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Running head: TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Teachers' Burnout Experience in a Title I Suburban Elementary School

by

Shakoiya K. Aiken

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership in the Bagwell College of Education

Kennesaw State University

Fall 2022

Dr. Tamela Thomas, Committee Chair

Dr. Miyoshi Juergensen, Committee Member

Dr. Arvin Johnson, Committee Member

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Abstract

This qualitative case study focused on the experiences of Title I suburban elementary school teachers in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons why teachers in Title I suburban schools experience burnout and how their burnout manifests. I also conducted this study to fill the gap in the literature and gain insight on the specific supports and strategies that Title I suburban school teachers need to help manage or eliminate their burnout. The theoretical framework that informed this study was the Burnout Theory. Several data gathering techniques (interview, reflective journals, and a focus group meeting) were utilized and analyzed to describe the participants' experiences regarding occupational burnout as FES. The research questions focused on the experiences teachers described of feeling burnout in their profession; the ways teachers described their burnout manifesting into emotional exhaustion; detachment; and reduced personal accomplishment; and the support needed to manage their burnout. From the data collected, several themes emerged such as *Workload, Student Behavior, Lack of Support by Leadership, Lack of Parental Involvement, Emotional Effects, Physical Effects, Mental Effects, Administrative Support, County Level Support, and Academic Coaches Support*. This information supports previous research on the causes of burnout that teachers experience. Study findings provided insight into teachers' experiences with occupational burnout in their school environments and highlighted the importance of support needed from school leaders to support teachers in thriving as professionals. The knowledge gained from this study can increase teacher retention in Title I suburban elementary schools. It can also be utilized in developing and providing teachers with coping strategies that help them manage their occupational burnout.

Key Words: Title I, burnout, suburban, administrative support, elementary education, teacher burnout

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin chronologically by acknowledging several individuals whose support, love and motivation led me to this degree, as well as helped me accomplish this goal. God is the first one. Without him by my side, I would not have made it through. Special thanks to my mother Juliet for being my rock. I think she wanted this degree for me more than I wanted it for myself.

I would like to express my appreciation to my committee members. I would like to thank Dr. Tamela Thomas for agreeing to serve as my chair and my person to lean on. Thank you to Dr. Arvin Johnson for the feedback during my research study and being my go-to person as I entered the Teacher Leadership program. Thank you, Dr. Miyoshi Juergensen, for the guidance and support you have given to me since the first day I enrolled in your graduate course and while being your doctoral student and serving as my committee member.

Finally, I would also like to thank my friends, family, my mentor, and co-workers for the ongoing encouragement and support. Thank you to the ones who listened to me cry and complain. I would like to thank all my participants for the time, effort, and work they put into this research study.

Dedication, determination, and dependability are the three D's I relied on to help get me through this journey. It was not an easy task, and sometimes it did not feel rewarding, but the individuals in my life provided me with the support and encouragement that I needed. This new education chapter started during COVID-19 and although it is over, I am eager to utilize this degree and continue to grow as a teacher leader.

Dedications

Thank you to my father God for being my protector. You guided, walked, and prayed with me throughout this entire process. I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Juliet, one of the strongest women I ever encountered. You have been my shoulder to lean on and cry on since I was a little girl. You have instilled the importance of being successful and striving for the best. I recall all the times I have called you stressed out, and you always provided me with encouraging words and support that I will make it through. I can never repay you for all that you have done for me and the path that you created for me to be successful. As your only daughter, I hope you know you have made me the woman that I am today. To observe you knock down all the challenges and obstacles that comes your way and pick yourself back up, as if nothing did not happen has given me the strength that I never knew I needed. I hope the woman I am today makes you proud, and I dedicate this doctorate degree to you because you were always my number one supporter. Thanks to my brothers, Leon and Kamar for always encouraging and motivating me with my success, although I tried to keep this doctoral degree as a secret. Thanks for always viewing me in the light of a hard-working woman who will go after what she wants. I am beyond thankful to have you both. To my best friend, Sophie, I am thankful that you are a part of my life. Thank you for allowing me to teach you when I was 7 years old. You have been there throughout all my trials and tribulations. I hope I inspire you to be your best. To my first-grade teacher, Mrs. Branch, I pray that you rest in peace. You have pushed me to be the best educator I could be. You told me one day, I would go far in life and at that time I did not understand. I hope I am making you happy. You are my inspiration.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgments..... iii

