

**Perspectives of Elementary Educators on Teacher Retention:
A Basic Qualitative Study**

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Abstract

High teacher turnover disrupts instruction continuity, hinders student learning experiences, and leads to financial and logistical burdens on schools and districts. The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. A gap in the existing literature reveals the need for a focused exploration of the unique perspectives of elementary educators on teacher retention. Researchers have often overlooked the distinct challenges faced by elementary teachers. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. This study addressed two key research questions that focused on (a) educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom and (b) administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom. Utilizing the transformational leadership theory as the theoretical framework underscored the need to prioritize guidance, inspiration, and motivation. Fifteen elementary educators in a Georgia school system participated in the study. Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators to gather relevant data. Data were collected utilizing individual, semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded, evaluated, and transcribed using NVivo 12 software. Key findings from the study revealed that a safe and positive work environment, effective coaching and mentoring programs, manageable workloads, adequate resources, supportive relationships, and recognition significantly impact teacher retention.

Keywords: elementary school, elementary teacher, teacher retention, transformational leadership

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my husband and various family members. To my husband, Aveary, thank you for being my rock, prayer partner, sounding board, motivator, encourager, adviser, activity planner, and chef. You always ensured I maintained a healthy diet, took vitamins, rested, read inspirational quotes and scriptures, and took necessary breaks. To my mother, Roberta, a God-fearing woman who cultivated and shared words of affirmation, brightened my day, and boosted my motivation to achieve my goals. To my dad, who always encouraged me to achieve my dreams. Thank you to my siblings, who always stayed in touch, sent encouraging messages, and organized family gatherings where I could participate. I also dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents, who were doctorate-level educators and have since passed away; they prayed for me to believe in myself, strive for my goals, and achieve things that seemed beyond my imagination. Their legacy has inspired me to continue pursuing similar accomplishments in my life.

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I thank God for allowing me to embrace getting my doctorate. Growing up, my mother reminded my siblings and me of the scripture from Jer 29:11. I know God has great things in store for me. His plans for me are to prosper, have hope, and have a future. As I reflect on this doctoral journey, I know I could not have made it without God and the support of my family and friends. My faith in God has brought me this far. I kept the scripture from Phil 4:13 in front of me. From an early age, I learned to acknowledge God, appreciate others, and work hard to achieve my aspirations. I believe everything else falls into place with God first in my life. I knew that with strength from God, I could complete the journey. I thank my professors for their unwavering support, guidance, encouragement, and valuable feedback. I owe my current level of success to their time and insightful assistance. I thank my chair, Dr. Lana Sloan, for always being my encourager and providing support and guidance throughout my journey. When times were hard, she never gave up on me. I thank my committee members, Dr. Dean Gualco and Dr. Sofia Lafayette, for generously sharing their time and knowledge. I also thank my professors, Dr. Alaina Desjardin, Dr. Rebecca Curtis, and Dr. Richard Rogers, for their valuable input and for providing resources to support my progress. I want to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Wendy Kaaki for helping me understand the research process and for believing I had the endurance and determination to achieve my goal. I thank my school district for allowing me to conduct the research I am passionate about. I am deeply grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues for their support, understanding, and belief in me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Education has remained a fundamental component in every human dispensation. The necessity of education is due to the irreplaceable roles that educators play in instilling knowledge. Such viewpoints would explain why the teaching profession and teachers have been highly valued in schools. Research in education in the last 10 years has focused on retaining educators while providing favorable learning environments (Williams et al., 2022). Ingersoll and Strong (2011b) indicated that teachers are the most essential assets in learning environments because they hold the key to raising student achievement levels. Despite their importance, teacher retention has been a persistent issue in the education sector for decades (Ingersoll et al., 2019c). The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality.

It is essential to understand the factors that influence teacher retention to develop effective strategies to effectively address the issue of teacher retention. Educators have an important impact on elementary school students, making it essential to ensure they remain in the profession (Nketsia et al., 2022). Nketsia et al. (2022) claimed the longer teachers stay in the profession, the more experience they obtain in delivering high-quality instruction. When related to boosting retention, understanding why teachers leave or remain at a school is important with respect to factors such as job satisfaction, job engagement, workload, compensation, and administrative support (Sutcher et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2022). Such considerations would also help understand the retention of elementary administrators, especially those working in rural school environments. This study's findings were expected to be valuable to educational policymakers, administrators, and other stakeholders in devising measures to retain experienced teachers and enhance the overall quality of education. The following sections focus on the

following areas: (a) background of the problem, (b) the statement of the problem, (c) the purpose and the significance of the study, (d) the theoretical framework that guided the study, (e) important terms and their definitions, (f) the research assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations of the study, and (g) chapter summary.

Background of the Problem

Retaining teachers has shown to be a serious global challenge (Sutcher et al., 2019). Numerous factors contribute significantly to teachers leaving the workplace, especially for educators working in rural schools (Marshall et al., 2022). Factors cited include low payment or remuneration, resource insufficiency, and lack of support from school administrations (Marshall et al., 2022; Seelig & McCabe, 2021; Sutcher et al., 2019). Over the past decade, high attrition rates and a decline in teacher recruitment have been blamed for approximately 28% of teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019). Marshall et al. (2022) found that teacher shortages can contribute to student performance declines. School districts experience staffing shortages due to decreased budgets based on student enrollment, tax revenue declines, and a lack of ample administrative support (Seelig & McCabe, 2021).

Teacher retention has been associated with numerous factors, such as poor working conditions, compensation, and job satisfaction (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). The common perception is that teacher attrition is regularly linked to a lack of support, excessive workload, low pay, and a lack of autonomy in the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2019c; See et al., 2020; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). According to Arviv Elyashiv and Navon (2021), the career field is still facing serious challenges in retention, and researchers have explained that the profession is seen as a continuous cycle of educators entering and exiting. Issues such as teacher pay, student behavior, unsatisfactory work, and educational environments have been blamed for teacher turnover (Beck

et al., 2020). According to teachers who have quit the profession, instability, program closures, and fewer possibilities for students to achieve their academic goals contribute to the problem (Moser & McKim, 2020). Kaewnaknaew et al. (2022) indicated that school districts can attract and retain qualified educators by offering attractive compensation and benefits, facilitating access to continuing education, and launching mentoring initiatives. Although existing literature has shown the need for school districts to recognize and celebrate teachers' successes and endeavor to foster an encouraging workplace and school culture, there has been minimal attention to elementary educators, leading to an approximately 23% increase in teacher attrition (Park et al., 2021).

Increased retention is essential because elementary teachers' performance affects children's academic achievement (Marshall et al., 2022). Understanding why elementary teachers leave or stay at school is the first step toward increasing teacher retention. However, researchers have made little effort to study elementary teacher retention by considering educator viewpoints regarding administrative support (Nketsia et al., 2022).

Statement of the Problem

The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. Bacher-Hicks et al. (2023) focused on strategies that can help improve teacher retention. Competitive, salaried benefits, professional development opportunities, and mentorship programs are some effective strategies for improving teacher retention (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Beck et al., 2020). Despite such propositions, with elementary teacher attrition escalating to approximately 33% over the last 3 years, the retention of elementary teachers has remained a persistent challenge (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023). Akiri and Dori (2022) emphasized the need for resource provision and career development while seeking

to augment teacher retention. Teachers require opportunities for professional development to keep up with changes in the field and maintain their expertise (Luesse et al., 2022). Akiri and Dori (2022) found that making available cutting-edge tools and materials also keeps educators interested and enthusiastic about their work, leading to reduced turnover. Although there are effective approaches to retaining teachers, a dearth of literature exists regarding specific strategies that can be used to improve elementary teacher retention based on school district uniqueness (Luesse et al., 2022).

Beck et al. (2020) revealed that mentorship programs and coaching programs are useful in reducing teacher turnover rates. Mentoring programs bring together seasoned educators and first-year teachers to ease the latter's entry into the field and foster their development as educators (Beck et al., 2020). Akiri and Dori (2022) indicated that educators who participate in coaching programs frequently report feeling more associated with their partners, which improves the probability of staying in the field. Although these insights are useful in improving teacher retention, it is unknown how they can be applied to the specific elementary teacher population (Beck et al., 2020).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) suggested that strategies for improving retention for elementary teachers may not be effective without gathering educator perspectives. Research findings from this study may address a significant knowledge gap regarding teacher retention in elementary schools, especially in rural areas, and might contribute to the body of literature. Although the factors impacting teacher retention have been addressed in the literature, very few studies explicitly focused on them in rural school settings, and even fewer addressed such issues in the context of elementary-level education. The absence of elementary teacher

perceptions regarding retention in existing literature could help explain why elementary teacher shortages between 2019 and 2020 hit a high of 34% (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. With few paved roads, few entertainment facilities, and predominantly agricultural land, the district serving as the research site is classified as a rural region. Eight primary schools are in this public school system. A qualitative methodology and basic research design were used to achieve the purpose of the study. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is the best method for studying a phenomenon that necessitates participant ideas, perceptions, and experiences (Belotto, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A basic qualitative design allows participants to discuss their reality through subjective, firsthand meanings and experiences (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). According to Belotto (2018), a basic qualitative design ensures that an issue has research questions that will guide the study and is the most logical form of research.

The participants were recruited from 200 educators, including elementary teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, working in eight elementary schools in a rural school system in Georgia. Fifteen educators serving at the elementary level were included in the purposive sample. Snowball sampling was proposed as an alternative sampling method but was not implemented. Individual, semistructured interviews were used to collect data regarding educators' perspectives on teacher retention and administrators' support in the elementary schools. The most common way of collecting data for qualitative studies is an interview protocol,

which was appropriate for this study because it enables participants to reply to preset, open-ended questions (Belotto, 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Significance of the Study

This research could be important to elementary educators in a rural school system experiencing declines in teachers' retention and increases in departure from the profession (Moser & McKim, 2020; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Understanding the value of the education sector can help develop strategies, ideas, and solutions for addressing teacher retention (See et al., 2020). Elementary administrators can benefit from the study because it might help them understand the specific needs inhibiting teacher retention (Park et al., 2021; Steiner & Woo, 2021). The study may be significant to education policymakers in generating insights to help address the teacher turnover crisis, increase focus on working school culture and better remuneration, and deter teachers from seeking less stressful jobs that pay more (Beck et al., 2020). Findings may foster higher levels of student achievement, given the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement (Luesse et al., 2022). Moser and McKim (2020) noted that competitive starting salaries and professional growth and development rewards motivate teachers to stay in the profession and focus on students' academic achievement.

Results from this study have the potential for positive social change. According to Seelig and McCabe (2021), mentorship programs that are targeted at improving teacher retention can significantly enhance the inculcation of positive life attitudes among students through the influence of teachers. Seelig and McCabe suggested that by improving teacher retention through mentorship programs, teachers can guide students to become more sociable and productive members of society. When teachers are subjected to coaching and mentorship programs to improve retention, they can enhance family-related efficiencies (Nketsia et al., 2022). Well-

designed-mentorship programs improve teachers' feelings of efficacy, attitudes, and instructional skills that help them effectively address family issues (Seelig & McCabe, 2021).

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study. Educators' perceptions of teacher retention were explored in the first research question. The second research question addressed educators' perceptions of the administrative support they received. The research questions were:

Research Question 1: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

Research Question 2: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

Theoretical Framework

Burns's (1978) transformational leadership theory was the theoretical framework that guided this study. The theory's main proposition is that individuals can develop leadership skills when subjected to a process that involves educating, counseling, motivating, and providing others with the challenge and assistance they require to become effective leaders (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership theory is founded on the principle that influential leaders serve as role models, lend appropriate support, and generate a favorable workplace culture that promotes employee engagement and retention. According to Jovanovic and Ciric (2016), the essential component of transformational leadership theory is the relationship between a leader and the team. When applied to teacher retention, the transformational leadership theory can assist school and district administrators in developing environments that are more accommodating for teachers, provide them with the resources they require in the classroom, and foster a climate that supports well-being and job satisfaction (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016).

Kramer (2007) claimed that transformational leadership has a specific approach to leadership that promotes results both inside and outside the workplace. By encouraging motivation, distributing extraordinary expectations, challenging the mind, respecting the individual, and inspiring personal growth, transformational leadership is about encouraging motivation. Akdemir (2020) asserted that transformational leadership directly impacts employee fulfillment. To understand elementary teachers' perspectives regarding retention, transformational leadership theory can be interpreted in terms of administrative roles and support (Akdemir, 2020).

This study was based on the transformational leadership theory, which supports the leader-follower dynamic and intellectual stimulation (Burns, 1978). The theory includes four main ideas: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Burns, 1978). Idealized influence is achieved when leaders live up to their values, inspirational motivation promotes mission consistency and values, intellectual stimulation encourages innovation and creativity without public criticism, and individualized consideration maximizes leadership effectiveness when leaders act as mentors and reward creativity (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016).

A qualitative approach was used in this study to investigate elementary educators' perspectives on teacher retention and administrator support in a rural Georgia school system. The research questions were meant to help discover educators' opinions and thoughts on teacher retention and administrative support in elementary schools. Fifteen elementary educators in Georgia participated in individual, semistructured interviews to collect data. Data were then transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12 software. This strategy ensured a thorough

investigation of the research issues and compatibility with transformational leadership's theoretical framework.

Definitions of Terms

Beck et al. (2020) indicated that clear definitions of key terms within a research study are essential for ensuring researchers and nonprofessionals grasp the study's scope and purpose. By providing these definitions, readers can understand the subject matter and nuances better. In this section, specific terms that are crucial to the study are defined, including elementary school, elementary teacher, teacher retention, and transformational leadership.

Elementary school provides a period of formal education after preschool and before secondary school with a focus on basic skills such as writing, reading, science, and mathematics during students' first 4 to 8 years (Luesse et al., 2022).

Elementary teacher is defined as an educator who works closely with elementary-age students (in most cases, children between kindergarten and fifth-grade levels) to assist them in learning important skills essential for development and future education (Akiri & Dori, 2022).

Teacher retention is defined as an education field that concentrates on certain factors, such as teacher demographics and school characteristics, which affect whether teachers remain on their job, transfer to teach in a different school, or resign before retirement (Beck et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that causes change in social systems and individuals and deals with creating positive and valuable change in followers, which results in developing followers into future leaders (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016).

Assumptions

An assumption is a premise taken for granted as the basis for further inquiry (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Two assumptions were made in the study. One of the assumptions was that

study participants would not be deceptive in their answers and would answer questions honestly and to the best of their ability. Jovanovic and Ciric (2016) found this assumption important as the results generated by the research instruments depend on honest and sincere answers. It was also assumed that the study would accurately represent elementary teachers. The consequence of generalizability with these assumptions was that the results would not truly represent the intended study population of elementary students if these assumptions were not met.

Scope and Delimitations

Scope and delimitations in qualitative research frame a study's focus (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). According to Belotto (2018), the scope of the study refers to the extent to which a certain research area is explored and the parameters within which the study operates. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) claimed that the scope gives the reader an insight into the study's aim and what should be anticipated. The scope of this study was delimited to a sample of 15 educators serving at the elementary level who work in a rural school system in Georgia.

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019), delimitations include limited sample size, inadequate methodology, a lack of resources, or other factors that might cause the study's flaws. Acknowledging the significance, Belotto (2018) emphasized that delimitation serves as a consciously chosen parameter crucial for maintaining research focus (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Study delimitations encompass the boundaries set in a research study, highlighting what to include and exclude (Belotto, 2018). This study only included educators at the elementary level who served in rural schools in Georgia. Delimitations of the research entailed excluding other teachers who did not meet the inclusion criteria, other stakeholders, including students, and the potential influence on the generalizability of the results due to the exclusive emphasis on elementary school teachers in rural Georgian schools.

Limitations

Limitations entail publicly identifying flaws that could have been better addressed and criticizing the researchers' assumptions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Study limitations encompass flaws or shortcomings resulting from the unavailability of resources, a small sample size, and flawed methodology (Palinkas et al., 2015). According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), limitations affect the scope of the study and can impact findings and conclusions. This study relied on a relatively small sample size, which could limit the transferability of the study should saturation not have been attained. A small sample size allowed for greater richness and depth of data through participant interviews. The use of purposive sampling was another limitation. Palinkas et al. (2015) highlighted the value of purposive sampling in qualitative research, which guarantees participant diversity, enhances data richness, and supports the exploration of specific research questions.

Purposive sampling was used to select individuals who met the criteria specific to the study phenomenon. Using purposive sampling mitigated the limitation and ensured that selected individuals met the predetermined criteria. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), the purposive sampling strategy can introduce bias as the data gathered will be aligned with individuals with specific experiences. Although the small sample size enabled comprehensive and detailed data collection, it could restrict how broadly the study's conclusions may be applied. Transparency, diversity, neutrality in data gathering, and data triangulation should be used to overcome these limits and biases to improve the study's credibility (Arias Valencia, 2022).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in

Georgia. Study objectives stemmed from the concern associated with elementary teacher retention and the negative impact on students, schools, communities, and the education sector. Transformational leadership theory guided this study as it embodies inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration concepts that may be attributed to teacher retention. Considering how elementary teachers view leadership, school administrators could assist in interpreting perceptions of teacher retention.

This study may be important to the education sector as findings can be used to develop strategies, ideas, and solutions to mitigate elementary teacher attrition. Developing findings related to mentorship and coaching. Attempting to improve teacher retention may also help meet the social needs of educators, enabling them to address personal issues more effectively while instilling societal values and attitudes in students. Because participant ideas, perceptions, and experiences are essential to understanding a phenomenon, the basic qualitative methodology was chosen as the most appropriate method for this research.

Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 elementary school educators in Georgia to collect data. Data analysis involved using thematic analysis. The subsequent Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review guided by the research questions and the study's purpose.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Receiving an education is essential to learning and fostering global change for the majority. Educators are required to support learning in an educational setting, owing to the importance of education, especially in the early grades. Teachers are valuable, and school districts value the teaching profession. Many societies have struggled for a long time to create and maintain a positive teaching environment (Seelig & McCabe, 2021).

Education administrators have long been anxious about hiring and keeping qualified teachers (Williams et al., 2022). Schools have faced difficulties finding, retaining, and training new teachers since the COVID-19 pandemic. Each year, 8% of instructors quit their jobs (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Many states do not have enough teachers for all the classrooms, with 90,000 teaching positions being open in 2017 (Sutcher et al., 2019). If the teacher shortage continues, states are unlikely to fill all their positions. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) pointed out that many teachers have left the field of education in the past few years. According to Sutcher et al. (2019), states nationwide had teacher shortages at the start of the 2018 academic year, and the problem is ongoing (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023; Seelig & McCabe, 2021).

Throughout the lives of primary school students, teachers lay a crucial foundation for learning and academic achievement (Nketsia et al., 2022). Teachers must feel appreciated and motivated to sustain their work in the classroom. According to Nketsia et al. (2022), teachers get more experience the longer they serve in the field, empowering them to give students adequate instruction. Understanding why teachers leave or stay in a school is a crucial first step in enhancing teacher retention.

The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. High teacher turnover rates are attributed to several factors, including low pay, a lack of support and professional growth, and difficult working conditions (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Exploring the problem of teacher retention is intended, along with identifying knowledge gaps and formulating research questions, to guide further study. To raise teacher retention in primary schools, understanding the elements that affect teacher retention and investigating practical methods is important.

Education is essential to society, and teachers play a crucial role in shaping young minds. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), the most crucial asset in schools is teachers, who hold the key to raising student achievement levels. Despite their importance, teacher retention has been a persistent issue in the education sector for decades (Ingersoll et al., 2019c). Researchers have found that teacher turnover negatively affects students, schools, and communities (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011).

Research has shown several factors contributing to high teacher turnover rates, including low salaries, inadequate support from school administration, lack of professional development opportunities, and challenging work environments (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011b; Sutchter et al., 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic also led to complexities in achieving teacher retention. The challenges posed by COVID-19 involved adapting to new teaching methods, managing remote classrooms, and dealing with the mental health impacts (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023). District decision-makers should collaborate with educators and school administrators to create and implement various mental health and wellness interventions (Steiner & Woo, 2021).

It is essential to understand why teachers leave or remain in their jobs to address the problem of teacher retention (Moser & McKim, 2020). By gaining insights into the factors that

influence teacher retention, schools and policymakers can develop effective strategies to support and retain teachers (See et al., 2020). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The main goal of the research was to understand the factors that influence teacher retention and explore the effectiveness of different strategies for improving teacher retention in the elementary school setting.

Teacher retention affects the education sector's stability and quality (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Understanding the factors that influence teacher retention and developing effective strategies to support and retain teachers is essential to address this issue (Steiner & Woo, 2021). The aim was to provide a foundation for future research on teacher retention in the elementary school setting.

