Exploring the Role of High School Administrator's Emotional Intelligence in Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Administrator Support

Dear James Weaver, Jerry Pickard,

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

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

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Informed Consent Forms

Title of the Project: Exploring the Role of High School Administrator's Emotional Intelligence in Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Administrator Support
Principal Investigator: James "Alex" Weaver, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must have three or more years of teaching experience and be deemed by the Delaware Department of Education as past the novice or inexperienced phase. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of the study is to discover the perceptions of administrative support from the viewpoint of classroom teachers and the role that administrator's emotional intelligence plays within teachers' perceptions of administrative support at a public high school in northern Delaware.

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 in-person, audio-recorded interview that will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes but no more than 1 hour. If an in-person interview is not feasible due to logistical or scheduling constraints the interview will be conducted via Zoom.
2. Participate in an in-person, audio-recorded focus group that will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes but no more than 1 hour. If an in-person focus group is not feasible due to logistical or scheduling constraints the focus group will be conducted via Zoom.
3. Participate in responding individually to four journal prompts that will be administered at the same initial time out of respect for participants' time and out of convenience within a Google Doc or Microsoft Word format.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

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

Benefits to society include recognizing that understanding how increased perceptions of administrative support from the perspective of classroom teachers can reduce the effects of teacher burnout, while also encapsulating the shared experiences of participants in conveying what perceived support looks and feels like. This study will ultimately be used to assist high schools across the world to change the nature of the professional development provided to administrators, identify coping and intervention strategies teachers may use to become more self-

sufficient, and how emotional intelligence is a developable skill that all roles within the educational system must cultivate and create to combat the systemic conditions of burnout affecting a multitude of stakeholders.

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. Records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked drawer for the hard copies. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

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

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as a teacher at Odessa High School. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, participants will remain anonymous and all data collection for the interviews and journal prompts will remain anonymous. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Odessa High School. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email and/or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, any audio recording and data collected from your individual interview will be destroyed immediately. Focus group audio recordings cannot be immediately destroyed but withdrawn participants' portion of those audio recordings will have their content edited out. As soon as the data analysis is completed for that focus group, that data will then be destroyed.

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

The researcher conducting this study is James "Alex" Weaver. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and/or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Pickard, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ .

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is 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) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

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

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

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Survey Questions

For the following questions please respond with either "yes" or "no" based on you individually.

1.) Do you have three or more years of teaching experience and considered by the Delaware Department of Education as past the novice or inexperienced phase? (Yes/No)

2.) Based on your initial understanding of the study's procedures and the estimated amount of time (60 – 90 minutes) your participation would require; do you feel this is something you could commit to? (Yes/No)

3.) After reading the Consent form attached in the email you received do you understand that this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any point for any reason f your choosing? (Yes/No)

4.) Do you have any questions or concerns that you want to ask proactively prior to volunteering to participate in this study? (Yes/No)

Individual Interview Questions

1. Hello. How are you today? Thanks for agreeing to this interview. We are discussing how supportive you perceive your administrator to be and the role emotional intelligence plays

in this. Describe your relationship with your assistant principal regarding how they make you feel as a classroom teacher. CRQ

2. Describe the challenges you face as a classroom teacher responsible for core content at the high school level. SQ1

3. Describe a time when a lesson didn't go well during a classroom observation. How did your administrator handle the situation? Consider the feedback they provided, how they communicated with you, and how they made you feel. SQ1

4. Talk about a time when you did not feel supported by your administrator. Consider specific lessons, behavioral issues with students, parent concerns, ineffective means of providing feedback, and/or irrelevant professional development training. SQ1

5. Describe how much you trust your administrator when it comes to sharing your struggles as a core content teacher, your professional development needs, and concerns over curriculum choices. SQ1

6. Describe a time when your administrator "had your back." What did they do to make you feel supported? SQ2

7. Talk about a time when you felt your administrator empowered you to become a better educator. SQ2

8. Describe the frequency and nature of your interactions with your administrator that you perceive to be *positive.* SQ2

9. Considering the challenges, you face as a core content teacher at the high school level. What are the ways your administrator helps you to overcome some of these challenges? SQ2

10. Describe a time when your administrator was visibly upset or frustrated and how it affected your interaction with them. SQ3