Dedications iv

Table of Contents v

List of Tables vi

List of Figures vii

Chapter 1 Introduction.....1

 Background2

 Problem Statement4

 Purpose of Study7

 Research Questions8

 Significance of the Study9

 Local Context11

 Conceptual Framework12

 Organization of Study14

 Definition of Terms15

Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature.....18

 Teacher Burnout in Title and Non-Title Schools20

 Teacher Burnout in Pandemic22

 What is Burnout?.....24

 Reasons for Occupational Burnout28

 Impact of Burnout38

 Summary & Conclusion43

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Theoretical Framework	44
Chapter 3 Methodology	51
Research Design	51
Research Questions	53
Role of the Researcher	54
Setting and Participants	55
Population and Sampling Method	56
Trustworthiness	58
Data Collection	59
Data Analysis	64
Ethical Considerations	67
Chapter 4 Findings	69
Demographics	69
Results	71
Participants Backgrounds	72
Emergent Themes	76
Summary	105
Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusions, & Recommendations	108
Discussion of Findings	109
Limitations	116
Researcher Comments	117
Connecting the Results to the Literature	119
Implications for Future Practice	120

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Recommendations for Teachers	121
Recommendations for School and District Leaders	123
Recommendations for Teacher Leaders	125
Implications for Future Research	126
Conclusions	127
REFERENCES	129
APPENDIX A: Participant Invitation Email	155
APPENDIX B: Participant Selection Questionnaire	156
APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol	157
APPENDIX D: Reflective Journal Protocol	158
APPENDIX E: Focus Group Protocol	161
APPENDIX F: Research Approval-KSU	162
APPENDIX G: Research Approval-School District.....	163
APPENDIX H: Informed Consent Letter	164
APPENDIX I: Sample of Participants Collages	167

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographics of Teacher Participants.....70

Table 2: Participation Data: Interview, Journal Entries, and Focus Group.....71

Table 3: Summary of Participants Triggers and Coping Mechanisms.....100

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.....14

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework.....48

Figure 3: Emergent Themes Challenges.....77

Figure 4 : Manifestations.....84

Figure 5 : Support.....91

TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Teachers are recognized for shaping a child's future. Teachers oversee preparing the coming generations to face the challenges of current unsustainable development (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Teaching is a profession not limited to planning lessons, attending grade level and district level meetings, dealing with student academic and behavior challenges, working with parents, and meeting administrative and district level personnel expectations. It also includes demands that impact teachers in mental, emotional, and physical ways. From a teacher's point of view, we tend to work until the job is done, fueled to continue the thankless work by praise and a show of appreciation from students and families, colleagues, and administration. Educators do not teach for the money nor fame. We have a passion for teaching that cannot be measured. However, many teachers are experiencing challenges in their profession.

Burned out teachers are present in our education system. Burnout can be emotional, mental, or physical. Teachers are expected to prepare coming generations, along with dealing with the challenges that they encounter. Furthermore, the need and pressure from changing state, district, and local expectations and complying with the changes place teachers in challenging and frustrating situations. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed education in many ways. For example, the new norm in education requires educators to teach virtually and in person simultaneously, while some educators are placed in situations to teach in a format against their personal will. This has caused teacher burnout with teachers leaving the profession, taking leave, not being effective, and stressing themselves out.