In the following sections of the literature review chapter, the role of transformational leadership in retaining teachers is explored. Four main sections are included in this chapter: (a) a process for conducting a literature search, (b) a theoretical framework, (c) a review of the research literature, and (d) a summary of the literature on teacher retention. Before discussing how transformational leadership might improve teacher retention, the theoretical perspective and its characteristics are explained. The empirical data and evidence from the literature demonstrating the success of transformational leadership in retaining teachers are also explored in this chapter.

Literature Search Strategy

Library databases and search engines provided by the American College of Education (ACE) library were used to search for literature. The search was conducted via electronic databases, including resources such as ProQuest, EBSCO, Wiley, and SAGE Publishing. The

following literature search sites were used to locate teacher retention studies and review the bibliographies of applicable articles: Google Scholar, ERIC, and SAGE Premier Journals. The *Education Journal*, the *Journal of Educational Research*, and the *Journal of Teacher Education* were also searched to discover pertinent information.

Individual terms and key phrases were applied in the searches, including *teacher shortage in the U.S.*, *teacher attrition*, *teacher perspective on retention*, *new and experienced educators*, *elementary education*, *transformational leadership*, *qualitative study*, *leadership role in education*, *improve teacher retention*, and *retain teachers*. Alternative words, synonyms, or related vocabulary helped to expand the search for information. Administrators and new, veteran, and retired teachers were contacted to capture key terms and phrases on teacher retention used in the search. At least 76% of articles involved in the search were peer-reviewed and published within the past 5 years. The search further helped identify seminal and historical articles. Articles retrieved through the search strategy contributed to developing the study topic and provided useful information on the significance of teacher retention and how it affects student achievement.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership theory formed the theoretical framework that guided this study. Leadership skills can be developed and demonstrated through transformational leadership (Buschlen, 2022). According to Kramer (2007), this transformative process entails educating, counseling, motivating, and providing people with the challenge and assistance they require to become effective leaders.

Transformational leadership theory suggests that leaders should empower and encourage employees to accomplish an objective that everyone shares (Akdemir, 2020; Buschlen, 2022).

Transformational leadership theory implies that influential leaders serve as role models, lend appropriate support, and generate a favorable workplace culture that promotes employee engagement and retention (Akdemir, 2020). The transformational leadership theory, when applied to teacher retention, can assist school and district administrators in developing environments that are more accommodating for teachers, provide the resources required in the classroom, and foster a climate that supports well-being and job satisfaction (Park et al., 2021).

In leadership, relationships are crucial (Akdemir, 2020; Beck et al., 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). According to Jovanovic and Ciric (2016), the essential component of transformational leadership theory is the relationship between a leader and the team. Leaders in the school and district may help improve teacher retention by comprehending what is most important for teachers. Teachers' confidence and self-esteem increase when they feel listened to and supported in the workplace (Khan et al., 2020). School leaders should understand the importance of motivating and appreciating teachers (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). The morale and motivation of the team members who work with transformative leaders also rise during their interactions (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016).

According to Kramer (2007), transformational leadership has a specific approach to leadership that yields results in and out of the workplace. In recovering from the unanticipated disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders within a school system who used transformational leadership to move forward possessed specific abilities (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). A few of these abilities included motivating others by setting high expectations, challenging individuals' minds, respecting each individual, and inspiring personal growth (Kramer, 2007). Administrators must establish a secure and encouraging work environment that

encourages employee involvement and provides the tools to help them develop transformational leadership skills (Park et al., 2021).

An effective school principal is approachable and demonstrates fairness and respect for everyone (Gold, 2022). According to Akdemir (2020), transformational leadership directly impacts employee fulfillment. Transformational leadership guides the principal and helps create an environment where everyone is treated equally and fairly (Kramer, 2007). This approach also helps principals understand how their conduct and attitudes affect the success of the school, teachers, and students (Kramer, 2007). As leaders celebrate the success of every student, they also celebrate the underlying values and work ethic of the school and its teachers. Through teamwork, transformational leadership impacts employees' emotional loyalty to the organization and job satisfaction (Park et al., 2021).

According to Allensworth and Hart (2018), administrators have a major influence on student learning because they control the school climate. Numerous research studies have underscored the importance of principal leadership on teachers' perceptions of their school's culture (Allensworth & Hart, 2018). Research demonstrates that principal leadership significantly impacts teacher turnover rates, especially for teachers of color and those working in challenging school settings (Goodwin, 2023). Those principals who teachers view as supportive and collaborative instructional leaders are less likely to leave their positions (Gold, 2022). Teachers place high importance on developing trusting relationships with their principals.

Principals must create conditions where teachers can collaborate and feel valued (Gold, 2022), and school districts can improve principal leadership and teacher retention (Marshall et al., 2022). Districts give administrators the time and resources to create a positive school environment, support strong teacher relationships, and serve as instructional leaders.

The principal's role may also need to be redefined, supported, and evaluated. Conducting school climate surveys that ask teachers how they feel the principal supports them may prove necessary (Hopper et al., 2022).

Research Literature Review

The search for existing literature focused on teacher retention and the role of leaders in encouraging employees. These areas included teacher retention challenges, understanding teachers' perspectives, factors that contribute to teacher attrition and low retention rates, factors that influence teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession, and the impact of teacher turnover on students and school districts. It is also crucial to understand the principal's role in motivating and appreciating teachers to lower retention rates.

Challenge of Teacher Retention

The challenge of teacher retention is a major focus for many educational institutions worldwide. Many factors contribute significantly to teachers leaving the workplace (Marshall et al., 2022). Some leave due to a lack of funds, resources, and support from administrators (Ingersoll et al., 2019c; See et al., 2020; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). The following three areas play a major role in teacher retention: (a) the problem of teacher shortages, (b) teacher attrition with low retention rates, and (c) the impact of teacher turnover on students and school districts.

Overview of the Teacher Shortage Problem in the United States

Learning is essential for growth and survival, as are other basic needs such as air and water. According to Akiri and Dori (2022) and Luesse et al. (2022), education plays a significant role in determining the nation's strength, and leaders must have teachers to impart the knowledge. High attrition rates and a decline in teacher recruitment have been significant causes

of teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019). The shortages of teachers can contribute to greater complications, making it essential to increase retention rates.

Challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic created dissension in school districts, including teachers leaving the profession (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023; Nagel, 2022). School districts experience staffing shortages due to decreased budgets based on student enrollment, a fall in tax revenue, and a lack of resources (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). According to the most recent data available, the average school-level teacher retention rate in North Carolina was 80%, and the retention rate in the lowest-poverty schools in North Carolina was nearly 84% (The Learning Policy Institute, 2019). By the end of 2022, 18% of U.S. public schools had at least one teacher position to be filled, whereas 27% had multiple vacancies (Nagel, 2022).

Factors That Contribute to Teacher Attrition and Low Retention Rates

According to a 2021 research brief by the Learning Policy Institute in North Carolina, the following working-condition factors were associated with teacher retention: teacher and school leadership, professional learning and collaboration, community support and parent engagement, teachers' collective practice and efficacy, and student conduct (Berry et al., 2021). Schools and policymakers can select specific recruitment and retention strategies by better understanding what works best regarding teacher perspectives (See et al., 2020). Countless factors, such as instructor education and support, working conditions, compensation, and job satisfaction, influence teacher retention. The perception is teacher attrition is regularly linked to a lack of support, excessive workload, low pay, and a lack of autonomy in the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2019c; See et al., 2020; Seelig & McCabe, 2021).

Impact of Teacher Turnover on Students and School Districts

Each student thrives on the availability of teachers in the classroom to fill the gaps or take the place of the education that students cannot get in a home setting. Although teachers are needed, few enroll in teaching programs, and more leave the profession each year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). School districts face challenges when filling teacher vacancies and increasing student achievement. The biggest influence on student achievement is having a qualified teacher in the classroom (Williams et al., 2022). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), teachers are deemed highly qualified after 7 years.

Without teachers, many parents might be compelled to reduce work hours to help educate their children and, ultimately, not be able to adequately provide for their families (Moser & McKim, 2020). Although some parents may lack an education beyond a high school diploma, having a certified teacher can provide students with greater educational experience in a classroom setting (Williams et al., 2022). Effective teachers must be retained for the profession to remain relevant; student learning declines when they leave the field, and programs are forced to close (Moser & McKim, 2020).

The U.S. Department of Education's (2023) mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. By providing leadership, technical assistance, and financial support, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2023) aims to empower states, districts, and other organizations to meet the various needs of every student. With these two missions in place, the impact teacher turnover has on school districts is astronomical as related to the goal of each mission. Disparities in grade levels, student placement, and instructor experience result in

teacher turnover in the workforce (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023). Not having teachers in place makes each goal nearly impossible to achieve.

Understanding Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers are key to the world's success today (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Ingersoll et al., 2019c; Sutchter et al., 2019). Someone must teach life skills and encourage students to challenge themselves, develop their talents, and achieve their creative potential. The duties and responsibilities of a teacher can be many and never-ending. Being a teacher has always been demanding (Marshall et al., 2022). A teacher can help young people who aspire to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, chefs, and many other professions grow and develop. According to Arviv Elyashiv and Navon (2021), teachers form relationships with students that last for years.

Although the teaching profession has a fair share of pros and cons, the career field still faces serious challenges in retention (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). The teaching profession is seen as a continuous cycle of educators entering and exiting (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Ingersoll et al., 2019c). Paying attention to what teachers say about retention is important because the workload only increases for those who choose to stay. As the number of teachers continues to decrease and the student population continues to rise, the likelihood of teacher burnout is inevitable. Marshall et al. (2022) claimed that more than 2 years after the pandemic began, teachers are still experiencing high burnout and low morale.

Overview of the Importance of Understanding Teachers' Perspectives

Because educators play a significant role in global society, it is important to get their perspectives on factors affecting the educational system. (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Sutchter et al., 2019). Educators need to be included in the case studies when determining how to

better shape the system. Teachers who are fully prepared and have the resources to succeed remain in the profession (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Sutchter et al., 2019).

With the weight of future generations in their hands, teachers need to share their voices and authorities should listen to them. Arviv Elyashiv and Navon (2021) found that if teachers have the resources to do their jobs well, student learning and academic success can be improved.

Geier (2020) discovered the amount of effort students put forth is influenced by both the importance and expectations of their teachers. This finding suggests that it is teachers who set the tone. Students then take cues from teachers and respond either negatively or positively to their behavior and expectations. The effort that the student chooses to put in is based on the attitude of the teacher. According to Beck et al. (2020), having a handle on behavior management is critical in staying in the teaching field. Teachers' perspectives are significant and relevant because of everything for which they are responsible and accountable.

Factors That Influence Teachers' Decisions to Stay or Leave the Profession

Although teachers differ in their perspectives about whether to stay or leave the profession, the overall retention rate for teachers is declining (Sutchter et al., 2019). Reasons for the decline include inadequate pay, poor student behavior, and unsatisfactory working and educational environments (Beck et al., 2020; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Moser and McKim (2020) stated instability, program closures, and fewer opportunities for students are some of the factors reported by teachers who have left the profession. According to Moser and McKim, 30% to 50% of teachers will leave their jobs during the first 5 years of employment. Retirement and transfer are perhaps less unfavorable variables that have impacted the decline in teacher retention (Moser & McKim, 2020).

The list of reasons teachers stay in the profession is varied as well. Many teachers remain in positions for distinct reasons, including ties to the community, close friendships, dedication to students, and expanded chances for leadership and collaboration (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Teachers become more productive with each additional year spent in the classroom (Beck et al., 2020), and dedication to students is a primary reason teachers stay in the profession (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). A student's relationship with a teacher is the most important in a student's life (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Luesse et al., 2022). Teachers may choose to remain in the profession not to disappoint students they have helped succeed.

Studies That Have Addressed Teachers' Perspectives on Retention

Teachers know that the retention rates have dropped and have extended advice on how the education system can return to normalcy. One event does not typically make someone choose to leave (Kaiser & Thompson, 2021). Many veteran teachers interviewed mentioned how schools needed to become more dependable. According to the teachers, the coordination of placements, the scheduling of positions, and the authenticity of the field experiences are all essential factors in teacher retention (Beck et al., 2020). Authentic field experiences refer to the need for diversity.

An experienced English language arts teacher claimed that, due to his suburban upbringing, teaching in an urban setting was necessary for him and other teachers (Beck et al., 2020). The suburban upbringing of an experienced English language arts teacher was needed to teach in the urban environment (Beck et al., 2020). Students need exposure to teachers who are different from themselves because, in terms of demographics, White middle-class females often

enroll in college to pursue careers as teachers after their senior year in high school (Beck et al., 2020).

According to Goodwin (2023), the benefits of having teachers of color in their classrooms are enormous for students of color. Diversity helps the teacher be more flexible. An educator must be able to work in several different environments and adapt. The teacher's perception of teaching in the inner city among different races and backgrounds was more realistic and like the real world compared to the suburban areas (Goodwin, 2023).

Most veteran teachers also agreed that positive mentoring contributed to their retention in the field and could help with the retention of teachers if utilized more frequently. According to Maready et al. (2021), mentoring techniques can help retain new teachers. Mentoring makes new teachers feel more at home and gives them time to understand what being a teacher entails. Teachers gain firsthand knowledge of being an educator from their mentors (Beck et al., 2020). Residency programs are useful as they aid in successfully recruiting and retaining teachers (Burstein, 2019). Beck et al. (2020) suggested that having a teacher as a mentor in the same building can prevent attrition by providing proximity and knowledge about the school.

Leadership and Teacher Retention

Teacher retention is an increasingly pressing issue within the field of education, as high teacher turnover rates can have significant consequences for the quality of instruction and overall student achievement (Williams et al., 2022). With the continued challenges schools and educators face in attracting and retaining qualified and motivated teachers, examining the role of leadership in addressing this issue is essential (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Administrative support is also key to teacher job satisfaction (Baker et al., 2022). Supporting

teachers and fostering an environment that promotes retention can be greatly aided by effective administrative leadership.

By implementing strategies and practices that promote teacher satisfaction, leadership can enhance students' overall quality of education (Williams et al., 2022). The role of leadership in supporting teacher retention and promoting excellence in education can be better understood by examining the challenges educators face and the strategies employed by successful leaders, (Baker et al., 2022). The next section includes a review of research on the role of administrative leadership and teacher retention, including two studies by Jones and Watson (2017) and Husain et al. (2021).

Overview of the Role of Leadership in Teacher Retention

Jones and Watson's (2017) initial investigation focused on the relationship between administrative leadership strategies and teacher retention in Christian schools. The two researchers surveyed 266 teachers from 44 Christian schools in the United States and included questions on administrative leadership behaviors, workplace satisfaction, and willingness to stay. Administrative leadership behaviors were significantly related to teacher retention (Jones & Watson, 2017). Teachers who perceived their administrators as exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors, such as inspiring and motivating them to achieve their goals, indicated stronger intentions to stay and better levels of job satisfaction.

According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), most areas of school operations, including teaching, peer support, and accountability measures, are influenced by school administrators. Transformational leaders inspire, motivate, and stimulate followers to achieve their full potential and surpass their expectations (Buschlen, 2022; Kramer, 2007). Skilled leaders empower and guide their followers, promote teamwork and collaboration, and

develop a positive organizational culture. Inspiring and motivating teachers, for example, are transformative leadership characteristics that Jones and Watson (2017) found to be crucial for retaining teachers. Effective leaders delegate responsibilities and create a positive and supportive culture where teachers feel valued, supported, and appreciated. As a result, work satisfaction may improve, and attrition rates may drop.

Husain et al. (2021) investigated whether male teachers prefer male administrators and if a principal's gender impacts teacher retention. Husain et al. employed data from the National Center for Education Statistics to assess teacher retention rates in U.S. public schools. According to Husain et al., male teachers had a higher likelihood of staying in schools with male principals, whereas female teachers were unaffected by the gender of their principal. The authors concluded that male teachers' preference for male leaders could be due to shared demographic characteristics and interests, such as sports or hobbies. Differences in student demographics, teachers' backgrounds, and racial and gender identities may slightly impact teacher retention (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023).

The findings suggested administrators need to be aware of the potential gender preferences of their teachers and should work to create an inclusive and supportive culture for all employees, regardless of gender (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023). Research has shown that effective leadership involves not only transformational leadership behaviors but also creating a positive school culture, providing professional development opportunities, and promoting work-life balance (Kramer, 2007). Effective leaders can enhance teacher job satisfaction, improve retention rates, reduce turnover rates, and contribute to better student outcomes (Akdemir, 2020; Beck et al., 2020).

The two studies by Husain et al. (2021) and Jones and Watson (2017) include insightful information about the role of leadership in teacher retention. Effective leadership can positively impact teacher job satisfaction, intention to stay, and student achievement (Husain et al., 2021; Jones & Watson, 2017). Administrators prioritizing teacher satisfaction and retention can create a culture of excellence, leading to better student outcomes (Akdemir, 2020). As such, school leaders must invest in developing leadership skills to create an environment that supports and retains high-quality teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). School leaders should foster a supportive environment, offer chances for professional growth, and promote work-life balance, creating an atmosphere of trust, respect, and shared values (Podolsky et al., 2019). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), effective leadership is essential for retaining highly skilled educators and improving student achievement.

Factors That Contribute to Effective Leadership in Retaining Teachers

Effective leadership can play a crucial role in retaining teachers and improving the quality of education provided to students (Akdemir, 2020; Beck et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2022). Retaining new teachers depends on their leadership qualities and connections with other educators (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). This review focuses on the factors that contribute to effective leadership in retaining teachers based on studies on teacher retention.

Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) conducted a study that addressed the impact of working conditions on the retention of teachers. Researchers surveyed 141 teachers from 18 schools in a large, urban district in the United States and analyzed factors such as workload, support from administration, and collaboration with colleagues. The study indicated that supportive working conditions were crucial in retaining teachers (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Higher levels of

support from their administration, such as regular feedback and recognition, were associated with longer tenures for teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Teachers who had opportunities for collaboration with colleagues reported being more satisfied with their jobs and had higher intentions to stay. Mentorship and having someone close by for collaboration are important in retaining teachers (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021). Therefore, a supportive work environment is essential to encourage teachers to thrive (Park et al., 2021).

Podolsky et al. (2019) examined strategies for attracting and retaining educators. The researchers reviewed existing research on teacher retention and identified several key factors that contribute to effective leadership practices in retaining teachers. Effective leadership involves fostering a supportive culture at school, offering opportunities for professional growth, and promoting work-life balance (Podolsky et al., 2019). Leaders who cultivate relationships and support teachers create an environment to retain teachers (Akdemir, 2020; Beck et al., 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Podolsky et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of competitive compensation and benefits, such as healthcare and retirement plans, to retain high-quality teachers. Findings suggested that school leaders should take a comprehensive approach to teacher retention.

According to Podolsky et al. (2019), effective leadership in retaining teachers involves communication and transparency. School leaders must communicate effectively with teachers, provide regular feedback and recognition, and engage in transparent decision-making processes (Gold, 2022). Effective communication, as well as transparency, helps to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that can result in teacher turnover. Building trust and respectful relationships between teachers and administrators is essential (Akdemir, 2020; Beck et al., 2020;

Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Trust and relationships result in a more positive work environment and higher levels of job satisfaction.

Effective leadership in retaining teachers involves creating a culture of continuous improvement (Podolsky et al., 2019). School leaders should promote ongoing professional development opportunities and encourage teachers to share their knowledge and expertise. Promoting ongoing professional development for teachers can help build a collaborative work environment and improve instructional practices, leading to better student outcomes. By investing in the professional growth of their teachers, school leaders can increase teacher satisfaction and retention (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022).

Podolsky et al. (2019) noted district measures regarding teacher retention. The reviewed studies provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to effective leadership in retaining teachers. Supportive working conditions, a positive school culture, opportunities for professional development, competitive pay and benefits, communication, accessibility, and a culture of continuous improvement are all essential for retaining high-quality teachers (Akdemir, 2020; Akiri & Dori, 2022; Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022). School leaders must prioritize teacher satisfaction and retention to create a culture of excellence, leading to better student outcomes (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Williams et al., 2022).

Leaders should leverage effective leadership practices to help improve the quality of education provided to students and create a more stable and consistent instructional environment (Podolsky et al., 2019; Seelig & McCabe, 2021; Williams et al., 2022). They should continue to develop their leadership skills and invest in teachers' well-being and professional growth (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022). This effort results in an environment conducive to important job satisfaction levels and excellent teacher retention.