11. Describe how your administrator handles unexpected situations or when things don't go accordingly. SQ3

12. Considering your experiences with your administrator, how would you describe their level of professionalism? Provide a specific example to support your perception of their professionalism. SQ3

13. Describe how you feel about interacting with your administrator. How do the vast majority of these interactions make you feel? Please explain why. SQ3

Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe your administrator's personality? What specific characteristics, qualities, and traits come to mind? SQ3

2. What do you like best about your administrator? Explain what they do well. SQ2

3. What do you feel your administrator struggles within their role? Explain the challenges you perceive them as having. SQ1

4. Suppose you had an opportunity to provide feedback to your administrator. What would you say or tell them? CRQ

5. What can your administrator do to make you feel more supported? SQ1

6. Given what you know about emotional intelligence, what specific components do you feel your administrator is best at exemplifying consistently with you? CRQ

7. Given what you know about emotional intelligence, what specific components do you feel your administrator could use additional training or to better support you? CRQ

Journal Prompt Questions

1. Reflect on the quality of your relationship with your administrator. Describe both positive and negative experiences you have had with them and their effect on your performance as a classroom teacher.

2. Reflect on the dualistic nature of the relationship between you and your administrator. What are the things you do well? What things do you need to improve on? Describe your administrator's role and influence on your strengths and weaknesses as a high school educator.

3. Consider your specific content area. What are the challenges that are unique to your subject? How does your administrator address those subject-specific challenges you encounter?

4. Reflect on how emotionally intelligent you perceive your administrator to be. How do they respond to your varying emotions and feelings? Likewise, share how your administrator handles their emotions and feelings. What role do both respective party's emotions and feelings play in the overall professional relationship?

Sample Interview Transcript #1

1. Hello. How are you today? Thanks for agreeing to this interview. We are discussing how supportive you perceive your administrator to be and the role emotional intelligence plays in this. Describe your relationship with your assistant principal regarding how they make you feel as a classroom teacher. CRQ

My relationship with my assistant principal has grown since she first started. Imagine accepting a new position and needing to "fit in" while still being respected for your position. In the beginning, I felt like no matter what I did, it was not enough. I kept getting lengthy emails of feedback for every walkthrough that did not seem personal to what I did in that lesson. I chalked

it up to her trying to get her footing and knew that she wanted what was best for me to improve. Fast forward, to year two, I have taken immense steps to better my lessons and improve my knowledge on racial bias, classroom techniques and have read about both topics to help improve my pedagogy and relationships with my students and co-workers. The relationship I currently have with my assistant principal is one of trust and openness. When I have an issue or concern, I can approach her to talk it through and come up with a solution that fits everyone. Last year, this was not the case, but as our relationship has grown I have found myself being more open and honest with my feelings and her being more (or I perceive as more) receptive to these.

2. Describe the challenges you face as a classroom teacher responsible for core content at the high school level. SQ1

The biggest challenge I face is the lack of student motivation to complete work and/or learn. I consistently feel defeated that the lessons I have spent hours developing are not enough and then quickly get discouraged when students (or the number of students I would like) do not turn the items in for score/feedback. This makes me feel like no matter what I do in my classroom with my lessons, it is not valued by the students as much as I would hope. Next, I am a big fan of giving students feedback and trying to take the grade off the "thing." This way students are completing things to learn. Yes, this is a challenge, but this year has shown me that no matter what if on the paper, students will still compete it, but getting it turned in is another story. Lastly, having inclusion classes without a co-teacher is really a challenge. Deep down I know that I am doing the best that I can, however I consistently feel like what I am doing is not enough due to the lack of items being submitted. I do know that students are getting things completed, but not nearly as many as I would like. Trying to differentiate an activity for the

needs of ten different students is a challenge. This is just the hand that I have been dealt and I am doing the best that I can with what I have gained in experience through the years.

3. Describe a time when a lesson didn't go well during a classroom observation. How did your administrator handle the situation? Consider the feedback they provided, how they communicated with you, and how they made you feel. SQ1

In all honesty, I have had observations that I felt did not go well, but my administration ranted and raved about in our post-observation meeting. My supervisor was "shocked" that I did not think that it went well and told me I am too "hard" on myself. At the end of the meeting, I felt better with the encouraging words and now take every lesson (no matter good or bad) with a grain of salt and just try to do better next time.