My experiences as a K-12 student in South Florida along with my teaching experience as a suburban elementary school teacher in a Title I school have contributed to my awareness of the need for acknowledging and addressing Title I school teachers burnout in elementary schools. In

the Title I schools in which I have aided in, I have noticed the increase in teachers leaving the profession, as well as demanding for change. I have witnessed teachers experiencing challenges and obstacles and left without an outlet to decompress. It appears as though that some of the obstacles that Title I suburban elementary school teachers continues to exist in schools. The reasoning of such may be related to the ongoing demands of the education system as well as the lack of professional development opportunities and support to assist teachers with managing their burnout.

Background

Burnout among teachers has been studied for over 30 years. Burnout syndrome is a cumulative concept comprising three closely related sub-constructs named as emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced personal accomplishment (PA) (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). The sub-constructs are imperative to understand when referencing teachers and their burnout. Tutlys et al. (2021) stated that teachers are facing instructional, behavior, and parental involvement challenges that change the way they interact with their school environments, change the materials and resources they need for success, and present long-term recent changes such as what the pandemic has caused. More research was needed to understand teachers' experiences in Title I suburban elementary schools regarding occupational burnout. This study is necessary to understanding teachers' experiences with how burnout manifests as reduced personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). Understanding how their occupational burnout manifest brings insight to the impact burnout has on teachers, students, and the profession.

Occupational burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic work-related stress, with symptoms characterized by feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance

from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, and reduced professional effectiveness (WHO, 2019). According to the International Classification of Diseases (2018), burnout is an occupational phenomenon and is not classified as a medical condition. Burnout is defined as a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Burnout is also characterized by three dimensions, feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, and reduced professional efficacy (International Classification of Diseases, 2018).

From an applied perspective, burnout syndrome may be identified through the presence of three problematic components: a low sense of work fulfillment, high levels of physical exhaustion, and cynicism (Montoya et al., 2021). Montoya et al. (2021) states, this syndrome can affect a wide variety of occupations, resulting in absenteeism, lack of job commitment, dissatisfaction, and other job-related issues, which can interfere with the efficiency of several types of organizations and companies. Thus, if teachers are burned out, their ability to perform at work diminishes due to the stress they experience.

Maslach & Jackson (1986) stated that burnout syndrome is caused by an imbalance between the resources available to workers and the demands, perceived as unsustainable, placed on them. Burnout is an emotional, mental, and physical, psychological condition. The emotional, mental, and physical aspects can potentially impact teachers' well-being, as well as the students. When teachers experience stress and lack ways to cope with this stress, their relationships with students are likely to suffer, leading to adverse student academic and behavioral outcomes (Wentzel, 2010). Their stress can be due to work overload that contributes to burnout by exhausting people's capacity to meet the demands of the job. When this kind of overload is a

chronic job condition, there is little opportunity to rest, recover, and restore balance (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Due to this, it is vital to identify and recognize the signs of burnout causing teachers to lack rest and a means of recovery, as it can manifest into more.

Burnout can cause short-term and long-term effects to an individual. The immediate effects and signs of burnout include, but are not limited to, fatigue, sleep issues, forgetfulness, intense trouble concentrating, appetite and weight issues, depression, and anxiety (Tapp, 2020). In terms of long-term impact, reducing the number of teachers experiencing burnout is important to retain teachers. Teacher burnout occurs when teachers no longer find significance in their work (McCarthy et al., 2009). Teachers begin to feel as if their work is not important or that they are not performing well in their jobs. Job-related stressors such as increased workload and increased time constraints to perform work tasks correlate highly with burnout (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Teaching is widely recognized as a stressful occupation, characterized by numerous and varied challenges: administrative burdens, long hours, classroom management difficulties, and lack of autonomy (McCarthy, 2019). When teachers are experiencing burnout, their experiences affect their enthusiasm about the profession and longevity in the field (Lever et al., 2017). Until now, there has been a lack of research to gain a better understanding about the extent to which occupational burnout impacts teachers in suburban Title I elementary schools.