Relationship Between Leadership and Teacher Retention

Retaining qualified and experienced teachers is essential for creating a stable learning environment and improving student outcomes (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). Leadership is an essential aspect in the retention of teachers, and numerous studies have highlighted this relationship (Park et al., 2021). This review addresses several other studies that have focused on the link between leadership and teacher retention.

Grissom and Bartanen (2018) conducted a study that highlighted the impact of principal effectiveness on teacher turnover. The study focused on multiple-measure teacher evaluation systems and indicated that effective principals were associated with lower teacher turnover rates. According to Grissom and Bartanen, strategic retention policies, such as hiring and retaining effective principals, could help address school teacher turnover.

Player et al. (2017) conducted a study on the connections between leadership and teacher attrition and mobility. They employed the person-job fit theory was employed to investigate the relationships between principal leadership, person-job fit, and teacher attrition and mobility. Researchers discovered that teachers were less inclined to switch schools or quit their jobs when they felt more at home in their jobs (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020; Park et al., 2021). Principal leadership traits, such as setting clear goals and expectations, were linked to decreased teacher attrition rates (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018).

García Torres (2019) studied distributed leadership as another approach to teacher retention. According to Garcia Torres, distributed leadership and professional collaboration positively affect teachers' job satisfaction. An intentional division of leadership responsibilities has been linked to enhancing organizational outcomes and increasing teacher satisfaction (Sulit, 2020). The study indicated that when teachers were provided with opportunities for professional

collaboration and distributed leadership was practiced, they reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Teachers with professional development opportunities stay in the profession (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022). Therefore, distributed leadership could help schools retain experienced and effective teachers (García Torres, 2019).

Strategies for Improving Teacher Retention

The success of school districts is directly related to the quality of its teaching staff, making teacher retention a crucial issue (Williams et al., 2022). Districts must take measures to attract and retain qualified educators. School districts may attract and retain qualified educators by offering attractive compensation and benefits (Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022), facilitating access to continuing education, and launching mentoring initiatives. Recognizing and celebrating teachers' successes and endeavoring to foster an encouraging workplace and school culture is important for school districts (Park et al., 2021). By embracing these measures, school districts may do more to keep their teachers happy and in the classroom.

Overview of Effective Strategies for Improving Teacher Retention

Competitive salaried benefits, professional development opportunities, and mentorship programs are effective strategies for improving teacher retention (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Beck et al., 2020; Luesse et al., 2022). Increasing teacher retention is facilitated by offering attractive salaries and benefits (Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022). Teachers should be remunerated reasonably for the time and exertion they put into their students' schooling, which is reflected in their pay. However, teachers might be obligated to remain in their positions for long, assuming they receive competitive benefits, including clinical protection, retirement reserve funds programs, and other monetary help.

Teachers also need opportunities for professional development to keep up with changes in the field and maintain their expertise (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022). Making available innovative tools and materials also helps keep educators interested and enthusiastic about their work and makes their classrooms welcoming. For administrators, this includes prioritizing teachers' physical and emotional health by providing proper resources and support. If teachers are rewarded for using effective strategies, their morale and satisfaction at work may be boosted (Akdemir, 2020; Baker et al., 2022; Park et al., 2021).

Another effective strategy for improving teacher retention is providing teacher development opportunities (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022). While ensuring a positive school culture and environment, leaders should invest in teachers' professional development and well-being. There are many methods for retaining teachers and boosting their satisfaction with their work, ultimately benefiting students (Akiri & Dori, 2022). Professional development initiatives impact teacher retention and develop strategies to help with both instruction and teacher morale (Luesse et al., 2022). Exposure to such events as conferences, classes, and internships may contribute to professional growth.

Schools may guarantee that teachers are current on industry developments by giving opportunities to maintain education and learning. Allowing teachers to build relationships with other educators can reward them and their engagement and motivation to remain in the field (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Paying attention to teachers' voices or opinions is another way to increase teacher loyalty. If teachers feel heard and their concerns addressed, they are more likely to remain in the classroom (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Teachers feel more appreciated if they are given the tools to execute their jobs well and if their efforts are recognized (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022).

Attractive compensation and rewards can increase teacher retention (Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022; Podolsky et al., 2019). Teachers are more likely to remain in the classroom if paid competitively and given the benefits they deserve (James & Wyckoff, 2020; Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022; Podolsky et al., 2019). Offering accessible emotional wellness support, flexible schedules, and other benefits can enhance teacher job satisfaction and retention (Podolsky et al., 2019; Steiner & Woo, 2021).

Mentorship programs are a successful technique for increasing teacher retention by providing new teachers with advice and support (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021). Mentoring programs bring together seasoned educators and first-year teachers to ease the latter's entry into the field and foster their development as educators (Beck et al., 2020). Maready et al. (2021) outlined multiple ways of executing a mentoring program, such as one-on-one gatherings and bunch meetings in an internet-based local area. The coach might help the mentee with practices such as example arranging, integrating innovation into the classroom, and encouraging a positive school environment. Through mentoring programs, teachers may benefit from working together and exchanging ideas (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021). Teachers need this kind of teamwork to remain enthusiastic about their work and professional development. New teachers may also benefit from the helpful analysis and exhortation of experienced educators who act as mentors (Beck et al., 2020).

Educators who participate in coaching programs frequently report feeling more associated with their partners, which improves the probability of staying in the field (Akiri & Dori, 2022). A coaching program has various positive results and needs to be utilized in schools. The program is an excellent tool for helping educators maintain their enthusiasm for teaching and professional development (Akiri & Dori, 2022). Coaching may foster a feeling of the school

community and help incoming teachers feel welcome and supported (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Mentorship programs increase teacher retention by giving educators the tools and guidance they need to stay in the profession (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021).

Best Practices for Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers

Every school system should make keeping good teachers a top priority (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). School leaders should consider enacting a rigorous professional development program to guarantee they have the most outstanding teachers in the classroom (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022). Educators have different strengths and weaknesses; thus, professional development programs should be adapted accordingly (Akiri & Dori, 2022). Professional development may occur through specialized training, seminars, or mentoring programs. Administrators should also consider helping teachers pay for professional development options not available inside the school system. Experienced teacher leaders can offer valuable insights that can help organizations develop teacher training programs to alleviate the teacher shortage (Kohli, 2018).

Providing teachers with sufficient resources and support is also crucial for keeping good instructors in the classroom (Akiri & Dori, 2022). Examples include allowing teachers more leeway in their schedules and giving them modern tools and resources. Administrators should also strive to foster an encouraging and constructive environment across the educational system. Showing gratitude to employees might take the form of organizing events to celebrate teachers' successes and honoring their contributions (Park et al., 2021).

Vital to keeping good teachers in the classroom is finding and hiring them (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). A transparent and fair recruiting procedure is essential for

schools to attract qualified teachers to open positions. Administrators should also network with educational institutions to find qualified employees and institute a well-rounded onboarding procedure, including orientation and mentoring initiatives. Taking measures to attract and keep the best possible teachers in the classroom is a top priority for every school district wanting to provide its students with the best possible educational experience (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Educational institutions prioritize finding and keeping excellent educators (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022). Schools must have a strategy for attracting and keeping teachers to provide their students with quality education (James & Wyckoff, 2020). One of the methods for finding and keeping excellent educators is for institutions to provide market-rate wages and benefits. Teachers should be rewarded for their valuable job and given perks that help them feel appreciated and respected (James & Wyckoff, 2020; Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022). Teacher benefits should include healthcare, retirement benefits, and other forms of assistance. Educational institutions should also provide an encouraging atmosphere for staff (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). Leaders can achieve this goal by creating an environment where educators feel respected and appreciated (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Relationships between faculty and administration should also be prioritized.

Another way is for educational institutions to work toward establishing a climate conducive to teachers' ongoing education and growth field (Akiri & Dori, 2022). To support teachers' growth, leaders should supply funding for teachers to attend conferences and seminars and provide instructors with materials to use in the classroom (Luesse et al., 2022). With such tools, educators may maintain professional competence and knowledge of current teaching

methods. Schools must equip teachers with manageable workloads. Time constraints should allow educators to prepare for and deliver effective instruction. Overburdened teachers may resent their jobs or feel underappreciated, which may compel them to leave the profession (Park et al., 2021).

Efforts to attract and retain excellent educators should be a top priority for school leaders in establishing a positive work environment (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). School administrators may do more to improve teacher retention by creating a welcoming workplace and putting in place proven strategies for attracting and keeping top-tier educators (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). If administrators are sincere about helping their staff members perform better, their priority should be maintaining a culture of teacher appreciation and respect (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Sutchter et al., 2019). Administrators could establish a climate where teachers feel appreciated and regarded, their commitments are perceived, and they can freely raise their grievances to their leaders.

Principals should meet teachers' professional and instructional requirements by providing enough tools and assistance (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022; Park et al., 2021). School administrators may attract and keep talented educators by providing them with competitive compensation and benefits, including opportunities for professional growth and guidance from experienced colleagues. Administrators should also interview them in-depth to determine whether new educators are an ideal match for the school and its students. Educational leaders must be proactive in searching for qualified staff members. Promoting teachers and giving them opportunities for professional growth, mentorship, and advancement should be a top priority for principals (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Beck et al., 2020; Luesse et al., 2022).

Case Studies of Successful Teacher Retention Initiatives

This case study analysis highlights an educational district in the United States that launched numerous measures to enhance educator retention (Peters et al., 2022). The district discerned that poor educator morale and scarce resources contributed to elevated teacher departure rates (Peters et al., 2022). Marshall et al. (2022) stated that increased teacher morale is critical to teacher retention. Strategies were implemented to remedy this problem and ameliorate the work environment for educators. Additional resources provided by the district included technology equipment, more desks, and instructional aids. Well-prepared teachers with access to the necessary tools maintain the teaching profession (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Sutchter et al., 2019). As noted by Peters et al. (2022), educators were provided additional professional growth opportunities, such as educational seminars and workshops to refine their instructional skills.

More adaptable scheduling choices were introduced to promote a healthier work-life equilibrium for educators (Peters et al., 2022). There were also various programs targeting educator morale enhancement that were enacted by the district. To provide crucial assistance for the success of educators, the district established a mentoring program. A dedicated space for teachers with cozy seating and a small kitchen area where they could relax during breaks was designed. The district granted further financial assistance, such as tuition reimbursement for postgraduate coursework for educators who opted to remain within the district. Initiatives undertaken by the district effectively bolstered the teacher retention rate. Within a year, the turnover rate of educators reduced from 30% to 20% (Peters et al., 2022). Instructors reported feeling more encouraged and appreciated by their colleagues and the administration, which increased educator morale (Peters et al., 2022).

Hennessy et al. (2022) focused on a school system in the United States that used various approaches to enhance educator retention. According to Hennessy et al., the district recognized that numerous instructors were leaving due to insufficient professional growth opportunities. In response, the district launched multiple strategies to support professional development for educators. Augmented funding for professional growth prospects was the main objective. A digital platform was created to help educators obtain the tools and resources they need to improve their practices. The district granted more adaptable scheduling alternatives, enabling educators to participate in professional development events outside typical school hours. Professional development is known to boost teacher retention (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Luesse et al., 2022).

The district executed various initiatives to provide teachers with the necessary support to utilize professional development chances (Hennessy et al., 2022). The district devised a mentorship program to help educators acquire novel approaches and techniques. A program of accolades was also implemented in the district to recognize and incentivize educators who completed professional development coursework. Providing support and acknowledging teachers boosts morale and increases teacher retention (Akdemir, 2020; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Marshall et al., 2022). Postgraduate tuition reimbursement was another benefit made available to instructors opting for professional advancement (Hennessy et al., 2022).

Research Topic Counterarguments

In this basic qualitative study, teachers were at the heart of the research, addressing the issue of retention and the application of transformational leadership to improve their circumstances. From this perspective, the transformational leader is teacher-focused and develops environments that are more accommodating for teachers, provide them with the

resources they require in the classroom, and foster a climate that supports their well-being and job satisfaction (Jovanovic & Ciric, 2016).

In a unique counter-approach, Khan et al. (2020) suggested transformational leadership was appropriate as a useful framework for gaining insight into how leaders drive and encourage employees; the researchers contended that the idea needs to emphasize the leader's importance while valuing the followers' influence on the workplace. Transformational leadership theory could also provide a more comprehensive explanation of leadership in rapidly changing and complex organizations. Research on a leader's impact on teacher retention aligns with the transformational leadership theory.

Another counterargument relates to the widely reported belief that teacher retention in modern education is problematic. In 2001, Richard Ingersoll, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, published a report stating that 44% of teachers left the profession within the first 5 years (Ingersoll, 2001a). Since then, many articles have slightly embellished the 44% and stated that 50% of new teachers do not remain in the profession past the 5-year mark. In 2023, this statistic was updated with national data on teachers with 3 or less and 15 or more total years of teaching. In 2023, the National Center for Education Statistics (2023) reported that during the 2020–2021 school year, of teachers with 3 years' teaching or less, 7% of public-school teachers and 15% of private school teachers voluntarily left the profession (Taie et al., 2023). The same report indicated that during the 2020–2021 school year, of teachers with 15 or more total years of teaching, 9% of public-school teachers and 12% of private school teachers voluntarily left the profession. Among teachers in the study who were voluntarily no longer teaching in the 2021–2022 school year, 16% indicated their most important reason for leaving was because they

decided to retire or receive retirement benefits from the previous year's school system (Taie et al., 2023).

Chapter Summary

Teacher retention is a major issue due to shortages, attrition, and low retention rates (Sutcher et al., 2019). Quality education for children is essential for the sustainability of a country, and school districts need help to retain staff due to increased workload and teacher burnout (Marshall et al., 2022). Creating a supportive atmosphere in the classroom and giving teachers resources is crucial (Park et al., 2021). Working-condition factors associated with teacher retention include leadership, professional learning, community support, and student conduct (Berry et al., 2021).

Investigating what educators think is essential to enhance student learning and academic success (Williams et al., 2022). Retention rates for educators are declining due to compensation, instability, program closures, and limited options for students (Moser & McKim, 2020). Many teachers stay in their jobs for various reasons, including links to the community, close friendships, commitment to their students, and increased opportunities for leadership and mentorship (Arviv Elyashiv & Navon, 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Positive mentoring helps new teachers realize more about their place and allows them time to learn how to be an educator, which helps retention. Having a teacher mentor who works in the same setting as them can also assist in mitigating attrition causes (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021).

The theoretical framework of the basic qualitative study was based on the transformational leadership theory. According to Kramer (2007), this approach requires training, advising, inspiring, and giving people the challenge and help they need to become influential leaders. Effective leadership is essential for retaining qualified, experienced teachers (Podolsky

et al., 2019). Studies have shown that effective leadership behaviors, such as clear goal setting and providing opportunities for professional collaboration, can help improve teacher retention rates (Akiri & Dori, 2022; Beck et al., 2020; Luesse et al., 2022).

Schools must prioritize the development of effective leaders to create a stable learning environment and provide students with the high-quality education they deserve (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Leadership and inclusive cultures are essential for teacher retention, and leaders must provide supportive working conditions, teacher collaboration, and professional growth opportunities (Akdemir, 2020; Akiri & Dori, 2022; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Studies underscore the importance of communication and transparency in building trust and respect between teachers and administrators, leading to a more positive work environment and higher levels of job satisfaction (Gold, 2022; Podolsky et al., 2019). Investing in developing leadership skills and creating a supportive work environment is critical for school leaders to retain high-quality teachers and improve student achievement.

School districts must implement efficient plans to boost teacher retention (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Key features of effective teacher retention campaigns include competitive salaries and benefits, professional development opportunities, and mentoring programs (Kaewnaknaew et al., 2022). A culture of gratitude and inspiration may be fostered by publicly rewarding teachers' successes (James & Wyckoff, 2020). By applying the transformational leadership theory and implementing these policies, school leaders may provide a setting where educators can thrive and remain dedicated to teaching (Park et al., 2021). Chapter 3 entails more in-depth information regarding how the study was conducted, with a focus on the research design, data analysis, sample size, data instruments, and data collection.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Numerous civilizations have attempted to create and maintain an environment favorable to learning because teaching is a highly valued profession in schools (Williams et al., 2022). The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. Finding and retaining suitable teachers is a concern for education officials (Seelig & McCabe, 2021; Williams et al., 2022). Vacancies are prevalent across the country (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Elementary teachers' work impacts the lives of elementary school students, necessitating the need to recognize their efforts. According to Nketsia et al. (2022), teachers acquire more experience delivering high-quality instruction as they remain in the profession for longer. Nketsia et al. noted the first step in boosting teacher retention is understanding why instructors leave or stay at a school. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. Due to fewer paved roads, fewer entertainment facilities, and more agricultural land, the district serving as the research site is classified as a rural region. There are eight primary schools in this public school system. The study was guided by the following research questions to achieve the purpose:

Research Question 1: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

Research Question 2: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

The research questions were used to explore the viewpoints of elementary educators and understand teacher retention. The research plan in this chapter includes descriptions of the

research methodology and design, the rationale supporting the selection, and the researcher's role. Other sections include the techniques for collecting data, the process of analyzing the data, and concerns about trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Research Methodology, Design, and Rationale

According to Busetto et al. (2020), qualitative research is the study of events in terms of their nature, consequences on the individual, circumstances in which they develop, or the perception of various viewpoints. This qualitative approach was chosen because it is the most appropriate method for studying a phenomenon that necessitates participant ideas, perceptions, and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study involved gathering educators' perspectives on teacher retention and how support, including administrators, influences decision-making.

Methodology

Qualitative research can play a vital role in understanding educators' perspectives on teacher retention (Berry et al., 2021; Pathak et al., 2013). To help leadership and administration address the issues, comprehending educators' viewpoints on teacher retention is essential (Moser & McKim, 2020; Stake, 2010). The exploration focused on understanding educators' perceptions and experiences, making qualitative methodology optimal.

Quantitative and mixed approaches were inappropriate for this inquiry for several reasons. Scientific studies relying on numerical data have long involved methods to show the relationships between numerous related variables (Babbie, 2020; Yin, 2014). The mixed-method approach was inappropriate for this study because of the quantitative components. A qualitative methodology facilitated the exploratory approach, enabling in-depth data analysis regarding the

issue. This method was particularly effective for directly addressing study issues through an interview protocol.

Design

A basic qualitative design guided this study. Babbie (2020) suggested that a researcher's decision on design is based on which approach best addresses the issue and study objectives. A basic qualitative design, as defined by Creswell (2012), allowed participants to discuss their reality through subjective, firsthand meanings and experiences. According to Baxter and Jack (2015), a basic qualitative design ensures that an issue has research questions that will guide the study and is the most logical form of research. The choice of a basic qualitative design was driven by the profound value of understanding the intricacies of the research issue.

Role of the Researcher

I functioned as both an interviewer and an observer in this research. This study involved individual, semi-structured interviews to explore educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of leadership and administration. The study participants and I were not connected personally or professionally. I was not a colleague and did not have supervisory authority over any participant. I participated in the study as an interviewer to answer the research questions and relied on the participants' perceptions and experiences. It was crucial that I resist influencing the participants' answers to the interview questions to comprehend the phenomenon being explored completely (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

As the primary investigator of the study, I ensured the entire investigation was conducted expertly without biases. I used a computer to capture participants' audio utilizing the Zoom online conferencing platform and asked clarifying questions to reduce bias and maintain the integrity of the data. To minimize potential biases, I relied on bracketing, a process that improves

objectivity and the researcher's reflexive limit to add information (Patton, 2015). According to Elkatawneh (2016), bracketing requires a researcher to forego their personal experience or any predisposition about the study to understand how the participants would comprehend it.

Using the interview protocol, I ensured participants were safe, comfortable, and at ease while sharing honest, uninhibited, open, and impartial discourse. Providing a convenient location and a welcoming environment ensured participants felt safe and comfortable. I was respectful, friendly, and approachable to participants' questions or concerns. Participants' personal information was safeguarded by assigning pseudonyms with numerical codes to identify them. The Institutional Review Board's (IRB) ethical standards and criteria and *The Belmont Report* principles guided me to conduct the study as morally as possible under the circumstances. When interacting with participants to comprehend their responses, I stayed within the scope and parameters of the research criteria. Participants' responses to the interview questions were audio recorded using Zoom to confirm the validity of the data collection further.

Research Procedures

According to Baxter and Jack (2015), outlining the study's process and boundaries is crucial. Before collecting data, several actions were taken to meet the IRB requirements. The safety and confidentiality of each participant was ensured. All protocols affected the participants, their rights, the methods used to conduct the study, and the accuracy of the data collection and analysis processes.