4. Talk about a time when you did not feel supported by your administrator. Consider specific lessons, behavioral issues with students, parent concerns, ineffective means of providing feedback, and/or irrelevant professional development training. SQ1

I have not had very many of these moments with my current administrator. However, I have sat in several professional development opportunities where I felt my knowledge with the grading committee and portfolio committee should have excused me. These did not come from my immediate supervisor, but feeling like you have lightyears ahead of how the presenter is talking to you makes you feel like you wasted time that you cannot get back that could have been used for more valuable things.

5. Describe how much you trust your administrator when it comes to sharing your struggles as a core content teacher, your professional development needs, and concerns over curriculum choices. SQ1

Given the relationship we now have, I feel confident in sharing my struggles and PD needs/concerns with my administrator. She may not be able to change/fix them, but having her know my struggles and challenges is important to continue growth of the relationship.

6. Describe a time when your administrator "had your back." What did they do to make you feel supported? SQ2

I remember at the end of one of the marking periods during the 2022-2023 school year I have 12 students I had communicated with home about missing summative assessments and being in danger of failing the marking period. I had one more day staying after school planned and I approached her to come up with a solution. She advised me to send one more email and request a response that the student(s) would stay that day. She advised that if they didn't respond call and (if needed) leave a voicemail. Then document all these things so they were known in the system. Then if the students did not show up to make up their items, they would fail the marking period and I had already gone beyond more than I should have when students/parents did not comply with requests earlier (before the marking period ended). Another time, I had one student's mom beg and plead to give her students another chance to make a summative to pass the marking period (the day before grades were due) and he did not show up after school and lied that I was not in my classroom, which I was until 5:15. I gave her until 5:15 and he could do what he could, but he did not appear. My administrator 100% had my back on that students failing the making period and even told me to CC her on the email to the mom about the failing. Makes me feel trusted as a teacher to know she has my back.

7. Talk about a time when you felt your administrator empowered you to become a better educator. SQ2

I feel empowered to be a better educator when my administrator complements me on my lessons, and this makes me push to do better. Even her words of encouragement in my walkthrough feedback or in passing help drive me to do better.

8. Describe the frequency and nature of your interactions with your administrator that you perceive to be positive. SQ2

I would say the majority of my interactions with my administrator are positive. I always leave the conversation feeling better about my concerns and/or listened to even if it is just a rant/ "dumb" issue I am having to ask about.

9. Considering the challenges, you face as a core content teacher at the high school level. What are the ways your administrator helps you to overcome some of these challenges? SQ2

The biggest way my administrator helps me to overcome challenges is by being supportive of my classroom and what goes on in it. Her openness to wanting to help when I face challenges and come up with a solution as a team is essential to help me be comfortable in my teaching.

10. Describe a time when your administrator was visibly upset or frustrated and how it affected your interaction with them. SQ3

When my administrator seems upset, frustrated or "off" this does not make me want to interact with them. In these moments, if it is something not pressing, I usually wait until she is in a more approachable mood to bring what I need to her attention.

11. Describe how your administrator handles unexpected situations or when things don't go accordingly. SQ3

I have not witnessed this firsthand, so I'm not sure how she would react to these types of situations. Based on assumptions, I would guess she is professional and right to the point, as this is how she comes across professionally.

12. Considering your experiences with your administrator, how would you describe their level of professionalism? Provide a specific example to support your perception of their professionalism. SQ3

My administrator is the definition of professional. She always approaches things in a professional manner and those on the outside looking in would not know something was wrong. She does not mention other individuals or her feelings or what she has heard about someone else to others.

13. Describe how you feel about interacting with your administrator. How do the vast majority of these interactions make you feel? Please explain why. SQ3

The majority of my interactions with my administrator are positive and make me feel supported. Along with being supportive, she pushes me to be a better educator and human. No matter the conversation I walk away with a clear head and a path to move forward to be successful. The relationship I have built with my administrator is one of honesty, I am not afraid to tell her when I am upset or don't agree with something. Granted it took us a bit to get here, but I would not want it any other way.