Problem Statement

Teaching is a challenging and unique profession for several reasons that range from politics in a way of not being able to express your views or avoiding political topics, changes in the curriculum, and various work-related responsibilities (National Education Association, 2018). The politics include everything in education from the resources to the curriculum to the policies that govern teachers' work and students' learning. It is political and ideologically

(National Education Association, 2018). Despite the many changes in the educational system, occupational burnout in teachers continue to increase. Burnout is described as more prevalent in the helping professions, and it is not a phenomenon that solely affects one individual. It involves students and other stakeholders (Blazer, 2010). Students are negatively impacted when teachers experience burnout. The suffering of burnout lessens the quality of service and care, and ultimately puts students' learning at risk (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). When teachers are burned out, students are impacted because teachers are unable to effectively fulfill the necessary tasks needed for students to be successful, including but not limited to academics, social support, and creating engaged lessons.

The problem this study explored was teachers' experiences in a Title I suburban schools related to occupational burnout. If teachers are burned out, it is because they are asked to do too much with insufficient support and low salaries, school resources do not meet students' needs, and reform efforts come too quickly without enough time for proper adjustment to implement, assess, and reflection (Santora, 2019). However, the research does not specify the reasons for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools experiencing burnout in the Southeastern region of the United States. Current research indicates that burnout is associated with long-term consequences on the academic achievements of students and has a negative impact on teachers' emotional development and mental health (Maric et al., 2021). Teacher accountability is playing a role in occupational burnout with policymakers attempting to hold schools accountable for student performance and making it difficult for low-performing schools to attract and retain good teachers (Dizon-Ross, 2020). This has led to teachers feeling more pressure due to the accountability in our schools and teaching to the test, especially our low achievement schools and increasing the burnout they experience.

As the research noted, burnout within the teaching profession has been recognized as a serious problem in schools (Blazer, 2010). In reviewing the literature, the research located an abundance of information on teacher attrition, causes of occupational burnout, and what can be done to reduce occupational burnout in teachers. Every year, hundreds of teachers decide to leave the profession. The number of teachers leaving the profession is reported as high as 50% (Kelly et al., 2019). Turnover rates are 70% higher for teachers in schools serving the largest concentrations of students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). When they describe themselves as frustrated, exhausted, and disappointed by their work, many teachers find themselves in an analogous situation (Kelly et al., 2019). They are not performing effectively, their well-being is impacted, they are finding ways to escape, and constantly feeling an overload with the job. The impact on teacher burnout that teachers experience ranges from dissatisfactions with testing and accountability pressures (listed by 25% of those who left the profession); lack of administrative support; dissatisfactions with the teaching career, including lack of opportunities for advancement; and dissatisfaction with working conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The factors play a role in how teachers view their job, as well as themselves.

Although teacher burnout is an ongoing problem and teachers leaving the profession is an ongoing discussion, there was a lack of studies on how occupational burnout mechanisms (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) affect teachers at suburban Title I elementary schools. There was also a lack of how teachers perceive the support and strategies needed to reduce burnout in suburban title I elementary schools. With this study, teachers shared their experiences with occupational burnout in a Title I suburban elementary school.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to provide insight on how to address the issue of occupational teacher burnout. This study explored the experiences of teachers in a Southeastern region United States Title I suburban elementary school related to occupational burnout. The burnout experienced by teachers can affect teachers emotionally, mentally, and physically as Maslach (1986) mentioned. Research implies that burnout diminishes opportunities for positive experiences at work; it is associated with decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organization (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Exploring the teachers' experiences played a role in the current literature and will guide others in how to view occupational burnout and address it in suburban Title I elementary schools.

Research Questions

The research questions guided this qualitative case study as the researcher explored teachers' experiences and perspectives of occupational burnout in a suburban elementary school setting.