Population and Sample Selection

Participant selection is generally informed by the research design, which was a basic qualitative study in this case. According to Patton (2015), the sample size for a qualitative study is often not predefined. A qualitative study's sampling is also goal-driven, which means that

samples are chosen based on participants' ability to provide richly detailed information pertinent to the phenomenon being studied (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The phenomenon addressed in this study was teacher retention, and educators were purposively selected as participants to address the issues associated with the phenomenon directly.

The target population for the study was 200 educators, including elementary teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, in a rural school system in Georgia. Prior approval was requested from the school system's superintendent by email and was granted to conduct the research in the district and interview the elementary educators (see Appendices A and B). Following IRB approval (see Appendix C), a recruitment invitation containing an eligibility survey accessible to potential participants was sent through district email to the 200 educators in the target population (see Appendix D). The eligibility questions were derived from inclusion criteria for participants: (a) at least a bachelor's degree, (b) 3 years or more of teaching experience, and (c) employment as a teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator in an elementary school in the school system approved as the research site. In the recruitment invitation email, potential participants were informed they would be asked to participate in a voluntary interview. They were assured that all information gathered during the study would be kept confidential in password-protected, encrypted files in a locked filing cabinet.

The first 15 potential participants who met the inclusion criteria and responded to the recruitment email received a follow-up email through the district acknowledging eligibility for the study and providing the informed consent form for signature (see Appendices D and E). The informed consent form contained a section reminding participants of the inclusion criteria for the study. Potential participants had a 2-week window to sign and return the informed consent by email. Fifteen participants accepted the invitation to participate and signed the informed consent

during the 2-week window. Although snowballing was proposed as an alternative sampling method, it was not implemented. Fifteen participants accepted the invitation to participate and signed informed consent during the 2-week window. After the consent forms were signed, returned by email, and verified by the dissertation chair, each participant was contacted by email to schedule the interview.

Data Instruments

An interview protocol is a fundamental research method offering insights into various phenomena. According to Smith (1995), an interview protocol provides a structured framework, ensuring consistency in questioning. Individual, semi-structured interviews, a flexible approach, blend predefined questions with the freedom for in-depth exploration, fostering a richer understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences (Smith, 1995).

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Instrumentation includes research tools used to observe, measure, or record qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) described the instrument as an inventory, interview questions, questionnaire, test, record, tally sheet, observation checklist, or evaluation tool. An interview protocol (see Appendix F) constitutes a fundamental element of the qualitative research design, with each participant acting as an informant, providing valuable insights into the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2014).

A variety of data collection methods can be used in a qualitative study. For this study, individual, semi-structured interview questions elicited the educators' perspectives and experiences on teacher retention and administrators' support in an elementary school. Semi-structured interviews were appropriate for this study because they called for each participant to reply to preset, open-ended questions (DeCarlo, 2018; Jamshed, 2014; Pezalla et al., 2012).

According to Yin (2014), a qualitative approach offers multiple advantages, such as providing insightful explanations of the phenomenon and focusing directly on the subject.

As McIntosh and Morse (2015) suggested, semi-structured interviews are particularly well-suited to eliciting participants' perspectives on their experiences related to the research issue. A dynamic and insightful exploration of the study's topic was ensured by the iterative process of formulating questions and probing based on emerging themes, which seamlessly integrated into the qualitative research methodology. The interview protocol was created using a schematic overview of the questions intended to be investigated and served the beneficial function of researching many respondents more thoroughly and systematically.

Semi-structured interviews also facilitated a reduced time commitment for data collection, adaptability for probing inquiries, and the potential to foster mutual understanding between the interviewer and participants (Yin, 2014). Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes, depending on how the participants responded to follow-up questions. The interviews took place over Zoom and were audio recorded. Additional handwritten notes were captured from the follow-up questions in a journal.

Prior to data collection, each participant signed and returned an informed consent form by email (see Appendix E). The dissertation chair verified each participant's signed informed consent, and a copy of the form was provided for the participant's records, ensuring transparency. An email invitation was sent to schedule the interview at the participant's preferred date and time. On the interview day, each participant received an overview indicating the study's objectives, the specific contributing role, and a copy of the interview questions (see Appendix F). As additional background information, participants provided their grade level(s), years of experience, and position on the first question in the interview protocol.

The interviews constituted the primary data source for the study. Each interview concluded with gratitude for the participants' time and valuable contributions. Contact information for follow-up questions or recommendations was provided along with a thank-you card.

Lester et al. (2020) noted that although audio and video data are frequently gathered in qualitative research, the data transcription takes time. For this study, each transcription was completed following the audio-recorded interview. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, including every word, pause, and nonverbal cue. Each participant member-checked or reviewed the transcript after it had been cleaned and corrected for mistakes. Transcription software can speed up the process, especially when taking additional notes during the interview (Lester et al., 2020). The data were analyzed and coded into themes using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model and NVivo 12 software.

Field Test

Interview questions were field-tested before submitting the study proposal to the IRB for review. The field test is a process for ensuring the reliability of the data-gathering tool (Creswell, 2011). Before using the interview protocol in the actual study, the field test was used to determine the viability of each item. According to Majid et al. (2017), the interview protocol was evaluated for acceptance and to determine if the items were appropriate for collecting data for this study.

Five subject matter experts (SMEs) were invited by email to field-test and provide feedback on the open-ended interview questions to maintain the validity of the study instrument (see Appendix G). The SMEs chosen had experience in the classroom as educators within an elementary school setting. Recommendations from the expert review panel ensured alignment

with the study's purpose and research questions and guided the restructuring of the interview items (Weller et al., 2018). Interview questions were revised based on the SMEs' comments (see Appendix G).

A retired educator with a specialist degree who served multiple roles as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal was the first SME. The SME supervised the Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP) candidates for OKRESA and educational leadership practicums for Valdosta State University (VSU). As a teacher and assistant principal, the second SME had a specialist degree and served as a K–12 curriculum director, PreK program director, and the county Transitional Academy director. The third SME was a teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal, and elementary school principal with a specialist degree. With 39 years of experience in public education, the fourth SME was an educational leader who held a doctorate. The SME's background in the school system consisted of multiple roles in educational leadership, such as teacher, elementary principal, and assistant superintendent. This SME worked as a district effectiveness specialist for the Georgia Department of Education. The last SME, who was retired, held a doctorate in education and had experience as a teacher and assistant principal in an elementary school.

Data Collection

Data were collected through open-ended questions from audio-recorded interview responses. Open-ended questions are used to explore subjects in depth and rely on processes using lists and replies in interviews (Weller et al., 2018). The use of open-ended questions allowed participants to feel free to answer. Following IRB approval, participant recruitment was conducted, informed consents were signed and verified, and data collection began. Potential participants who met the inclusion criteria emailed acceptance of the invitation to participate. An

individual interview session was then scheduled with those educators who met the criteria for participation in the study. Participants received the date, time, and location of the interview that was convenient for them, were asked if they had any questions before the interview began, and were reminded that it would be audio-recorded through Zoom. Each participant received a meeting link and code to join the interview. Additional notes were taken and used to gather data about the participants' daily activities, including their teaching practices, interactions with students, and overall demeanor. The research study started in mid-February 2024 and ended in April 2024 to complete the required tasks.

Data Analysis

A data analysis plan guided how the information was arranged and broken down. According to Bhatia et al. (2020), the data analysis plan accomplishes three goals that identify with the study's purpose. These goals include (a) gathering the information to answer each research question, (b) using an appropriate approach to understand participants' responses, and (c) connecting themes and patterns within the data to validate the research (Busetto et al., 2020).

Thematic analysis allowed evidence-based insights into the challenges faced by rural school districts in retaining teachers. The analysis offered evidence supporting potential solutions to the teacher retention problem addressed in the study. This study followed the six steps and established guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2019) in adhering to a thematic analysis model. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the first step was data familiarization to provide an overview of the entire interview data set. Researchers use data familiarization to find patterns of meaning across respondents and interview transcripts. Initial codes were identified to support the research questions in the second step. Coding refers to grouping excerpts from transcripts with similar meanings. Using the NVivo 12 software, the data were analyzed and coded into

themes. Visualizations such as tables and figures were generated to identify patterns and trends in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The coding process enabled a thorough exploration of recurring themes and variations, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Braun and Clarke's (2019) third, fourth, and fifth steps are related to identifying, reviewing, defining, and naming themes. In the sixth step, the analytic process was discussed, and findings related to the study's research questions were reported. Visualizations and reports generated through NVivo 12 aided in presenting the emerging patterns and trends more effectively, enhancing the clarity and transparency of the analysis process. This analytic approach ensured a robust and rigorous examination of the data by delving into the details of coding and themes.

Reliability and Validity

The concept of saturation was crucial in ensuring the comprehensive exploration of the research topic and its reliability and validity within the context of this study. Saturation is a fundamental principle in qualitative research methodology, serving as a marker to determine the sufficiency of data collection. Data saturation represents the point at which no new, meaningful information emerges from the data collection process (Weller et al., 2018). According to Weller et al. (2018), data saturation indicates the research has reached the end of data richness, where additional participants or data sources would yield minimal or no further insights.

According to Weller et al. (2018), saturation is not a fixed number of participants or data points but a dynamic process that unfolds throughout the research journey. Saturation is marked by a point where a consistent pattern of information repetition becomes evident. This repetition

signifies that participants are expressing viewpoints, themes, or experiences that have already been encountered, leading to a point of diminishing returns in terms of novel insights.

Saturation was achieved when participants share information that aligns with previously gathered data without introducing novel perspectives or insights. In this study, saturation was achieved when the 15th participant was interviewed, as no new insights, patterns, or themes emerged from the data. This saturation point assured that the research has explored deeply into the phenomenon under investigation, leaving no significant issues unaddressed. By attaining saturation, the reliability and validity of the study were reinforced, as the thoroughness of data collection helps to mitigate the risk of overlooking critical aspects of the research topic (Weller et al., 2018).

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell, 2017). Validity is related to credibility and transferability, whereas reliability in qualitative research is measured by dependability and confirmability. According to Creswell (2017), the validity and credibility of a study are judged based on how closely its findings match real responses from participants. The following sections focus on trustworthiness related to reliability and validity.

Trustworthiness and Construct Validity

Trustworthiness in a qualitative research study encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Stahl & King, 2020). Yin (2014) suggested strategies to address the trustworthiness of a research study and construct validity. These strategies included creating a chain of evidence through the defined steps of the research plan and engaging participants as interim reviewers as the study progressed through member-checking.

Credibility

Member checking, or participant validation, was used to enhance the credibility of the study results. All data were audio-recorded and transcribed to preserve the authenticity of participant contributions. Through member checking, participants received the opportunity to review interview transcripts and verify the accuracy of the data they provided (Stahl & King, 2020). Transcriptions were provided to participants for review and feedback, and revisions were made as needed. The member-checking process was essential to maintain a chain of evidence and receive feedback as the study developed. This process contributed to the trustworthiness, construct validity, and veracity of the study's findings.

Transferability

Transferability extends the study's findings to the intended audience, context, and circumstances (Cope, 2013). Data that accurately represented the studied phenomenon were collected to ensure the findings revealed valuable insights that can be applied to comparable contexts. Although qualitative research does not aim for broad generalizability, it is possible to increase the transferability of the study's findings by carefully selecting participants who represent the diversity of the population being studied and by using probing questions to produce in-depth and detailed data (Busetto et al., 2020). Detailed descriptions of participant responses, contrasting viewpoints, and incorporating actual quotations contributed to the transferability of the findings. This approach allowed for understanding the phenomenon that can inform and resonate with similar settings.

Dependability

According to Creswell (2017), dependability is the extent to which consistent results can be obtained from repeated studies using the same sample, data sources, and resources. The

information gathered, and participant data were reflected in the themes developed during the analysis. Constant comparison and member checking are the main methods for dependability (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020). Reconstructing the research and replicating the findings relied solely on maintaining a reliable and auditable trail.

Documentation of the entire research process and methodological and procedural coherence were emphasized throughout the study. The research process was documented to implement these methods effectively, noting the rationale supporting methodological choices, adaptations, and any changes made along the way. Notes taken during the interviews captured context, participant reactions, and unanticipated insights, enriching the study's credibility. Regularly comparing new data with existing findings ensured that emerging themes were rigorously examined. Member checking was conducted by revisiting participants to validate interpretations and conclusions (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020).

Confirmability

The final element of trustworthiness, confirmability, addresses how the study's findings may be corroborated (Creswell, 2017). Research findings were unbiased and based solely on participant replies. Achieving confirmability requires thematic classification and a detailed explanation of the study process (Mishler, 1990).

Ethical Procedures

To ensure all ethical requirements were satisfied, participants' legal rights, confidentiality, and privacy were protected, and risks associated with participation were minimal, as participants might experience discomfort in answering interview questions. Participants were assured through informed consent that they had the right to refuse to answer interview questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

IRB permission was sought to conduct the basic qualitative study (Sanjari et al., 2014). Approval was obtained from the IRB before recruiting participants and collecting data. Establishing a clear code of ethics for qualitative research that protects participants' confidentiality, prevents misrepresenting participant intent, and fosters open communication with participants was crucial. The teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators were assigned pseudonyms with numerical codes (i.e., P1, P2) to protect their confidentiality. They were also assured that audio recordings and data would be protected throughout the research process and deleted 3 years after the study.

The criteria to participate in the research study were defined as educators with (a) at least a bachelor's degree, (b) 3 years or more of teaching experience, and (c) employment as a teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator in an elementary school in the school system approved as the research site. Participants received the study information via a fully informed consent form. Incorporating the three principles of *The Belmont Report* prioritized (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Requesting participants' informed consent, assessing risks and benefits, and selecting human subjects in research are the three primary application areas discussed in the following sections.

Respect for Persons

Respect for persons requires obtaining participants' informed permission, respecting their decisions, and protecting their rights (Sanjari et al., 2014). Each participant signed an informed consent form before participating in the study as part of adhering to ethical procedures. The procedures included explaining the data collection method and ensuring that recruitment is done without coercion (Sanjari et al., 2014). Teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators were

viewed as autonomous individuals with the right to make individual decisions and choose their involvement in the study. Participants were also informed they had the right to refuse to answer interview questions and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Beneficence

Related to the principle of beneficence, the study's results may provide teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and other school officials with new perspectives that might improve their educational experiences and methods. No personal information was collected for participants. The interview notes and audio recordings were labeled as P1, P2, and so forth to protect confidentiality. Taking these precautions protects participants in human research initiatives from unethical conduct.

Justice

Pursuing justice in research projects entails the equitable distribution of costs, risks, and advantages among participants (Abd ElHafeez et al., 2022). Justice involves safeguarding individuals from undue harm, ensuring transparent and informed consent, and representing diverse populations to avoid perpetuating inequalities. Achieving justice requires mitigating risks, fairly allocating benefits, and providing access to research outcomes. Recent scholarship underscores the significance of addressing distributive justice in research ethics (Abd ElHafeez et al., 2022). By adhering to these principles, researchers contribute to ethical and inclusive research practices that show respect for the rights and welfare of participants, promoting a more just and equitable advancement of knowledge. Transparent communication and participant collaboration throughout the research process ensured a fair and inclusive approach.

Research notes and interview audio recordings were considered protected information (Azevedo et al., 2021). The dissertation chair verified the informed consent of participants, and

all data, including participant names and pseudonyms with numerical codes (i.e., P1, P2), were kept in password-protected encrypted computer files in a locked file cabinet. Audio and written transcripts of the interviews were maintained in an encrypted digital format with backups on an external drive and a cloud server. The purpose of the external storage was to ensure the retrievability of data even if the computer fails. External storage with encryption guarantees the information's security while keeping it in a format that may be accessed, if necessary, later or from a different place (Azevedo et al., 2021). Hard copy notes were kept in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. Following the completion and acceptance of the final dissertation, data will be kept for 3 years before paper documents are shredded and electronic data are destroyed by deleting the data folder from the laptop and cloud storage platform (Office for Human Research Protections, 2016; Recker et al., 2021).

Chapter Summary

A basic qualitative research design was employed in this study. Using this methodology and design, a target population's views, experiences, attitudes, interactions, and behaviors about a topic—specifically teacher retention in this study—were explored using qualitative research (Pathak et al., 2013). The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The study's total population was 200 potential participants, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators at the elementary level in a school system approved as the research site in Georgia.

Fifteen educators serving at the elementary level in the school system were included in the sample. This study involved individual, semi-structured, interview questions to gather

educators' perceptions of teacher retention. By adhering to Yin's (2014) recommendation to rely on ongoing data analysis and participant review, high-quality output should be free of validity issues. The thematic analysis offered a fact-based understanding of a rural school district's difficulties in retaining teachers and potential solutions. To conform to evidence-based thematic analysis, recommendations made by Braun and Clarke (2019) were followed. The next chapter entails the investigation's findings, implications, and conclusions.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results

Retaining teachers has shown to be a difficult challenge on a global scale (Sutcher et al., 2019). Numerous factors contribute significantly to teachers leaving the workplace, especially for educators working in rural schools (Marshall et al., 2022). Factors that have been cited constitute low payment or remuneration, resource insufficiency, and lack of support from school administrations (Marshall et al., 2022; Seelig & McCabe, 2021; Sutcher et al., 2019). Over the past decade, high attrition rates and a decline in teacher recruitment have been blamed for approximately 28% of teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Marshall et al. (2022) found that teacher shortages can contribute to declining student performance. School districts experience staffing shortages due to decreased budgets based on student enrollment, tax revenue declines, and a lack of ample administrative support (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The following two research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

Research Question 2: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

The following section of Chapter 4 entails the data collection procedures followed by a description of the data preparation steps. Next, the procedure that was used to analyze the collected data is described. Also included is a presentation of results and a discussion of the reliability and validity of data and findings. The final section is a chapter summary.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited after receiving permission from the IRB of American College of Education to conduct the study. Before taking part in the study, participants signed informed consent forms, which were verified during the research process, and then the data collection began. Data were gathered from 15 participants through an in-depth, semi-structured interview protocol. The interviews contained open-ended questions. Before each interview was conducted, permission was sought from participants to record the interviews. Once permission to record the interview was obtained, the interview session began. Open-ended questions allowed participants the freedom to answer (Weller et al., 2018).

Interviews were conducted online via Zoom. The Zoom Enterprise license was used, which was appropriate for holding remote meetings with individuals. Each participant received a meeting link and code to join the interview. Additional notes were taken and used to gather data about participants' daily activities, including their teaching practices, interactions with students, and overall demeanor.

Data collection began in early March 2024 and ended in mid-March 2024. Interviews ranged from 41:31 minutes to 55:39 minutes. The average time was 51:40 minutes. Regarding the frequency of data collection, interviews were conducted daily. The length of each interview and details about the location, date, and length of the single-spaced transcript are shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Details of the Interview Session for Each Participant*

Participant Pseudonym	Interview Location	Interview Length	Date of Interview	Transcript Pages (Single-Spaced)
P1	Zoom Meeting	43:31 Minutes	2024/03/03	12 pages
P2	Zoom Meeting	51:41 Minutes	2024/03/05	15 pages
P3	Zoom Meeting	50:21 Minutes	2024/03/06	14 pages
P4	Zoom Meeting	53:25 Minutes	2024/03/07	16 pages
P5	Zoom Meeting	41:31 Minutes	2024/03/07	15 pages
P6	Zoom Meeting	42:00 Minutes	2024/03/08	11 pages
P7	Zoom Meeting	50:53 Minutes	2024/03/08	15 pages
P8	Zoom Meeting	52:06 Minutes	2024/03/11	14 pages
P9	Zoom Meeting	50:24 Minutes	2024/03/11	13 pages
P10	Zoom Meeting	47:43 Minutes	2024/03/12	13 pages
P11	Zoom Meeting	48:06 Minutes	2024/03/13	18 pages
P12	Zoom Meeting	50:04 Minutes	2024/03/14	13 pages
P13	Zoom Meeting	45:32 Minutes	2024/03/15	13 pages
P14	Zoom Meeting	55:14 Minutes	2024/03/15	13 pages
P15	Zoom Meeting	55:39 Minutes	2024/03/15	15 pages
TOTAL		771.04 Minutes		210 pages
AVERAGE		51.40 Minutes		14 pages

Note. Data were collected from 15 participants.

There were no deviations in data collection from the plan outlined in Chapter 3. In this study, the 15 educators who participated in the study served at the elementary level in a school system in Georgia, which aligned with the plan outlined in Chapter 3. Data saturation was reached through 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews using an interview protocol guide. During the interviews, probing was used, which elicited deep and rich data from educators. Probing entailed using verbal prompts asking the educator to elaborate, illustrate, elucidate, or

explain a prior answer to an interview question already given. No unusual circumstances were encountered during the collection of data.