Sample Interview Transcript #2

1.) Hello. How are you today? Thanks for agreeing to this interview. We are discussing how supportive you perceive your administrator to be and the role emotional intelligence plays in this. Describe your relationship with your assistant principal regarding how they make you feel as a classroom teacher. CRQ

My administrator this year was one of the best I've had in 17 years. She knew how to actually teach and understood pedagogy; you could tell she was an effective teacher herself and she challenged you enough to reflect on and grow your own pedagogy, but did not pursue ratings quotas or buzzword bingo- my instructional feedback captured an accurate description of my lesson plan in action while prodding my decisions, often with questions, that extended my own reflection and helped me grow as an instructor. She likewise was a friend and support person as I battled my own issues (personal and professional). She has an incredibly high emotional intelligence and was communicative and easy to be relaxed around. She made me feel like a great teacher, but most importantly she made me feel valued and respected. Our time was genuine and she was open and honest.

2.   Describe the challenges you face as a classroom teacher responsible for core content at the high school level. SQ1

A lot of pressure since school ratings are based on SAT. Many IEPs and accommodations require two instructors, but we are understaffed and essentially running single teacher inclusion. Providing support, maintaining primary instructional delivery, grading, contacting parents, attending all meetings, communicating with all students, delivering accommodations, collecting data and creating goals can be a lot for one person to handle. Having excessive amounts of initiatives and technology that we are forced to implement. Having to rely on parents to discipline their children because the school won't due to fears of creating data that suggests discrimination against black or special education students.

3.   Describe a time when a lesson didn't go well during a classroom observation. How did your administrator handle the situation? Consider the feedback they provided, how they communicated with you, and how they made you feel. SQ1

More recently, I was told I needed better posted Success Criteria and Learning Intentions at my summative evaluation. When I received the first formal comment, I created a series of each for multiple units I'd be teaching and sent the doc link to administrators for feedback- never received any feedback. I definitely improved, but by summative time, I was marked down heavily because of this mistake I made. I felt like I was being treated unfairly and challenged the rating and was told they "accidentally selected" that rating and they fixed it. This was all after I complained about having an awful co-teacher and they did nothing for me but tell me they were working on pressuring him to quit. This all just made me feel like a pawn, an afterthought, unappreciated.

    4.   Talk about a time when you did not feel supported by your administrator. Consider specific lessons, behavioral issues with students, parent concerns, ineffective means of providing feedback, and/or irrelevant professional development training. SQ1

I don't write kids up much because most issues can be resolved in class. This year I wrote 2 students up for cutting class. They were conferenced with over 2 school days after the event, reprimanded, and sent back with a warning. Both students reoffended within a week. When administrators start to prioritize data over reality, the kids suffer. One student actually started chronically skipping all classes the day she was reprimanded. I realize administrators are given directives from above and states can apply pressure and threaten funding if problems aren't resolved (and proven with data), but someone has to do something that puts kids first and it often falls on the teachers, especially in these situations.

5. Describe how much you trust your administrator when it comes to sharing your struggles as a core content teacher, your professional development needs, and concerns over curriculum choices. SQ1

This past year I trusted her with my deepest opinions and rawest realities. I had no filters and asked for her support when needed. It wasn't often that I needed her, but openly communicating is a comfort inducer and relieves a lot of the stress teachers may have about "evaluation". Typically, I would not share any of these items with an admin for fear they'd use it against me, especially after my experience with the evaluation rating mentioned in my answer to #3.

6. Describe a time when your administrator "had your back." What did they do to make you feel supported? SQ2

This is not a classroom but I was rebuked by our principal for missing a meeting due to needing to set my room up for the SAT the following morning. Our principal marched into my room on the morning of the following day and essentially asked me "How dare you miss that meeting, why would you do that!?" She questioned why my supervisor agreed to let me leave at 3:30, and told me we'd revisit this agreement. I don't know what my supervisor did, but I did not have to adjust my schedule and never heard about it again. She consistently had all of our back's though. And proved it time and time again by pursuing what she felt was right for the kids.

7. Talk about a time when you felt your administrator empowered you to become a better educator. SQ2

Many years ago I had the only other truly effective instructional leader administrator supervisor. Firstly, she prodded my decisions without invalidating them; she made me feel smart and validated my motivations and intentions, but made me think, reflect, and grow on the means

I've selected. Such a process made too much sense and I had a tough time returning to ineffective instructional leadership, until this past year. Secondly, this administrator encouraged me on two major initiatives, which I pursued and she continued to support me with, on a person level. Both decisions made me feel special, valued, and made me want to be better.