The research aimed to explore the following questions:

1. In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school describe the reasons for feeling occupational burnout?
2. How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools?
3. What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions of burnout?

I used question one to gather detailed descriptions and explanations of teachers' burnout experiences in a Title I suburban elementary school and what teacher burnout is to them. Question two was used to identify how teachers are affected by burnout in their profession. This question investigated how teacher burnout experiences impact their emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment state. Research question one was also used to determine if there were any similarities and differences between teachers' emotional, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment in suburban elementary schools and which dimension (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) affected teachers' burnout the most. I utilized question three to provide future school leaders with insight, including strategies, that may support teachers with managing the dimensions of teacher burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools.

Significance of the Study

An abundance of research studies regarding teacher burnout exists in current literature; however, occupational burnout remained a limited topic of study, specifically in Title I school elementary teachers in the United States. It is widely understood that the turnover rates in high-poverty (Title I) schools are steadily growing. Data show that teachers are more likely to leave schools where more students of color and more low-income students, lower salaries, and poorer working conditions (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). Turnover rates in high-minority schools are higher—regardless of teachers' subject taught, years of experience, or certification pathway (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). In association with turnover rates increasing due to teachers experiencing occupational burnout in high-poverty schools, it was significant to identify causes for these high turnover rates in high-minority schools, such as the one in which this study was conducted. Vacancies are hard to fill in high-poverty schools, and they experience higher turnover and attrition than low-poverty schools (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The reason for higher turnover varies and includes but not limited to stress, lack of collaboration, student behavior, and lack of support.

Teachers leave their profession for a variety of reasons. However, stress can be a significant contributing factor that turns into burnout. The stress and emotional demands associated with the teaching profession can lead to emotional exhaustion, cynical attitudes about teaching, a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment, and lower job satisfaction (Albanese et al., 2017). Teacher burnout and turnover impact all students' achievement in a school, not just those with a new teacher, by disrupting school stability, collegial relationships, collaboration, and the accumulation of institutional knowledge (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). Thus, if teachers are stressed and their burnout is being increased, it can harm school operations. If school

operations, such as collaboration among peers and collegial relationships, results in teacher turnover, this will more than likely continue to impact teachers and their burnout.

Teachers are experiencing unique working conditions related to their burnout and other responsibilities that prevent them from remaining in the profession, and the requirements may deter others from entering the profession. According to the Economic Policy Institute, we must provide extra supports and funding to high-poverty schools, where teacher shortages are even more of a problem (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). This includes increasing funding for school leaders, administrators, and school district personnel in the capacity of providing teacher support as a means of reducing teacher burnout (Matiang'i, 2016; Crosby, 2015; Pressley, 2021). This support can include but not limited to professional development, self-care, and materials and resources needed for the classroom. School leaders, specifically administrators, can help reduce burnout by creating supportive environments and providing instructional guidance to teachers to ease the anxiety that they may be experiencing (Pressley, 2021). This study was original in its purpose to describe occupational burnout in Title I suburban elementary school teachers explore individual burnout experiences teachers face and identify a variety of suggestions for supporting teachers in avoiding occupational burnout.

With the stressors of burnout impacting teachers, administrators ensure that teachers can express their experiences regarding burnout in their professional careers at their schools. The results of this study provided school districts with insight on teachers' specific experiences in Title I suburban elementary schools and how school leaders as well as county leaders should address occupational burnout in this school district. The results also informed school leaders what they can do to understand how burnout impacts their wellbeing and how to better support their teaching staff. The workload, administrative support, accountability, and school

environment can contribute to more problems for teachers that increase their burnout levels and impact their burnout experiences. This research added to the broader research on teacher burnout and turnover in education and suburban elementary schools as it focused on how burnout manifest and the specific supports Title I school teachers need.