Data Preparation

In this study, each transcription was completed following the audio-recorded interview. The electronic interview data were sorted to remove grammatical errors, determine missing data, and organize for analysis. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, including every word, pause, and nonverbal cue. Each participant participated in member checking of their transcripts. They each reviewed their transcripts after they had been cleaned and corrected for mistakes. Transcription software was used to aid the transcription process. Transcription software can speed up the process, especially when taking additional notes during the interview (Lester et al., 2020). Data were secured with encryption and a strong password that prevented unauthorized access by third parties. The data will be kept for 3 years after the report's publication. After 3 years, the data will be destroyed by deleting the data folder from the laptop and cloud storage platform (Office for Human Research Protections, 2016). After transcribing, the data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model with the aid of the NVivo 12 software program.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step thematic analysis model was used to analyze the gathered data. Thematic analysis provided evidence-based insights into the challenges faced by rural school districts in retaining teachers. The analysis also provided evidence supporting potential solutions to the teacher retention problem addressed in the study. In adhering to the thematic analysis model, the six steps and established guidelines were followed in this study. The six steps included the following:

Step 1: Familiarization with data – According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the first step in thematic analysis is data familiarization. Researchers fully immerse themselves and actively engage in the data by first transcribing the interviews before reading and rereading the data transcripts. The first step of this study was to provide an overview of the entire interview data set. Each transcript was read at least three times. At the end of this phase, the content of the interview was familiar and thoroughly understood. Data familiarization was aimed at finding patterns of meaning across respondents and interview transcripts.

Step 2: Generating initial codes – After becoming familiar with the data, the second step was identifying preliminary codes, which refer to data features that seem meaningful and interesting (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this study, initial codes were identified to support the research questions. Coding entailed grouping excerpts from transcripts with similar meanings. Important features of the data were methodically coded. Portions of the text were highlighted, and codes were applied to them, which described the nature of their content. Codes were generated with the aid of NVivo 12. The coding process facilitated a thorough exploration of recurring themes and variations, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Table 2 shows how codes were created.

Table 2*Codes Formed by Grouping Excerpts From Transcripts*

Code	Excerpt from Transcript
High workload	P3: "I think a lot of teachers feel overloaded." P7: "And I will say that coming to the elementary school my workload doubled coming from middle school to Elementary. There's so much more."
Low pay	P13: "The amount that we get paid is not nearly enough compared to the world. And that is the struggle for us." P9: "Based on what the work that they do, They don't feel like they get paid enough for the amount of work they're doing but also the stress Of getting all that work done within a certain amount of time"
Lack of parental support	P14: "I've taught for 10 years and some things that I would have not imagined ever seeing in a classroom at the very beginning of my career. And now in the tenth year it blows my mind how different behavior and discipline in the classroom is the lack of Parental support or involvement If you've got a child that is in the classroom and they're struggling and the parent could care. You can't get a hold of the parent. You can't get them to come to the building for any kind of meeting to support that student that to me is another." P9: "parent support not having that can be a challenge."
Inadequate resources	P14: "Another challenge that teachers face, a lack of resources. you're in a district that does not provide resources for your staff. You could be in an outdated building you could have outdated curriculum outdated everything and you're just kind of at the mercy of What your content knowledge is and how flexible or good you are on your feet?" P6: "And I would go with support for faculty and teachers. The next thing would be the amount of resources and programs and in this case could be either too many resources or maybe not enough of the resources or programs."

Note. Table 2 shows how codes were formed.

A total of 788 response excerpts or quotes from participants were assigned to 229 codes.

Table 3 shows the initial codes. The table also shows the number of response excerpts or code frequencies assigned to each.

Table 3*Initial Code Frequencies*

Initial code	Code frequency in the collected data
Abundance of IEP Paperwork	2
Different expectations for different staff members	2
Feel overwhelmed	1
High workload	6
Inadequate resources and programs	2
Inadequate salary	11
Lack of administration support	11
Lack of parental support	3
Large class sizes	3
Long work hours	2
Meaningless testing	5
Pressure of students to succeed	2
Stress	6
Student behavior issues	26
Students' lack of respect for authority	3
Adequate resources	2
Administration support effective and important	7
Availability of professional learning opportunities	1
Build relationships with the employer	8
Creating positive relationship with administrators	10
Early release passes	7
Educators want to be listened	3
Emotional support	3
Give compliment and positive affirmation	4
Morale booster activities	3
Perceptions vary depending on school	4
Open-door policy	2
Listening	1
Lack of consistency in policy implementation	1
Recognition and acknowledgement	8
Include teachers in decision-making	1
Orientation for new teachers	4
Lower teacher-student ratio	2
Family feel	3

Note. Initial codes and number of response excerpts assigned to each code.

Step 3: Generating themes – After the codes are created, Braun and Clarke’s (2019) third step is to examine the codes, identify patterns within them, and start to generate themes. Several codes are bundled together to develop themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this study, the 229 codes were combined into eight themes. Table 4 shows how codes were combined into themes.

Table 4*Grouping of Codes Into Final Themes*

Theme Initial Code Clustered to Identify Theme	Theme Frequency in Dataset	No. of Participants Who Supported Theme
Theme 1: Safe and positive working environment improves retention Positive working environment Safety officer makes teachers feel safe School safety increases retention	35	15
Theme 2: Coaching and mentoring programs increase retention Teacher mentoring Mentor new teachers Coaching	28	14
Theme 3: Excessive workload, job stress, and student behavior issues hurt retention Work stress High workload Student behavior issues	21	13
Theme 4: Inadequate resources and low pay hurt retention. Inadequate resources and programs Lack of resources Low pay affects retention	20	12
Theme 5: Lack of support from parents, administrators, and other teachers hurts retention Lack of parental support Lack of administration support Teachers not supporting each other	18	12
Theme 6: Positive relationship with administrators supports retention Creating positive relationships with administrators Build relationships with the employer Make teachers feel valued and wanted	18	11
Theme 7: Support through appreciation, incentives, and recognition Incentives are necessary Showing appreciation helps with retention Recognition and acknowledgement	16	10
Theme 8: Active listening and providing emotional support Listening Provide emotional support Celebrate success	15	10

Note. This table illustrates how codes were grouped to form finalized themes.

Step 4: Reviewing themes – The fourth phase involves ensuring that the generated themes represent the data accurately (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this study, coherent patterns were identified at the level of the coded data. As part of the theme review, the whole data set was reviewed. There were adequate data to support each theme at the end of this stage. The codes and themes were reworked and refined.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes – In the fifth step, the themes are refined and defined within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Ongoing analysis enhanced the identified themes even further. Theme definitions were also provided in this phase in the results section of this chapter.

Step 6: Creating the report – The final step involves transforming an analysis into an interpretable piece of writing using compelling and clear extract examples. The examples should relate to the identified themes, research questions, and the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This stage was completed by writing this chapter of the research study, which contains the results of the data analysis.

Findings/Results

Data collected from the 15 participants in the basic qualitative study resulted in eight major themes related to teacher retention and attrition. The themes addressed the study's problem and purpose and answered the two research questions. The themes are addressed and supported with relevant participant responses in the following section.

Major Themes

The major themes in this study are explained by thick, rich descriptions from participant responses. Each relevant theme has detailed insight into a critical problem in modern education – the retention and retention of teachers. In the responses, diverse teacher and principal

participants shared their firsthand knowledge of this educational phenomenon with societal and global implications.

Theme 1: Safe and Positive Working Environment Has Positive Impact on Retention

The first theme revealed that, according to the participants, a safe and positive working environment positively impacted retention. Data from all 15 participants contributed to this theme. P11 noted that having safety officers makes her feel safe. The officers are available for the sole purpose of protecting the school, including teachers and students. Feeling safe increases retention rates. The participant stated:

I think it [school safety or having a campus resource officer] has a positive impact.

Teachers need to feel safe and feel that they work in a safe environment where they're supported and when they do have discipline issues that those discipline issues are addressed. I know that on our campus the teachers notice when we do not have an SRO officer and they ask. Is our officer here or why don't we have one today? because it does make them feel just more at ease I think, knowing that he's there to protect us. What was the other, I say SRO officer.

P12 underscored the importance of teachers feeling safe at work. A resource officer makes teachers feel safe while at school. A feeling of safety increases retention rates. P12 noted:

People need to feel safe at work and parents need to feel that their kids are safe at school. So definitely having a resource officer. And also like I said I teach at an inner city school. So a lot of our students walk to school in the morning and they walk home in the afternoon and they may just live one block away. I mean you have first graders walking a block by themselves.

P14 mentioned that having security officers in the school made her feel somewhat safer. Feeling safer consequently increases the teacher's likelihood of staying with the school. In this way, having a safer school reduces attrition rates. The participant noted:

Whenever we started having an SRO in the school. It really did make me feel better a little safer. Our district does have a School District SRO police program and with the response to just concerns of safety. I believe it was in 2018 the school shooting that happened in our school district really pushed having a specific police program in order to provide safety for our campuses and I feel better knowing that if there's any kind of issue there is an officer there that can come and deescalate a situation to help out.

P6 talked about having a positive working and learning environment. In such an environment, the educators feel needed and supported by the school. Having such a feeling makes the teachers want to stay. Specifically, the participant stated, "A positive working and learning environment teachers need to feel needed and supported the same goes for students. And assistance needed to help solve behavior issues by connecting with parents and teachers."

P14 spoke about the physical conditions of a school. A poor physical environment hinders the ability of a school to retain good teachers. A good physical working environment serves to increase retention. The participant stated:

In my opinion if you have a school with poor working conditions, you don't support your physical building being in disrepair. If you just got a very apathetic attitude when it comes to the buildings here, your teachers are here and you're not going to be able to retain an effective teacher. You may be able to hire somebody to be a warm body at the front of that classroom if you do not have a good working condition for your teacher.

P2 spoke about having a "positive atmosphere."

The first theme indicated that having a safe and positive working environment positively impacts the retention of educators. Teachers generally want to work in a safe school and in a school with a positive atmosphere and learning environment. Schools with safe and positive learning environments have low attrition rates, as evidenced by this theme.

Theme 2: Coaching and Mentoring Programs Have Positive Impact on Retention

The second theme indicated that the teachers felt that having coaching and mentoring programs for new teachers positively impacted retention. Fourteen participants contributed to this theme. P3 mentioned how her mentor was always ready to assist her. The mentorship not only made the participant feel supported but also reduced the participant's stress. As a result, her performance improved as well. The participant stated:

That is my mentor that I can go to. And she will stop what she's doing and help me. Then I feel supported, and I can decrease my stress by just going and asking a question or if I've got an academic coach that I can say. Hey, I'm having trouble with this. Can you stop by my room knowing that person will come by my room and help me if it's 20 minutes? I can lower my stress level and...anytime I can lower my stress level. Then my performance improved and my mindset changed. I don't get as frustrated.

P10 spoke about having an academic coach. The coach can assist teachers in their weak areas. They can also model lessons for teachers. The participant noted:

In our school personally, the main thing that helps us is having an academic coach in place because that academic coach is there and that's part of their job description is to make sure that new teachers or teachers that have an area weakness whatever the case may be that they're providing that support and they know that person is usually on campus most days and they can go to them with the questions. They can come in and

model lessons for them or whatever helps them with lesson plans whatever the case may be. And so, I feel like the academic coach is a huge asset and as far as is helping them, making them feel like they have the support they need especially at the school level.

P1 mentioned that the academic coach played a vital role in helping teachers. He noted, “Our academic coach has spent many hours with our new teachers. Helping them to learn the ropes of what those things are.”

P3 stated that a mentor helps new teachers by guiding them appropriately. She noted, “She [the mentor] spends a lot of time supporting the new teachers and giving them guidance.”

P3 talked about how her mentor makes her feel supported. She added that:

I get down on myself. I get stressed I get frustrated, but I know I’ve got someone next door. That’s my co-worker. That is my mentor that I can go to. And she will stop what she’s doing and help me. Then I feel supported and I can decrease my stress by just going and asking a question or if I’ve got an academic coach that I can say. ‘Hey, I’m having trouble with this. Can you stop by my room knowing that person will come by my room and help me if it’s 20 minutes?’ I can lower my stress level.

P1 reported that mentoring programs are necessary. New teachers who are mentored by seasoned teachers can learn a lot from the mentorship. As a result, they can become better educators. The participant stated:

Induction and mentoring programs are necessary. I feel that, especially the mentoring part of it. Induction you would hope that they would get a lot of information from their coursework new teachers and feel pretty secure in that area. But when you get into the real world, you need someone there beside you to help mentor and just to be a person that

you can turn to help you with the student behaviors. Just the real-world expectations of being a teacher.

P13 remarked, “If the mentoring program was done correctly, it would be amazing. But I’ve found that everyone's so busy with their own stuff that they're not really having the time to mentor you appropriately.”

The participants felt that having a coaching and mentorship program has a positive impact on teacher retention. A total of 14 participants contributed to the theme. Participants believed that a mentor could help them in many different ways, such as by modeling lessons. They also believed that having an academic coach can help them succeed and even reduce their stress levels.

Theme 3: Excessive Workload, Job Stress, and Student Behavior Issues Negatively Affect Retention

The third theme revealed that the high workload of elementary school teachers, job stress, and student behavior issues negatively impacted retention. Data from 13 participants contributed to this theme. P1 mentioned that the retention of teachers has reduced, whereas the workload has increased. According to P1, “Teacher retention has decreased within the recent years. Workloads have been increased and demands on teachers have been increased.”

P4 talked about high workload as a factor that negatively affects retention. The participant reported that teachers have high job demands and excessive workloads, which consequently contributes to their decision to leave. The participant said:

And then, of course, just it's a hard job and the workload and the high expectations teachers are held to a high expectation. among their peers. They're looked at in the community. And so that in another thing is just the demands that they're placed on as far

as their lesson plans and all the things that they have to do to even prepare for class, and I think and this is not necessarily maybe doesn't go with this question.

P1 reported experiencing job stress. The participant noted emotional stress due to the high workload and bringing schoolwork home. Emotional stress can result in a decision to leave. She narrated:

What another job might make with the same amount of hours, but it can be looked at as we don't make enough because we do bring so much home. So, I think it can be a negative thing. By bringing home lesson plans to prepare or papers to grade, data to look at...not to mention the emotional stress of the job because if you truly love your students, they always come home with you.

P10 remarked about teachers experiencing burnout. She said, "I think after being in the classroom for sometimes three, four, five years we start to see that teacher burnout and they start to feel stressed." She added, "And another big thing that I think is causing them to feel that way or burned out is student misbehaviors." When asked about the challenges that teachers experience that result in high attrition rates, P15 replied, "One thing I would think is stress and just feeling overwhelmed."

Participants also identified student behavior as a challenge. P11 spoke about the challenge of "student behavior in large class sizes." P13 also talked about students' behavioral issues. He noted, "And there's so much misbehavior by students and they're not showing respect and they talk all the time. And this happens in the regular classrooms as much as it does in the special ed." The participant added that such students can cause disruptions in the classroom. Disruption can make teaching very frustrating for the teacher and other students may not be able to learn properly. The participant noted:

When you have a very difficult student or students in your classroom who are disrupting the class for the other students. It is very frustrating and very hard to teach the other students within the classroom and even if everybody's supporting you and everything's going great. That way the misbehavior can still continue, and it makes you not really want to come back the next year.

P15 mentioned the difficulty of working with students who have behavioral issues. He stated, "I think that's just a difficult age to work with. They're going through a lot. They can have very bad attitudes and be very lazy at times not all students, but just them, it's just a hard age."

The third theme indicated that the high workload of elementary school teachers, job stress, and student behavior issues hurt retention. These factors contribute to a high attrition rate. Thirteen participants contributed to this theme.

Theme 4: Inadequate Resources and Low Pay Contribute to High Attrition Rate

Participants in this study mentioned insufficient resources and low pay as other important factors contributing to teachers' high attrition rate. Twelve participants contributed to this theme. P14 talked about the lack of resources. The participant noted that when the school district does not provide sufficient resources, the school may continue to have old infrastructure, including dilapidated buildings. The curriculum also remains outdated. The participant mentioned:

Another challenge that teachers face, a lack of resources. You're in a district that does not provide resources for your staff. You could be in an outdated building you could have outdated curriculum outdated everything and you're just kind of at the mercy of what your content knowledge is and how flexible or good you are on your feet.

P6 also spoke about the insufficiency of resources. She noted, “The next thing would be the amount of resources and programs and in this case...maybe not enough of the resources or programs.” P8 talked about inadequate salary. They get paid salaries that cannot meet their expenditures. The low pay contributes to the decision to leave the organization. She stated:

And their salary I think [is a] challenge also. The low salary affects some teachers like myself if I feel like my salary is not meeting my expenses with the cost of living, that could be a challenge. You want your salary to kind of equal what you feel like your job is required, to meet whatever responsibilities your job and too much waste of time. I believe sometimes we don't use our time effectively.

P9 mentioned inadequate salaries. He remarked, “Based on what the work that they do. They don't feel like they get paid enough for the amount of work they're doing but also the stress of getting all that work done within a certain amount of time.”

P12 also talked about the low pay scale for teachers, saying, “From what I've seen, I honestly think that the biggest two reasons why teachers leave the teaching field is number one the difficult students and number two the low pay scale.”

Insufficient resources and low pay are some of the notable factors that impact the retention of teachers. Schools faced with inadequate resources tend to have outdated infrastructure and curriculum. These could cause talented teachers to leave for a better school elsewhere. Low pay that cannot meet the teachers' expenses also contributes to a high attrition rate.

Theme 5: Lack of Support From Parents, Administrators, and Other Teachers Negatively Affect Retention

The fifth theme demonstrated that a lack of parental support, as well as a lack of support from school administrators and even from fellow teachers contributes to attrition. Data supporting this theme were derived from 11 out of 15 participants. P4 talked about a lack of administration support for newer teachers. The participant stated:

But I think for me what I've heard mostly is that it's a lack of support all the way around even though the funding cost of living all of that play into it. I think not having the support especially newer teachers that they need in the beginning. And I think that really turns a lot of teachers off and has them look elsewhere for something else.

P6 mentioned that a lack of support from the administration affects the decision of teachers to stay or leave. The participant remarked, "I feel that educators are aware of the lack of support from administration, and it affects whether they want to stay in a school."

P8 also indicated that teachers are not getting enough support from the administration. She stated:

Sometimes as an educator we feel like we don't have the support of our administration. Because it goes back again to communication. We would definitely like to see more support from the administration, and also I thought about incentives and my school. I would love to see more incentives for the employees.

P9 spoke about a lack of support from parents, saying, "Parent support not having that can be a challenge."

P14 mentioned a lack of parental support and involvement, noting some parents do not care when their children are struggling academically and do not want to be involved at all in their child's education. The participant stated:

I've taught for 10 years and some things that I would have not imagined ever seeing in a classroom at the very beginning of my career. And now in the 10th year it blows my mind how different behavior and discipline in the classroom is the lack of parental support or involvement. If you've got a child that is in the classroom and they're struggling, and the parent couldn't care. You can't get a hold of the parent. You can't get them to come to the building for any kind of meeting to support that student that to me is another challenge that teachers face.

P7 mentioned that some parents are not supportive at all. Comments suggested that some parents abuse their children at home, an overwhelming discovery for a teacher. The participant noted:

The parents either are not being supportive or in a case, I had several years ago, I had a child that was being abused and I had the hardest time watching that every day. It was awful. I would just cry and tell my husband I couldn't do it anymore. Their home lives are horrible.

P8 talked about support from other teachers. New teachers may struggle to adjust to their new environment without support from seasoned teachers. They may also struggle to learn about the school's procedures and regulations, which could impact retention. The participant stated:

I just believe that's the first thing that challenges that has to be met, is that to make sure that the teachers have that support from each other because I believe that we are not be on the island by ourselves. We are working teachers and parents [and] administration.

We all are working together as a team to accomplish one great purpose and make sure that child gets the quality education.

The fifth theme suggested that teacher retention is negatively impacted by a lack of support from parents, administrators, and fellow teachers. Twelve participants contributed to this theme. Newer teachers need this support because they are more likely to leave the school if they do not feel supported.

Theme 6: Creating Positive Relationships With Administrators Supports Retention

The sixth theme demonstrated that establishing positive relationships between educators and administrators supports teacher retention. Data from 11 participants contributed to this theme. According to P1, the school principal should be a personable individual whom teachers can easily approach and talk to when they feel happy or sad. The school principal also has to be a relatable person. If the principal is not relatable, then teachers can easily leave the school. The participant stated:

I really feel like this [school principal] is one of the most important people at the school. Obviously, they help run the school, but when dealing with teachers and their retention if the administrator is not a personable person who someone can come to in times of happiness, sadness if they're not relatable, then their teachers are not going to want to stay there. They're gonna want to go somewhere where they have some sort of a relationship with the administration.