8. Describe the frequency and nature of your interactions with your administrator that you perceive to be *positive.* SQ2

Good admin: Frequent genuine small talk, not wastefully so, but enough to know our own purpose and motivations, and monitor the things we both care for, whatever they may be. In the case of the 2 admin I've mentioned that were amazing, we bonded over talking about our families as they also had young children of their own. Occasional Insider Info, not gossipy or nosey ends, but relevant information that is provided by the admin to gauge my feelings or thoughts. In the case of the 2 admin I mentioned, both would ask my two cents on topics that I had experience with or, at the least, would be objective about. Being respectful enough to acknowledge strengths yet also clearly and plainly state weaknesses. Bad Admin: Tend to obviously be working towards specific data ends and outcomes based on current district initiatives. Fail to personally connect with staff. Share no information with staff unless required to do so and make all decisions behind closed doors without input from the staff they oversee. Tend to under-do their job and tend to have priorities other than students.

9. Considering the challenges, you face as a core content teacher at the high school level. What are the ways your administrator helps you to overcome some of these challenges? SQ2

While very few of my concerns were addressed, I was validated in having them by one administrator. There were situations I was involved in that exploded beyond me and my

classroom, and I tried to warn superiors about the possibility, but was rebuked or ignored, and then the thing I warned them about ended up occurring. No one I tried to warn circled back and said anything to me, not even a thank you for not being a part of the problem. Sometimes people can be way too proud and they are unable to see things that are correct because it is in conflict with their perspective. A lot of the people like this in education end up administrators because they feel they have the teeth to support their visions; if only they realized humility and selflessness would take them further than pride.

10. Describe a time when your administrator was visibly upset or frustrated and how it affected your interaction with them. SQ3

During the situation I described above, I was sarcastically rebuked and told to observe CTE teachers to aid in my delivery of accommodations. My initial contact was to warn the administrator that our EDs and case managers were telling parents solo taught classes were co-taught and accommodations that couldn't be delivered by one person were being delivered. I got very frustrated and responded with a similar level of sarcasm. I had to be the bigger person and retract my email and apologize to everyone. The administrator who told me to observe CTE teachers never apologized to me for the email, and also never circled back to apologize after our school was legally involved with families for failure to comply, even when I had parents say in these legal proceedings that "Mr. Becker was the only teacher appropriately supporting my child." and I know that was said in at least 2 formal meetings. Pride again is a problem. I don't even care for the apologies or acknowledgement for my ego, but I'd like to be productive and cooperative with this person rather than opposed. It's hard to progress to a place of collaboration with this administrator; if we can't acknowledge disagreements, how can we ever achieve resolutions?

11. Describe how your administrator handles unexpected situations or when things don't go accordingly. SQ3

My supervisor this year was excellent and always erred on the side of appreciating the impromptu. Life is not scripted so I really valued this aspect of her. This is probably the number one reason I felt comfortable and was able to open up fully to her.

12. Considering your experiences with your administrator, how would you describe their level of professionalism? Provide a specific example to support your perception of their professionalism. SQ3

She was great, but I think they are all polished, often to a fault. My administrator this year was real and was honest about her opinions. I think she needed to know I was her confidant as well though, informally. Professionalism in one sense is just being polished and presenting your work self, but I think an effective admin navigates professionalism in different modes. Some folks need that ultra polished version, some moments do too, but some of your staff needs to know you are real and the admin needs to know they are real. What good is a leader you feel you have to impress or posture for? What good is an employee who can't bring their authentic self to your work group? I think professionalism is in a continuum and finding that balance and learning to whom and to what extent you can also be your authentic self is a critical aspect of successfully navigating professionalism.

13. Describe how you feel about interacting with your administrator. How do the vast majority of these interactions make you feel? Please explain why. SQ3

This year I feel great (the good side of this whole interview has mostly been about her, so you understand why). But in previous years with less effective administrators, I'd often feel

bothered or like we completed an acting class after interactions. Nothing seemed real or worthy

of the time I was spending when I had other things to do to complete my own responsibilities.

Appendix B

Phenomenological Research Questions:

Central Research Question

What influence does the emotional intelligence of high school administrators have on classroom teachers' perceptions of the administrator's support?

Sub-Question One

How do high school classroom teachers describe administrator's support?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of high school classroom teachers who perceive administrators as supportive?

Sub-Question Three

How do high school administrators' emotions and feelings influence classroom teachers' perception of the quality of interactions?