The participant added:

You don't want the principal to feel they're just your best friend kind of like a mama and a daddy, but you want to know that the principal loves you and is there to support

you and always has your back no matter what but is also going to say, 'Hey, we need to sit down, and let's discuss how we deal with behavior issues; you have to have that.'

P11 believed that creating that positive relationship with the administration would definitely be supportive to teachers, saying, "Yes, absolutely." The participant mentioned that it is important for administrators to go around the school and interact with teachers and students instead of just sitting in their office. Interacting with teachers will create a positive relationship with them, which is crucial to retention. She added:

Teachers want administrators that they are out and about. And that they see, not somebody who just sits in their office all the time. No. Someone who interacts with the students and has a pleasant attitude, like you said, a positive relationship with them and with the students.

P14 also believed that creating a positive relationship with administrators could support teacher retention in the classroom, saying, "Very much." The participant emphasized that having a positive relationship between educators and administrators is important. Without such a relationship, the participant believed that he would not need to continue working in that school under that particular principal. He stated:

So, if you don't have that positive relationship, if every time I feel like that you're calling on me or you talk to me. There's nothing but negative you're very critical of everything. There's nothing constructive about the feedback that you're giving me. What is the point of me being in the building working under you? What is the point of me staying? In that classroom when everything I do is wrong. And like I said, I've been on that other side where nothing you do is good enough, but at the same time you're not giving me feedback on how I can fix it. It's just negative all the time.

P4 highlighted the importance of creating a positive relationship with administrators. The participant stated, “Yes, and I think that's [creating a positive relationship with administrators] got to be a priority.” The participant mentioned that administrators should not feel offended when teachers want to teach in a particular manner. She stated:

I feel like when you know that you can go to that administrator, that administrator is coming in to observe you, not as a get you but as making sure, I mean because there's some administrators that would go in and say, ‘Okay if I was to teach, this is what I would do.’ But some get offended thinking that like I said, it's a slap but when you set out your expectations. I just feel like it's a win, and the teachers understand, and I think they feel better about getting those grows. Then if it was just written up and then you just read it sign off on it and you're done.

The sixth theme demonstrated that establishing positive relationships between administrators and educators is integral to the retention of teachers. Educators might be more likely to leave if there is no positive relationship between these two parties. They may look for a school where positive relationships between themselves and administrators can be established. Eleven participants contributed to this theme.

Theme 7: Support Through Appreciation, Incentives, and Recognition

The seventh theme showed that administrators’ support for teacher retention is provided by showing them appreciation, giving them incentives, and through recognition and acknowledgment. Data supporting this theme were drawn from 10 participants. P14 reported that the administration supports educators through appreciation, which entails giving rewards. Appreciation is also achieved through recognition, such as Employee of the Month. Such gestures help with retention. The participant stated:

Admin has put different rewards that we can cash in our shout outs because every time you get a shout out or when you receive one it banks and you can take those and turn them in for block of jeans pass or leave early pass but you can have bigger rewards as well. So you do have these other little things and then we do have our employee of the month. And Brag Board of the month those things as well, like employee of the month for us. Another person can refer you for employee of the month and then Brag board.

P3 stated that teachers want to feel “appreciated and they want to feel important.” Appreciating them makes them feel important and valued, which increases retention. P12 indicated that teachers are also supported through incentives. The incentives range from gifts and free lunches to leaving work early and wearing jeans on certain days. These efforts help to increase the retention of educators. He stated:

As far as incentives and things we do get teachers gifts, we get lunch, we get to wear jeans on Fridays, we get to sometimes have a 2:30 Friday. So maybe get off just a little bit early. We always get snacks and drinks whenever we have to do any kind of faculty meeting or anything that requires us to stay past our contracted hours. They always offer things like that for us.

P13 mentioned that educators are recognized and acknowledged, which shows support. They are acknowledged in different ways, such as employee of the month and brag board of the month. The recognition increases the teachers’ retention. She stated:

At our school level, we do monthly employee of the month and a Brag Board of the month. So, two teachers out of the school get chosen for that each month based on what the other teachers have done in affirming them, too. Encouragement even from the top

down is also very helpful and we get to leave on Fridays at 2:30 most of the time which gives us. That appreciation for the principal.

P3 also mentioned that educators are recognized. The recognition is important as it makes them feel joyful. As a result, they are more likely to stay. The participant noted:

They want to feel they've achieved something. We all want to be recognized and when we're recognized we're elated, they get so excited you get to be staff of the month.

We're gonna share it on Facebook, a lot of people love that. There's some people now that may not want as much recognition and you see them sitting back but sometimes it's just a written note. If they don't want to be recognized in front of everybody leaving them a note is important. I received a note just the other day. It was a postcard from my administrator.

The seventh theme revealed that administrators provide support through appreciation, incentives, and recognition. Retention of educators increases when they are recognized, appreciated, and given incentives. These gestures make them feel valued and appreciated, which in turn helps with retention. Ten participants contributed to this theme.

Theme 8: Active Listening, Celebrate Successes, and Provide Emotional Support

The eighth theme demonstrated that administrators' support for teacher retention is also provided by listening to educators, helping them solve their problems, celebrating their successes, and providing emotional support. Data supporting this theme were obtained from 10 participants. P11 spoke about celebrating teachers' successes. Teachers tend to feel valued and special when their successes are celebrated. Consequently, they are more likely to stay with the school rather than leave. The participant noted:

I think those that are successful recognize teachers' efforts and celebrate their successes and I think that they protect their planning time. And that they have differentiated PD [professional development] instead of a one size fits all model when it comes to professional development. I think it's stopping an increased amount of stress and never hurts anything...I think this leads to teacher retention.

P11 also mentioned that educators want to be listened to and to feel heard. The participant stated, "I think that teachers perceive administrator's support as being very important...They want to feel heard and listened to when they have a problem. And for someone, to help them solve those problems."

P3 mentioned that teachers want to be listened to. Not only do they want their administrators to listen to them, but they also want the administrators to help them solve problems. Doing so will be a show of support and help improve retention. She stated:

The educators need to know that if there's a problem, and you don't know how to solve it, that you can go to your administrators. That they'll listen, and they will support you. That they may not know the answer, but they'll at least try to sit down and problem solve with you, so that y'all can get on the track of finding a solution and that you're not alone.

P1 talked about providing the teachers with emotional support. The participant stated:

There is emotional support...Providing support emotionally for those teachers is important whether it's dealing with an angry parent and the teachers emotions are all over the place. Helping to let the teacher know I've got your back. Even if the teacher did something wrong the administration is not going to portray that to the parents in a way she's wrong, I'll deal with her. She is still going to have the teachers back

emotionally.

This participant added:

If it's something that the teachers' dealing with at home, I feel like the principal should be someone that you can go to and say, 'Hey, I'm dealing with a divorce and the principal should understand.' If you need me to come help out in your classroom. You need me for 30 minutes so that you can go to your car and breathe, you have emotionally got you.

P4 also talked about administrators providing emotional support. He stated, “[administrators] being available themselves always saying, if you need some help with something, come tell me.”

The eighth theme showed that having administrators listen to the educators, celebrate their successes, and provide them with emotional support helps to improve the retention of teachers. All these make the teachers feel valued, which makes them more willing to stay with the organization rather than leave. The theme was supported by data from 10 participants. There were no discrepant cases.

Answering the Research Questions

The current study sought to address two research questions. The eight themes adequately answered each of the research questions. This section entails the answers to the research questions in detail.

Research Question 1: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

The first research question sought to establish how elementary teachers perceive teacher retention in elementary classrooms. Findings showed that, according to the teachers, a safe and positive working environment positively impacts retention, which was the first theme. The

findings also demonstrated that coaching and mentoring programs positively impacted retention, which was the second theme. Excessive workload, job stress, and student behavior issues negatively affect retention, which was the third theme. The fourth theme demonstrated that inadequate resources and low pay contribute to high attrition and low retention rates. A lack of support from parents, administrators, and other teachers negatively affected retention, which was the fifth theme.

Research Question 2: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia?

The second research question was aimed at determining how educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom. Findings revealed that administrators supported teacher retention by creating positive relationships with them, which was the sixth theme. The administrators also provided support through appreciation, incentives, and recognition, which was the seventh theme. Besides, they engaged in active listening, celebrated teachers' successes, and provided emotional support, which improved retention, as demonstrated by the eighth theme.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important concepts in qualitative research. The concepts are commonly utilized in evaluating the quality of a given research study. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of a measure, whereas reliability focuses on the consistency of a measure (Weller et al., 2018).

Data Saturation

In this study, one of the approaches used to ensure the reliability and validity of the study was reaching saturation of data. Saturation was vital in ensuring the comprehensive exploration

of the research topic, reliability, and validity. Saturation, a fundamental principle in qualitative research methodology, is a marker to determine the sufficiency of data collection (Weller et al., 2018). Data saturation represents the point at which no new, meaningful information emerges from the data collection process (Weller et al., 2018). In this study, saturation was achieved when the 15th participant was interviewed, as no new insights, patterns, or themes emerged from the data. Saturation was reached when the last interview participants shared information aligned with previously gathered data without introducing new perspectives or insights. Reaching saturation point demonstrated that the research had explored deeply and exhaustively into the phenomenon under investigation. By attaining saturation, the reliability and validity of the study were reinforced, as the thoroughness of data collection helped to mitigate the risk of overlooking critical aspects of the research topic.

Trustworthiness of Data

Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research is integral. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell, 2017). Validity is related to credibility and transferability, whereas reliability in qualitative research is measured by dependability and confirmability. According to Creswell (2017), the validity and credibility of a study are judged based on how closely its findings match real responses from participants. The following sections address how the four aspects of trustworthiness were established in this study.

Credibility

The first aspect of enhanced trustworthiness is credibility. Stahl and King (2020) reported that credibility is the extent to which the study could be considered accurate and responsible. Member checking, or participant validation, was used to increase the credibility of the study

results. All data were audio-recorded and transcribed to preserve the authenticity of participant contributions. Through member checking, participants were able to review interview transcripts and verify the accuracy of the data they provided. The interview transcripts were provided to participants for review and feedback, and necessary revisions were made. The member-checking process contributed to construct validity and veracity of the study's findings.

Transferability

Transferability helps extend the study's findings to the intended audience, context, and circumstances (Cope, 2013). In this study, the transferability of the study's findings increased through the careful selection of participants who represented the diversity of the population being studied and by using probing questions to produce in-depth and detailed data (Busetto et al., 2020). Detailed descriptions of participant responses, contrasting viewpoints, and incorporating actual quotations also made the findings of this study more transferable.

Dependability

Dependability is the degree to which consistent results can be obtained from repeated studies using the same sample, data sources, and resources (Creswell, 2017). The information gathered and participant data should be reflected in the themes developed during the analysis (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020). In this study, dependability was established through constant comparison and member checking. Reconstructing the research and replicating the findings relied solely on maintaining a reliable and auditable trail. Dependability was also assured by documenting the entire research process and ensuring methodological and procedural coherence. The research process was documented to implement these methods effectively, noting the rationale supporting methodological choices, adaptations, and any changes made along the way. Notes taken during the interview captured the context, participant reactions, and unanticipated

insights, enriching the study's dependability. Regularly comparing new data with existing findings ensured that emerging themes were rigorously examined. Member checking was conducted by revisiting participants to validate interpretations and conclusions.

Confirmability

The last component of trustworthiness that was established was confirmability. Creswell (2017) posited that confirmability specifies how the study's findings may be corroborated. Confirmability was established by ensuring the findings were unbiased and based solely on participant replies. Further, confirmability was achieved through thematic classification and a detailed explanation of the study process.

Chapter Summary

The problem is teacher retention is a complex, critical issue affecting the education sector's stability and quality. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. Data from 15 semi-structured interviews were analyzed through inductive, thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 12 software. A six-step thematic process was used to analyze the gathered data, which resulted in eight themes, five of which were aligned to Research Question 1 and three of which were aligned to Research Question 2.

Research Question 1 was as follows: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia? Per the findings, a safe and positive working environment positively impacted retention; coaching and mentoring programs positively impacted retention; excessive workload, job stress, and student behavior issues negatively affected retention. Findings also revealed that inadequate resources and low pay

contributed to a high attrition rate, and a lack of support from parents, administrators, and other teachers negatively affected retention.

Research Question 2 was as follows: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom in a rural school system in Georgia? Per the findings, creating positive relationships with administrators supported retention; school administrators showed support through appreciation, incentives, and recognition; and administrators displayed support through active listening, celebrating successes, and providing emotional support, which improved retention. The research summary, implications, conclusions, and recommendations of the entire study based on these findings are provided in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The study focused on the factors that influence teacher retention and how administrative support affects teachers' decisions to stay in their positions. Key findings from the study revealed that a safe and positive work environment, effective coaching and mentoring programs, manageable workloads, adequate resources, supportive relationships, and recognition significantly impact teacher retention. Additionally, the lack of these elements, along with low pay and inadequate support from parents and administrators, negatively affects teacher retention. These findings confirmed and extended existing research, providing deeper insights into the specific challenges and supports relevant to elementary educators in rural settings.

The following sections highlight how the research plan was implemented and the findings and results revealed in the study. Sections include findings, interpretations, and conclusions; limitations; recommendations; and implications for leadership. The chapter ends with conclusions drawn from the entire study.

Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions

Two research questions guided this basic qualitative study exploring educators' perceptions about the critical national issue of teacher retention. Transformational leadership provided the foundation for the study and influenced potential solutions to the problem addressed. The following sections are organized according to the eight major themes that emerged from participant data collected in semi-structured interviews.

Safe and Positive Working Environment

The importance of a safe and positive working environment for teacher retention emerged as a critical theme in this study. Participants emphasized that feeling secure and supported in their work environment significantly impacts their decision to stay in a school, district, or profession. All 15 participants in this study contributed to the theme, underscoring its importance. Participants highlighted the role of safety officers in making teachers feel protected. They found the presence of safety officers reassuring, as they are dedicated to ensuring the safety of both teachers and students. This sense of security directly contributed to increased retention rates. Participants stressed that a resource officer's presence makes teachers feel safe, making them more likely to remain in their positions. This finding echoed Marshall et al. (2022), who reported that providing support and acknowledging teachers boosts morale and increases teacher retention.

Both teachers and parents need to feel that the school environment is safe, which is crucial for the well-being and retention of teachers. This feeling of safety is pivotal for teacher retention, as it reduces anxiety and fear, which can otherwise contribute to higher attrition rates. Participants' observations underscored the importance of having dedicated security personnel to handle safety concerns and de-escalate potential issues, particularly in districts that have experienced school shootings or other safety incidents. Although safety should be an obvious concern, given the large number of educators who exited the profession after the COVID-19 pandemic (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023), it was rarely mentioned in the existing literature as a reason for teachers leaving their positions. However, safety was the most often mentioned reason for resignation in this study. The data collected from participants extended knowledge of teacher retention by highlighting the unique challenges teachers face in rural settings, where resources

for safety measures may be limited. In this context, ensuring a safe and positive working environment is even more critical, as it directly impacts teachers' sense of security and well-being.

Beyond safety, a positive working and learning environment is essential. In such an environment, teachers said they felt valued, comfortable, needed, and supported, which enhanced their desire to stay. Participants also discussed the adverse effects of poor physical conditions in schools. Dilapidated buildings and outdated facilities contributed to a negative working environment and drove teachers away.

According to participants, a supportive and uplifting work environment can greatly influence a teacher's decision to stay, as it fosters a sense of belonging and community. This positive atmosphere is crucial for mitigating the stresses and challenges inherent in teaching, thereby reducing turnover. The findings of this study, which indicate that a supportive and safe work environment is crucial for teacher retention, confirmed existing knowledge in the field by Park et al. (2021). Park et al. established that a supportive work environment is essential to encourage teachers to thrive, emphasizing the crucial role of a supportive and safe work environment in teacher retention. Higher levels of support from the administration, such as regular feedback and recognition, were associated with longer tenures for teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

The theoretical framework of this study supported these findings. Transformational leadership theory suggests that leaders who inspire, support, and act as role models create a favorable work environment that enhances employee engagement and retention. When school administrators embody these qualities, they can significantly improve teacher retention by fostering a safe, secure, and supportive work environment.

Coaching and Mentoring Programs Increase Retention

The study's findings revealed the significant positive impact of coaching and mentoring programs on teacher retention, with data from 14 participants supporting this theme. Participants emphasized that effective mentoring and coaching programs provide new teachers with the necessary guidance and support, reducing their stress and increasing their likelihood of staying in the profession. The availability and assistance of mentors were viewed as crucial in making new teachers feel supported and reducing their stress levels. Participants also highlighted the importance of academic coaches in assisting teachers in their weak areas and modeling lessons.

Participants emphasized the necessity of induction and mentoring programs, illustrating the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application and highlighting the importance of mentorship in bridging this gap. Further, while acknowledging the benefits of mentoring and coaching, participants also noted potential challenges. They stressed that their effectiveness depends on proper implementation and the availability of mentors.

This study's findings showed that school administrators and academic coaches who create an environment for support and professional development influence teacher retention positively. These findings aligned with previous findings by Nketsia et al. (2022), who asserted that teachers who had opportunities for collaboration with colleagues reported enduring less stress, being more satisfied with their jobs, and having higher intentions to stay. The findings of this study also showed that mentorship and having someone close by for collaboration are important in retaining teachers. This finding corroborates the finding of the study by Beck et al. (2020), who established that transformational leaders play a crucial role in providing the motivation and guidance necessary for new teachers to succeed. The interpretations, inferences, and conclusions drawn from these findings did not exceed the study's data, findings, and scope.

The data showed that participants perceived mentoring and coaching as crucial for retention. The existing literature and this study consistently aligned with these findings. The study's boundaries were maintained, focusing on the specific context of a rural school system in Georgia without making unwarranted generalizations beyond this setting.

Excessive Workload, Job Stress, and Student Behavior Issues Hurt Retention

This study's findings revealed that excessive workloads, job stress, and student behavior issues negatively affect teacher retention. This finding aligned with prior research by Sutchter et al. (2019), who reported high teacher attrition rates due to these factors. Data from 13 participants in this study supported this theme, indicating a broad consensus among educators. Participants highlighted that teacher retention has decreased in recent years, whereas workloads and demands on teachers have increased. This observation confirmed the findings of Sutchter et al. (2019), who identified increasing workloads as a primary driver of teacher attrition. The observation also aligned with Marshall et al.'s (2022) study, which indicated high expectations placed on teachers exacerbate their stress and workload, ultimately affecting retention.

Job stress was another critical factor identified by the participants. Participants noted that since the COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening of the nation's schools, teachers' mental and emotional stress has increased, resulting from high workloads and the need to bring schoolwork home. This finding supported existing literature linking job stress to high attrition rates among teachers (Williams et al., 2022). Participants also mentioned burnout as a consequence of prolonged exposure to high stress and workload, reinforcing the findings of Seelig and McCabe (2021).

Student behavior issues, which also seemed to increase after the COVID-19 pandemic, were frequently mentioned as a challenge contributing to teacher stress and attrition. Participants

pointed out the difficulties posed by student behavior in large class sizes and noted that disruptive behavior could make teaching frustrating for them and negatively impact other students' learning. This finding was consistent with research by Nketsia et al. (2022), which emphasized the impact of student behavior on teachers' job satisfaction and retention.

The theoretical framework of this study, transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), supports a school climate that inspires and supports teachers. In this context, school administrators play a crucial role in mitigating teachers' job stress and managing workloads by fostering a supportive environment and providing necessary resources. When leaders exhibit transformational qualities, they can help teachers cope with high demands and stress, thereby improving retention.

The interpretations, inferences, and conclusions drawn from these findings did not exceed the study's data, findings, and scope. Data in both this study and the existing literature consistently indicated that excessive workloads, job stress, and student behavior issues negatively impacted teacher retention. The study's boundaries were maintained by focusing on these specific issues within the context of a rural school system in Georgia without making unwarranted generalizations beyond this setting.

Inadequate Resources and Low Pay Hurt Retention

The study revealed that inadequate resources and low pay are major factors contributing to high teacher attrition rates. This finding was consistent with previous research by Marshall et al. (2022), who identified resource insufficiency and low pay as key challenges in teacher retention. Twelve participants from the study underscored these issues, highlighting their significant impact on teachers' decisions to remain in their positions. Participants noted that the lack of resources in their school district leads to outdated infrastructure and curriculum. This lack

of support can leave teachers feeling overwhelmed, undersupported, and underprepared to meet educational standards and increase student achievement, which in turn affects their job satisfaction and retention.

Low pay was another critical factor identified by participants. Participants discussed how inadequate salaries make it challenging for teachers to meet their living expenses. This financial strain can demotivate teachers and drive them to seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere. Further, participants highlighted that teachers do not feel adequately compensated for the amount of work and stress they endure. One participant mentioned that low pay and difficult students are the primary reasons for teachers leaving the profession.

The interpretation of these findings confirmed existing research and underscored the necessity of adequate funding and competitive salaries in rural schools. Teachers need adequate resources to perform their duties effectively. Teachers may struggle to deliver quality education without proper resources, leading to frustration and burnout. This finding confirmed the findings by Marshall et al. (2022), emphasizing the importance of resource availability for teacher retention. Low pay further exacerbates the problem, as it demotivates teachers and increases their likelihood of leaving the profession. This finding aligned with Sutchter et al. (2019), who reported that inadequate pay is a significant factor in teacher attrition. Ensuring that teachers are adequately compensated is essential for job satisfaction and retention.

The theoretical framework of this study was transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978), which prepares leaders to take on the difficult decision-making related to inadequate resources and low teacher pay. In this context, school administrators can play a crucial role in addressing the issues of insufficient resources and low pay by advocating for better funding and creating a supportive environment that recognizes and values teachers' contributions.

Transformational leaders can influence policy changes that ensure adequate resources and competitive salaries for teachers. By fostering a supportive and motivating work environment, transformational leaders can help mitigate the negative impacts of resource insufficiency and low pay on teacher retention. The need for transformative support aligns with the principles of transformational leadership theory, which underscores the importance of meeting employees' needs to enhance their motivation and job satisfaction.

Lack of Support From Parents, Administrators, Teachers Hurts Retention

The study revealed that a lack of support from parents, administrators, and fellow teachers significantly negatively impacts teacher retention. This finding aligned with Seelig and McCabe (2021), Beck et al. (2020), and Maready et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of comprehensive support systems for teachers. Data supporting this theme were derived from 11 out of 15 participants, indicating the widespread recognition of this issue among educators.

Participants noted that newer teachers particularly suffer from a lack of administrative support, which can turn them away from the profession early in their careers. New teachers were described as feeling unsupported and overwhelmed, leading them to seek other opportunities where they might feel more valued and assisted. This observation confirmed the need for a robust support system for new teachers to help them transition smoothly into their roles (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Participants highlighted that the lack of administrative support directly affects teachers' decisions to stay at a school. They stressed teachers need to feel that their administrators are accessible and willing to assist with challenges. Without this support, teachers may feel isolated and unsupported, leading to higher attrition rates. This finding is consistent with the research by Seelig and McCabe (2021), which indicated that administrative support is a critical factor in teacher retention.

Parental support also plays a crucial role in teacher retention. Participants spoke about the challenges posed by the lack of parental involvement. They emphasized that when parents are not engaged in their child's education, it places additional stress on teachers, who must manage educational and behavioral issues without adequate support. This finding aligned with existing literature by Seelig and McCabe (2021), underscoring the importance of parental involvement in the educational process. Participants also mentioned extreme cases where parents were unsupportive and detrimental to their children's well-being, adding another difficulty for teachers. These situations can be emotionally draining for educators, contributing to their decision to leave the profession. These findings further confirmed the need for comprehensive support systems, including effective communication and collaboration between parents and teachers (Beck et al., 2020). Results from this study that parental support positively influences teacher retention were similar to the findings by Maready et al. (2021). Maready et al. established that new teachers struggle more without positive parental involvement in the education system, increasing their likelihood of attrition.

Support from fellow teachers is another critical component. Participants pointed out that new teachers may struggle to adapt to their new environment and understand school procedures without the backing of seasoned colleagues. This lack of peer support can make the transition into teaching more difficult and increase the likelihood of attrition.

Transformational leadership theory suggests that supportive and collaborative leadership can foster a positive school climate, leading to higher teacher retention (Burns, 1978). Leaders who build strong relationships and provide necessary support create an environment where teachers feel valued and motivated to stay. These findings confirmed existing research and highlighted the necessity for strong support systems (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021;

Seelig & McCabe, 2021) in rural schools. Teachers need to feel valued and supported by all stakeholders to thrive in their roles. This assistance means having access to administrative support and fostering a collaborative environment with parents and fellow teachers. The lack of such support systems can lead to increased stress, burnout, and, ultimately, higher teacher attrition rates.

Creating Positive Relationships With Administrators Supports Retention

The study indicated that creating positive relationships with administrators is crucial for teacher retention. This finding aligned with research by Berry et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of supportive leadership in retaining teachers. Data from 11 participants contributed to this theme, emphasizing the significant impact that positive administrative relationships have on teachers' decisions to remain in their positions.

Participants stressed that the school principal should be a personable individual who teachers can easily approach, regardless of whether they are experiencing happiness or distress. If the principal is not relatable and approachable, participants observed that teachers were more likely to leave the school in search of a more supportive environment. This finding underscored the need for administrators to be accessible and relatable, fostering an environment where teachers feel supported and valued. Similarly, participants highlighted the importance of administrators being visible and interactive within the school environment. Participants noted teachers prefer administrators who are out and about, interacting with teachers and students, rather than those who remain confined to their offices. This interaction helps build a positive relationship between administrators and teachers, which is crucial for retention. This finding confirms the existing research that supportive leadership is essential for retaining teachers (Berry

et al., 2021). Working condition factors associated with teacher retention include leadership, professional learning, community support, and student conduct (Berry et al., 2021).

Participants also emphasized the importance of positive relationships between educators and administrators. Participants noted little motivation to continue working in the school without such a relationship. They also viewed constant negative feedback without constructive advice as demoralizing, leading teachers to seek employment elsewhere. This finding highlighted the need for administrators to provide constructive feedback and foster positive interactions, reinforcing the importance of supportive leadership in teacher retention. Participants added that creating positive relationships with administrators should be a priority. They also mentioned that administrators should not take offense when teachers want to teach in a particular manner but should instead provide supportive and constructive feedback. This approach helps teachers feel understood and supported, contributing to a more positive work environment and higher retention rates.

These findings indicated support in the theoretical framework of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the importance of supportive and empowering leadership in enhancing employee satisfaction and retention. Further, the findings extended the knowledge in the field by highlighting the specific importance of positive administrative relationships in rural schools. Rural schools often face unique challenges, including limited resources and isolation, making supportive leadership even more critical. The study confirmed that positive relationships with administrators can significantly impact teacher retention, as teachers are more likely to stay in environments where they feel valued and supported.

In the context of the theoretical framework, these findings align with transformational leadership theory in reinforcing that leaders should empower and support their employees to

achieve common goals. Positive relationships with administrators embody transformational leadership theory's idealized influence and individualized consideration components. By being role models and showing genuine concern for their teachers' well-being, administrators can create a supportive and motivating work environment, which is crucial for retaining teachers. The conclusions drawn from these findings were within the scope of the study and based on the data collected. The study consistently indicated that supportive and approachable leadership is essential for fostering a positive school environment and improving teacher retention. School administrators should prioritize building positive relationships with teachers to enhance retention rates. Building such relationships involves being visible, approachable, and able to provide constructive feedback that helps teachers feel supported and valued.

Support Through Appreciation, Incentives, and Recognition

According to participants, recognition, incentives, and appreciation from administrators significantly impact teacher retention. Data from 10 participants underscored the importance of such measures in improving teacher retention rates. Participants reported that administrative support through appreciation and rewards, such as Employee of the Month and other small incentives, positively influences teacher retention. They also noted that these forms of recognition help teachers feel valued and acknowledged, encouraging them to remain in their positions. This finding supported existing research, confirming that recognition is a critical factor in teacher motivation and retention (Moser & McKim, 2020).

Participants highlighted that teachers want to feel appreciated and important. According to participants, when teachers are appreciated, it boosts their sense of self-worth and importance within the school community. By feeling valued, teachers are more likely to stay committed to their roles, which positively impacts retention rates (Moser & McKim, 2020).

Participants indicated that incentives, such as gifts, free lunches, early-leave passes, and casual dress days, also contribute to teacher retention. They mentioned that these incentives make teachers feel appreciated and provide them with tangible rewards for their hard work. This finding extended existing research by highlighting the specific types of incentives that can be effective in rural schools, where resources may be more limited but where creative incentives can still play a significant role in retention.

Participants discussed the importance of formal recognition programs, such as Employee of the Month and Brag Board of the Month. According to participants, these recognition programs encourage a sense of achievement and acknowledgment among teachers, contributing to their decision to stay in their positions.

Participants also emphasized that recognition, whether through formal awards or simple gestures like written notes, significantly impacts teacher retention. Receiving a personal note from an administrator made participants feel appreciated and valued, reinforcing their commitment to the school. This finding aligned with Moser and McKim (2020), who stated that recognition, even in small forms, can have a profound impact on teacher motivation and retention.

Findings demonstrated and confirmed the literature that administrators' support for teacher retention is effectively provided through appreciation, incentives, and recognition. Recognition programs and incentives create a supportive and positive work environment, making teachers feel valued and motivated. These findings also extended existing research by highlighting the specific types of recognition and incentives that can be effective in rural schools.

To enhance teacher retention, schools should implement comprehensive recognition and incentive programs. These programs can include formal recognition awards, tangible incentives

such as gifts and early leave passes, and simple gestures of appreciation like personalized notes. Schools can significantly improve teacher satisfaction and retention rates by fostering a culture of appreciation and recognition.

The conclusions drawn from this study were consistent with the data collected and within the scope of the research. The findings emphasized the importance of recognition and appreciation in retaining teachers, particularly in rural schools with limited resources. Implementing these strategies can help create a positive and supportive school environment, ultimately leading to higher teacher retention rates. Schools and policymakers should prioritize these measures to ensure teachers feel valued and supported in their roles, contributing to a more stable and effective educational system.

Active Listening, Celebrate Successes, and Provide Emotional Support

The study revealed that providing emotional support and celebrating teachers' successes were crucial factors in improving teacher retention. Data from 10 participants underscored the significance of these measures in retaining teachers, particularly in rural schools. Participants highlighted the importance of celebrating teachers' successes. Recognizing and celebrating teachers' efforts makes participants feel valued and special, increasing their likelihood of staying with the school. Participants noted that successfully recognizing teachers' efforts, protecting their planning time, and offering differentiated professional development contributed to reducing stress and enhancing retention. This finding confirmed Pathak et al.'s (2013) research, which indicated that emotional support and acknowledgment of achievements are vital for teacher motivation and retention.

Participants also mentioned that educators want to be listened to and feel heard. Educators perceived administrators' support as crucial when they felt someone was available to

listen to their problems and help them find solutions. This finding aligned with the literature, which showed that emotional and problem-solving support can significantly impact an individual's well-being and motivation (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Administrators can create a supportive environment that fosters teacher retention by actively listening to teachers and addressing their concerns. Participants also emphasized the importance of being listened to and supported by administrators. Educators observed that teachers want their administrators to listen to them and assist them in solving problems. This support helps address immediate issues and makes teachers feel valued and part of a supportive community. This finding confirmed existing research and underscored the necessity of strong emotional support systems (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021) in rural schools, where teachers often face unique challenges.

Participants discussed the need for emotional support, particularly when encountering difficult situations such as angry parents or personal issues. Administrators providing emotional support were viewed as helping teachers navigate these challenges and feeling that someone backs them. This support is essential in creating a sense of security and belonging, which are critical components of teacher retention. Participants' insights reinforced the idea from the literature that emotional backing from leaders can significantly enhance job satisfaction and retention (Beck et al., 2020; Maready et al., 2021; Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Participants added that administrators should be approachable and understanding, especially when teachers are addressing personal issues. For instance, if a teacher is going through a difficult personal situation, having a principal who is willing to offer emotional support and practical assistance can make a significant difference. This level of support ensures that teachers do not feel isolated and overwhelmed, which can reduce turnover rates.

Participants also spoke about the importance of administrators being available and offering help when needed. They mentioned that knowing administrators are approachable and willing to provide support significantly affects how teachers perceive their work environment. This finding extended existing research by highlighting the specific actions that administrators can take to provide emotional support, such as being present and responsive to teachers' needs.

According to participants, administrators effectively support teacher retention through active listening, celebrating successes, and offering emotional support. These practices create a supportive and positive work environment, making teachers feel valued and motivated. The findings confirmed and extended existing research by emphasizing the specific actions that can be taken to support teachers in rural schools.

The conclusions drawn from this study were consistent with the data collected and within the scope of the research. The findings underscored the importance of emotional support and recognition in retaining teachers, particularly in rural settings. Schools and policymakers should prioritize these measures to ensure teachers feel supported and valued, contributing to a more stable and effective educational system. By fostering a culture of support and recognition, schools can significantly improve teacher satisfaction and retention rates, ultimately benefiting the entire academic community.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in this study, which should be considered when interpreting the findings and implications. The transferability of the findings is limited due to its specific focus on a rural school system in Georgia. The unique characteristics of this geographical and demographic setting may not be representative of other rural or urban school systems (Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020). Consequently, the findings may not be directly applicable to

different contexts. To enhance the generalizability of the results, future research should address similar issues in diverse geographical and demographic settings, allowing for a broader understanding of teacher retention challenges and solutions.

Credibility of the study was further enhanced through member checking, SME field testing of the interview protocol, and achieving data saturation, but the reliance on self-reported data introduced potential bias. Participants' responses could be influenced by personal perceptions, memories, and the desire to present themselves in a favorable light (Jones & Donmoyer, 2021). To strengthen the credibility of future studies, researchers should consider triangulating data sources. According to Natow (2020), combining interviews with observations, questionnaires, and administrative data could provide a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the issues.

The study's dependability was bolstered by documentation of the research process, member checking, and SME validation of the data instrument (Stahl & King, 2020). However, the context-specific nature of the findings posed a challenge to dependability. The study's results were tied to the particular setting of the rural school system in Georgia, and replicating the study in different environments is necessary to assess the consistency and reliability of the findings. Future researchers should aim to replicate this study in various settings to determine if the results hold across different contexts.

Confirmability was established through thematic classification and a detailed explanation of the study process. Despite these efforts, potential researcher bias remained a concern. The interpretation of qualitative data can be subjective, and personal biases may inadvertently influence the findings (Stahl & King, 2020). Future studies should involve multiple researchers to independently analyze the data to minimize this risk. This approach can provide a more

balanced and objective analysis, reducing the impact of individual biases on the research outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, several recommendations were made for practice, policy, and future research. Schools should prioritize creating a safe and positive working environment by implementing safety measures and fostering a supportive school climate. The recommendation is also supported by findings in Marshall et al. (2022), where factors like establishing a safe and positive working environment for retaining teachers were indicated. The findings of this study also revealed the need for structured mentoring and coaching programs that help new teachers adjust to their profession and reduce turnover. This recommendation is supported by Nketsia et al. (2022), who noted that mentoring and coaching programs positively impacted teacher retention.

Managing and monitoring teacher workloads is critical to prevent burnout and stress. Providing adequate teacher resources, including competitive salaries, contributes to a positive teacher retention outcome (Seelig & McCabe, 2021). Seelig and McCabe (2021) also found that excessive workloads, job stress, and student behavior problems contributed to the negativity of retaining teachers. Developing strong support systems involving parents, administrators, and fellow teachers is also crucial.

Education policymakers should consider mandating mentoring and coaching programs for new teachers. These programs are recommended based on findings by Beck et al. (2020) that coaching and mentoring teachers positively contributed to teacher retention. The mentoring and coaching program recommendation is further supported by Nketsia et al. (2022), whose study indicated that teachers reporting more opportunities for collaboration with colleagues also

reported less enduring stress and higher job satisfaction, exhibiting fewer intentions for attrition. Policies aimed at reducing teacher workload and stress should be developed. The findings inform the development of policies, where Sutchter et al. (2019) established that heavy workloads, job stress, and student behavior impacted teacher retention. According to Sutchter et al. (2019), growing workloads primarily contribute to teacher attrition.

Adequate funding for resources and competitive teacher salaries should be ensured to retain quality educators. Marshall et al. (2022) also supported the recommendation for adequate funding with their findings that inadequate resources and low pay were the major causes of the high teacher attrition rate. Sutchter et al. (2019) also justified competitive teacher salaries by demonstrating that inadequate pay contributes to teacher attrition. Furthermore, policies should encourage parental involvement in education to provide additional support for teachers. This recommendation is based on the findings of Maready et al. (2021), which established that new teachers perform worse without positive parental involvement, leading to increased attrition.

Future researchers should explore the long-term impact of mentoring programs on teacher retention. Research could focus on strategies to manage teacher workloads and effectively reduce stress. Such a recommendation would be important because of the research evidence from this study. Williams et al. (2022) also indicated that heavy workload and job stress, as negative student behavior, negatively influence teacher retention. There was a direct correlation noted by Williams et al., where high attrition rates for teachers correlated to job stress. Investigating the different approaches might help discover some of the retention challenges.

Further studies could help examine the effectiveness of different types of incentives and recognition programs on teacher retention. Recommendations on how effective incentives and

recognition programs can be on teacher retention corroborate Moser and McKim (2020), whose study results proved that administrative support, appreciation, incentives, and recognition profoundly affected retaining teachers. Examining different approaches to recognition may bring forth crucial ideas that help support teachers.

Implications for Leadership

The findings of this study have several implications for leadership at various levels. At the individual level, teachers need a safe and positive working environment to feel secure and supported. This type of environment involves implementing comprehensive safety measures and fostering a school climate that supports and encourages teachers. By prioritizing these aspects, school leaders can help teachers feel secure and valued, which is essential for their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. This finding is also well supported by Marshall et al. (2022), who found that safe and supportive working environments highly influence teacher retention. Marshall et al. noted the development of an environment in which a teacher feels recognized and supported, improving their morale and thus motivating the teacher to remain in the profession.

At the family level, parental support is crucial for teacher retention. School leaders should engage parents and encourage involvement in their children's education. This approach helps create a supportive community that benefits both teachers and students. The results from this study showed that one of the causative factors contributing to teachers' attrition was a lack of support from parents. This finding corroborates the results by Seelig and McCabe (2021), who asserted that the involvement of parents in the educational process is very important. Anytime a parent is involved in a child's education, the workload on the teacher becomes less difficult, hence making the job more fulfilling for teachers.

At the organizational level, schools must implement comprehensive support systems, including mentoring and coaching programs, to support new teachers. These programs can help reduce turnover and improve teacher retention rates by providing the necessary guidance and support for new educators. Implementing such measures can significantly improve teacher retention rates. The need for mentorship aligns with Beck et al.'s (2020) finding that transformational leaders are important in providing the motivation and guidance required to ensure new teachers succeed. According to Beck et al., when teachers had opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, they reported fewer instances of stress, which made them have better job satisfaction, resulting in a higher retention rate.

At the societal and policy level, education policymakers should prioritize funding for resources and competitive teacher salaries, especially in rural schools. Policies should mandate mentoring programs and encourage parental involvement to provide additional support for teachers. These measures may ensure that teachers feel valued and supported, ultimately improving retention rates and the overall quality of education. The availability of resources, coupled with competitive teacher salaries, may ensure increased support for the teachers to improve their retention rates in the teaching profession and eventually raise standards in educational delivery. This finding supports Marshall et al. (2022), who emphasized that resource availability was a core requirement for teacher retention. Marshall et al. reported supporting and recognizing teachers as key elements that boost morale and increase teacher retention.

Conclusion

This basic qualitative study focused on elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The findings revealed that a safe and positive working environment, effective coaching and mentoring

programs, manageable workloads, adequate resources, supportive relationships, and recognition significantly impact teacher retention. These findings aligned with and extended existing research, providing deeper insights into the specific challenges and supports relevant to elementary educators in rural settings.

The implications of the study suggest that schools should prioritize creating a supportive and positive working environment and implementing structured mentoring and coaching programs. They should also prioritize managing teacher workloads, ensuring adequate resources and competitive salaries, and developing strong support systems involving parents, administrators, and fellow teachers. Leaders should consider these factors when implementing transformative changes to support teachers, and education policymakers should consider them when developing policies to improve teacher retention.

Future research should address the long-term impact of mentoring programs on teacher retention, specific strategies to manage teacher workloads and reduce stress, the effectiveness of different types of incentives and recognition programs, and the role of parental support in teacher retention. The study highlighted the critical need for school leaders and policymakers to address the multifaceted factors influencing teacher retention. Schools can significantly improve teacher retention rates by creating a supportive and positive working environment, providing adequate resources, and fostering strong support systems. Such an environment can enhance the overall quality of education, benefiting students, teachers, and the broader community.

Teacher retention is a complex and critical issue that requires a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the specific challenges and supports relevant to elementary educators in rural settings. By implementing the recommendations provided, schools and policymakers can create a more

supportive and sustainable teaching environment, ultimately improving teacher retention and the quality of education.

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Appendix A

Site Permission Email

Request for Research Site Approval in the [redacted] School District Inbox x

 **Yolanda Daniels** [redacted] Wed, Aug 2, 5:31 PM (10 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to [redacted] me ▾

Dear Superintendent Dr. [redacted]

I hope you are doing well. My name is Yolanda Daniels, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at the American College of Education. I am writing to request your kind permission and support to conduct my research dissertation, which focuses on teacher retention.

My research aims to explore factors influencing teacher retention within the educational environment and educators' perspectives on teacher retention in support of leadership and administration, particularly identifying best practices and strategies to enhance teacher retention rates. The insights gained from this study have the potential to contribute significantly to the overall improvement of our education system.

Given the significance of the topic and the valuable insights your school district can offer, I am seeking approval to use the [redacted] School District as a primary site for data collection and analysis. By conducting research within your school district, I hope to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by teachers in our community.

The data collection will include surveys and interviews, ensuring minimal disruption to regular school activities. All collected information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and I will strictly adhere to institutional guidelines and protocols to ensure the privacy and protection of participants.

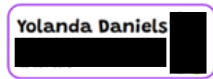
I would like to ask for your permission for this research project and allow me access to the necessary resources within the school district. Please let me know if there are any specific requirements or procedures for obtaining approval, and I will quickly fulfill them.



Your support and cooperation are vital to the success of this research endeavor. With your help, we can contribute meaningfully to addressing teacher retention challenges within our education system.

Thank you for considering my request. I am more than willing to provide any additional information or answer any questions you may have regarding this research.


I look forward to your positive response and the opportunity to collaborate on this crucial research project.

Sincerely,


Yolanda Daniels
[redacted]

Shine Bright with Success! 


Re: Request for Research Site Approval in the [redacted] School District Inbox x

 [redacted] Thu, Aug 3, 3:10 PM (9 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to me ▾
Yolanda,

I will prepare a letter giving you permission to proceed.

I hope you have a great start to the school year!

[redacted]

NOTICE: This e-mail message and all attachments may contain legally privileged and confidential information intended solely for the use of the addressee. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any reading, dissemination, distribution, copying, or other use of this message or its attachments is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by telephone (912) 384-2086 or by electronic mail [redacted] and delete this message and all copies and backups.

Appendix B

Approval of Site Permission



[Redacted] *Board of Education*
[Redacted] Superintendent
[Redacted] Chairman - [Redacted] Vice Chairman
[Redacted]

August 4, 2023

Human Subjects Review – Institutional Review Board
American College of Education IRB
Indianapolis, IN 46204

To Whom It May Concern:

This will serve to give approval to Ms. Yolanda Daniels to conduct a study in the [Redacted] School System. This also gives authorization to her to make use of student and staff data, within the parameters of applicable Federal and state law, and LEA policy. Ms. Daniels has permission to continue her stated dissertation project to completion and to utilize any system data that is necessary to complete her study so long as the use of data and associated materials are protected and retain anonymity.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Superintendent

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter

February 20, 2024

To: Yolanda Daniels

Lana Sloan, Dissertation Committee Chair

From: Institutional Review Board American College of Education

Re: IRB Approval

"Perspectives of Elementary Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study"

The American College of Education IRB has reviewed your application, proposal, and any related materials. We have determined that your research provides sufficient protection of human subjects.

Your research is therefore approved to proceed. The expiration date for this IRB approval is one year from the date of review completion, February 20, 2025. If you would like to continue your research beyond this point, including data collection and/or analysis of private data, you must submit a renewal request to the IRB.

Candidates are prohibited from collecting data or interacting with participants if they are not actively enrolled in a dissertation sequence course (RES6521, RES6531, RES6541, RES6600, RES6551, RES6561, RES6302) and under the supervision of their dissertation chair.

Our best to you as you continue

your studies. Sincerely,

Tiffany Hamlett

Chair, Institutional
Review Board
American College
of Education

Appendix D

Recruitment Email

Dear Educator:

I hope you are doing well. My name is Yolanda Daniels, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at American College of Education. I am inviting you to participate in a critical research study as a potential participant.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to capture elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. My research aims to explore factors influencing teacher retention within the educational environment and educators' perspectives on teacher retention and the support of leadership and administration, particularly identifying best practices and strategies to enhance teacher retention rates. The insights gained from this study have the potential to contribute significantly to the overall improvement of our education system.

Your participation in this study would benefit society by understanding the perspective of qualified elementary teachers in a rural area regarding teacher retention. District and school-level leaders will learn how to decrease the retention rate. This will allow teachers to remain in the profession, gain support, and feel valued as team members. Your input would add new knowledge in educational leadership when hiring and retaining teachers.

This research study follows the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the protection of participants.

Your participation is voluntary, and your identity will be kept confidential. The individual interview will be audio recorded using the Zoom online conferencing platform and will last 45-60 minutes. You will be asked a series of open-ended and follow-up questions. I will also take journal notes. All research data will be kept secure in password-protected, encrypted computer files on a stored in a locked filing cabinet in my possession.

Please click the link to the Google Form below to complete the eligibility survey to verify you meet the inclusion criteria for the study.

[Eligibility Survey](#)

- a) Do you hold at least a bachelor's degree? Yes No
- b) Do you have 3 years or more of teaching experience? Yes No
- c) Are you employed as a teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator in an elementary school in the school district approved as the research site? Yes No

If you meet the inclusion criteria and would like to participate in the study, please email me at yolanda.daniels5726@my.ace.edu

In your email response, please include (a) your name and (b) your email address. After you complete the eligibility survey and accept this invitation to participate, you will receive a follow-up email through the district acknowledging eligibility for the study and providing the informed consent form for signature. The informed consent will describe the study and your rights as a participant in detail.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this research study, please let me know.

Thank you in advance for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Daniels

Appendix E

Follow-Up Email and Informed Consent

Dear Educator:

Thank you for responding to my invitation to participate in my doctoral research study on teacher retention. You have met the eligibility requirements for the study. The next step is to read and sign an informed consent form required to participate in the study. The informed consent form provides detailed information on the study and your rights as a participant. You will have 2 weeks to read and sign the informed consent provided below and return it to me by email at yolanda.daniels5726@my.ace.edu. If you have questions or require more information on the study or informed consent, please contact me.

Thank you for your interest in my study,
Yolanda Daniels

Informed Consent

Title of Study:

Perspectives of Elementary Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

Researcher: Yolanda Daniels

Email: yolanda.daniels5726@my.ace.edu

Purpose of Study

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is vital that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to capture elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. The population engaged in the research study will be educators who meet the following criteria: a) at least a bachelor's degree, b) 3 years or more of teaching experience, and c) employment as a teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator in an elementary school in the school district approved as the research site.

Date of IRB Approval: TBD

Please note that the American College of Education Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this research study. The IRB approved this study on February 20, 2024. A copy of the approval letter will be provided upon request.

Researcher's Dissertation Chair: Dr. Lana Sloan

Organization and Position: American College of Education, Doctoral Research Faculty

Email: lane.sloan@ace.edu

Study Procedures

Data will be collected through an individual interview. The interview will take 45-60 minutes to complete. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded using the Zoom online meeting platform for accuracy and transcription.

Participant Selection

Participants must meet the following inclusion criteria to be accepted for participation in the study:

- (a) at least a bachelor's degree
- (b) 3 years or more of teaching experience
- (c) employment as a teacher, paraprofessional, or administrator in an elementary school in the school system approved as the research site.

Risks

The risk, or potential for harm, related to study participation is minimal. Participants may experience discomfort in answering some interview questions; however, based on informed

consent, they have the right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study without explanation or repercussion.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study may add new knowledge to the field.

Confidentiality

During the interview session, every effort will be made to protect your identity and confidentiality, including the following:

- Assigning pseudonyms with numerical codes for participants on all research notes and documents (i.e., P1, P2).
- Conducting individual, audio-recorded interview sessions via Zoom, an online meeting platform.
- Keeping all data, including notes, interview audios and transcriptions, and any identifying participant information, in password-protected, encrypted files in a locked filing cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher throughout the research study and for 3 years after study completion at which time the information will be destroyed.

Contact Information

If you have questions about this study or experience adverse effects because of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to participate in this study. If you participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are free to withdraw at any time from the study without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect your relationship with the researcher, if any. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Consent

I have read and understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Name Printed _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that consent has been given freely by the participant and that they understand they can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A copy of this consent form has been provided to the participant.

Researcher's Name Printed _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Interview Email

Dear Educator:

Thank you again for your interest in participating in my research study. I am excited about the next steps. I will be setting up interview sessions within the next two weeks.

Please let me know a date and time that is convenient for you. Please remember that the interview will be audio recorded using the Zoom online conferencing platform and will last 45-60 minutes.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you. Have a blessed day.

Yolanda Daniels,
Doctoral Student
American College of Education

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Greeting the participant at the beginning of the interview:

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. My name is **Yolanda Daniels**. I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at American College of Education. As stated in the recruitment, the purpose of this basic qualitative study is to capture elementary educators' perceptions of teacher retention and the support of administrators in a rural school system in Georgia. Your participation in this study would benefit society by understanding the perspective of qualified elementary educators in a rural area regarding teacher retention. District and school-level leaders will learn what can be done to decrease the retention rate. This will allow teachers to remain in the profession, gain support, and feel valued as team members.

Review participant rights, informed consent

The Nature of the Interview

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to stop the interview at any time or withdraw from the study should you wish to. The interview will be recorded using audio on the Zoom online conferencing platform, will last 45-60 minutes, and I will take journal notes. You will be asked a series of open-ended and follow-up questions.

Participant's Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, I will not include your name or other personal identifiers in the study reports. If I were to share this dataset with other researchers in the future, I would ensure any identifying details are deleted before sharing. This would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by protecting each with a password and securing handwritten notes under lock and key. Data will be kept for 3 years and then destroyed.

Closing Statement and Transitioning Into the Interview

Again, I want to thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary, and you can refuse to answer a question or stop this interview anytime. I would also like to take this opportunity to address any questions or concerns you may have at this time. Should you need a break during the interview, let me know and pause the interview. If you do not have any questions or concerns at this time, I will begin the interview.

Interview Questions

Perspectives of Elementary Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

Years of educator experience? _____

Current Position? _____

Grade Level(s) _____

RQ1: What are educators' perceptions of teacher retention in the elementary classroom?

- What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers?
- What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers?
- What effect does the compensation have on the retention of teachers?
- What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?

- What preparation practices are effective in retaining teachers?
- What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in high attrition rates?

RQ2: How do educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom?

- What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers?

Appendix G**SME Contribution Email and Feedback**

Dear [Name]:

I hope you are doing well. My name is Yolanda Daniels, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at American College of Education. I invite you to contribute vital information as a subject matter expert (SME) in the education field for my dissertation research on teacher retention. I would greatly appreciate your feedback and perception of my interview questions on teacher retention.

Before moving forward in the dissertation process, I must reach out to at least three experts in the field. These people are considered subject matter experts. The task of a SME is to gauge the interview questions and provide a perspective if the questions fit the topic in acquiring new knowledge regarding teacher retention.

I hope to receive your feedback on the participant questions I will use in my research. These questions are for new and retired educators.

Please read and give feedback on the questions I have attached if you want to contribute. If you need additional information, please feel free to let me know.

Thank you in advance for considering contributing your expertise.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Daniels

SME Feedback for Research Interview Questions

SME #1

Re: Request Feedback for Research Interview Questions External Inbox x



[redacted]@gmail.com
to me

Mon, Aug 14, 3:40 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

I am not ignoring you. I just haven't had time, yet, but I promise to get on it tomorrow!

On Fri, Aug 11, 2023 at 8:01 AM Yolanda Daniels [redacted] wrote:

Hi Ms. [redacted].

I hope you are doing well. My name is Yolanda Daniels, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at the American College of Education. I invite you to contribute vital information as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the education field for my dissertation research on teacher retention. I would greatly appreciate your feedback and perception of my interview questions on teacher retention.

Before moving forward in the dissertation process, I must reach out to at least three experts in the field. These people are considered Subject Matter Experts. The task of an SME is to gauge the interview questions and provide a perspective if the questions fit the topic in acquiring new knowledge regarding teacher retention.

I hope to receive your feedback on the participant questions I will use in my research. These questions are for new and retired educators.

Please read and give feedback on the questions I've attached if you want to contribute. If you need additional information, please feel free to let me know.

Thank you in advance for considering contributing your expertise.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Daniels [redacted]

Re: Responses to Research Questions External Inbox x



[redacted]@gmail.com
to me

Tue, Aug 15, 10:07 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮

I fixed the one question that needed work. The rest were fine.

On Tue, Aug 15, 2023, 10:03 AM Yolanda Daniels [redacted] wrote:

Hi [redacted].

Thank you so much for all your help. Did you have any suggestions on rewording any of the questions? Were the questions clear?

Have a blessed day. 😊

Yolanda Daniels [redacted]

Shine Bright with Success! 💡



██████████ SME #1

Interview Questions

SME #1

Perspectives of New and Retired Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

What is your marital status?

What is your level of education?

Years of working experience? _____

Are you teaching or retired? _____

Where do you currently live? _____

RQ1: What are new educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers? **This question will support your study.**
- What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers? **This question will support your study.**
- What does the compensation have on the retention of teachers? **This question will support your study.**
- What are various strategies related to teacher preparation that have impact on teacher retention? **Notice I fixed this question for you.**

RQ2: What are veteran educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention **This question will support your study.**
- What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers? **This question will support your study.**
- What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in a high attrition rate? **This question will support your study.**

SME #2

SME #2

Re: Request Feedback for Research Interview Questions External Inbox x



to me ▾

Sun, Aug 13, 12:29 PM (9 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hello!

Below is my feedback...

From your title I did not understand that this research is just for elementary school classrooms. Should that be mentioned in the title? I'm not sure.

"New" teachers - first year? 0-5 years?

You asked or you working or retired. Maybe just a check mark for new or retired.

I'm not sure I understood "What are various strategies related to teacher preparation have on teacher retention?"

Everything else looks great.

Hope this helps.

What are various strategies related to teacher preparation have on teacher retention?

On Fri, Aug 11, 2023, 8:01 AM Yolanda Daniels [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Mrs. [REDACTED],

I hope you are doing well. My name is Yolanda Daniels, and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my studies at the American College of Education. I invite you to contribute vital information as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the education field for my dissertation research on teacher retention. I would greatly appreciate your feedback and perception of my interview questions on teacher retention.

Before moving forward in the dissertation process, I must reach out to at least three experts in the field. These people are considered Subject Matter Experts. The task of an SME is to gauge the interview questions and provide a perspective if the questions fit the topic in acquiring new knowledge regarding teacher retention.

I hope to receive your feedback on the participant questions I will use in my research. These questions are for new and retired educators.

Please read and give feedback on the questions I've attached if you want to contribute. If you need additional information, please feel free to let me know.

Thank you in advance for considering contributing your expertise.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Daniels [REDACTED]

SME #3



to me

google.com>

Wed, Aug 16, 8:16 PM



shared a document

.ga.us) has invited you to **edit** the following document:

Here ya go! I am so sorry this took me so long. I am trying to keep up!! lol! LOVE YOU!

Interview Questions

SME #3

Perspectives of New and Retired Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

What is your marital status? M ___ S ___ W ___ D ___

What is your level of education? Bachelors ___ Masters ___ Specialist ___ Ph.D. ___

Years of working experience? _____

Are you teaching or retired? _____

Where do you currently live? _____

These questions are appropriate for your study.

RQ1: What are new educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- ✓ What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers?
- ✓ What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers?
- ✓ What does the compensation have on the retention of teachers?
- ❖ **What are various strategies related to teacher preparation have on teacher retention? Consider revising.**

RQ2: What are veteran educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- ✓ What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
- ✓ What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers?
- ✓ What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in a high attrition rate?

[REDACTED] SME #4

RE: Request Feedback for Research Interview Questions External Inbox x



[REDACTED].ga.us>
to me

Fri, Aug 11, 2:39 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hey friend,

I made a few edits to the document. I think you can tell by the color coding what I mean.
Let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks

From: Yolanda Daniels [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 1:22 PM
To: [REDACTED].ga.us>
Cc: Yolanda Daniels [REDACTED]
Subject: Request Feedback for Research Interview Questions

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the GaDOE Mail System. Use caution replying or supplying information, clicking links, or opening attachments. If you suspect the message is fraudulent, please utilize the Report Message button.

SME #4

Interview Questions

SME #4

Perspectives of New and Retired Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

What is your marital status? M___ S___ W___ D___

What is your level of education? Bachelors ___ Masters ___ Specialist ___ Ph.D. ___

Years of working experience? _____

Are you teaching or retired? _____

Where do you currently live? _____

RQ1: What are new educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and **what are** the supports needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers?
- What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers?
- What **effect** does the compensation have on the retention of teachers?
- **What are various strategies related to teacher preparation have on teacher retention?**

This question is not clear. Maybe it could be – “What are the various strategies related to teacher preparation and what is their effectiveness for retaining teachers?”

RQ2: What are veteran educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and **what are** the supports needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
- What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers?
- What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in ~~a high attrition rate~~ **high attrition rates**?

Possibly add another question to break down questions 1 and 2. This question could be – “What are the educator's perspectives on the administrator's expectations for teacher retention in the elementary school?”

[REDACTED] SME #5

Interview Questions

SME #5

Perspectives of New and Retired Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

What is your marital status? M___ S___ W___ D___

What is your level of education? Bachelors ___ Masters ___ Specialist ___ Ph.D. ___

Years of working experience?

Are you teaching or retired?

Where do you currently live?

The following questions are excellent research determinants for new Educators to consider and for Administration to closely examine in determining Teacher perspectives and Teacher retention. After looking at the research pertaining to these questions, there are numerous Researchers who have published findings of qualitative studies regarding:

Teacher Retention, Characteristics of Schools with high Retention of Teachers, How working conditions affect Retention of Teachers, How Induction and Mentoring affect Retention of Teachers, Is Financial Compensation enough support to improve Retention of Teachers.

[REDACTED] Ph.D.

SME #5

SME #5 Continued

RQ1: What are new educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and **what is** the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers?
- What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers?
- What does the compensation have on the retention of teachers?
- What are various strategies related to teacher preparation have on teacher retention?

RQ2: What are veteran educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and **what is** the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?

- What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?
- What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers?
- What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in a high attrition rate?

Minor suggestion: Add a third research question with administrators or school leaders.

Original Interview Questions with SME Suggestions and Changes**Interview Questions****Perspectives of ~~New and Retired~~ Elementary Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study (SME 2)**

SME #2 suggested changing the title to Perspectives of **Elementary** Educators on Teacher Retention: A Basic Qualitative Study

My first question is to understand some basic background information.

What is your marital status? M ___ S ___ W ___ D ___ Marital status was removed (TOR feedback).

What is your level of education? Bachelors _____ Masters _____ Specialist _____ Ph.D. _____

Years of working experience? _____

~~Are you teaching or retired?~~ Changed to Current Position (TOR feedback)

Where do you currently live? _____

With multiple feedback from SMEs, dissertation committee, and Chapter 3 TOR, the research questions were rewritten to maintain the key ideas of the purpose statement and problem and to make them more succinct. This document shows the SME and TOR suggestions, which were incorporated into the final research questions.

RQ1: What are ~~new~~ educators' ~~perspectives~~ perceptions ~~on~~ of teacher retention in the elementary classroom, ~~and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?~~ (TOR)

- What are the characteristics of schools and districts most likely to successfully retain teachers?
- What working conditions affect a school's ability to retain teachers?
- What effect does the compensation have on the retention of teachers? (SME 4)
- What preparation practices are effective ~~various strategies related to teacher preparation have on~~ in retaining teachers ~~retention~~? (TOR)

RQ2: ~~What are veteran educators' perspectives on teacher retention in the elementary classroom and the support needed or expected from administrative leaders?~~ How do

educators perceive administrators' support for teacher retention in the elementary classroom? (TOR and SME 5)

- What impact do induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention? Moved to RQ1 (TOR)
- What other support besides financial compensation is the administration providing for the teachers?
- What perceived challenges do teachers experience that result in a high attrition rates? (SME 4) Moved to RQ1 (TOR)
- SME #4 suggested adding a third question to break down questions 1 and 2. ~~What are the educator's perspectives on the administrator's expectations for teacher retention in the elementary school?~~ Deleted (TOR)
- Based on SME feedback, Research Question 2 was modified to include administrator perspectives.