Local Context

This study was conducted to shed light on teachers' experiences related to occupational burnout within a suburban elementary school. Teacher turnover averages approximately 15% annually, with schools in the Northeast and less diverse rural areas generally experiencing the least turnover. However, southern schools and more diverse urban centers deal with the most turnover (Carter-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The site for this study is a Title I school located in the Southeastern United States. Economically disadvantaged students account for 78% at the suburban school. Furthermore, such schools are changing drastically. While suburbs are fertile sites for study, with some of our most critical educational challenges, education scholarship has paid insufficient attention to these contexts. Much scholarly research focuses on teacher burnout in urban settings rather than suburban settings (Camacho et al., 2021; Reddy et al., 2021; & Starostina et al., 2021). The reasons mentioned in previous studies regarding urban schools were limited school resources, more acute student behavior, and inability to develop relationships with students (Camacho et al., 2021; Ferlazzo, 2015; Jimenez-Castellanos, 2010; and Kamrath et al., 2020). Hence, at this suburban school, absenteeism among teachers is high for unknown reasons. Research on burnout provides an opportunity to explore and identify the reasons for phenomenon like high absenteeism throughout teachers' careers and employ timely preventative solutions that enhance career development and success (Tutlys et al., 2021). Preventative solutions are what is needed for teachers to be successful in their careers regarding

burnout. Research indicates that teachers' changing roles affect the professional satisfaction and social well-being of teachers and are known to cause teacher occupational burnout (Tutlys et al., 2021).

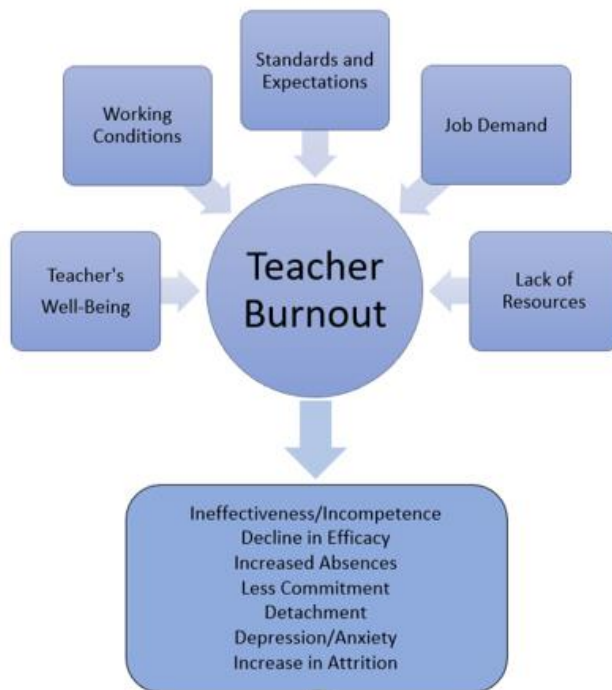
The population of this study included teachers from a Title I suburban elementary school located in the Southeastern part of the United States. The school is ranked in the bottom 50% in test scores in Georgia. The school loses a significant number of teachers each year and that has increased since the pandemic. Some leave the profession, while a few transfer to other schools, and many ask to be moved to another grade or position. According to Suro (2022), teachers from the school district leaves for reasons including but not limited to lack of contact tracing, increased workload due to the number of teachers who are out sick and having to cover classes, lack of support, and being asked to do more with less resources. More than 90% of teachers at the research site have more than three years of experience working at the suburban elementary school. Exploring these diverse teachers' experiences with occupational burnout and the effects of teacher burnout provided a foundation for future research that addresses occupational burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools. I gathered data from teachers to contribute to the existing research on teacher burnout. Specifically, I identified similarities and differences in teachers' experiences of burnout. The aim was not solely to provide an awareness of the role teacher burnout plays in the profession, but to provide insight to initiate change in Title I suburban schools that will reduce or limit how burnout manifests with teachers.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework (Figure 1) was based on the Maslach Burnout Theory (1981) approach to assessing the burnout dimensions for educators. Understanding teachers' experiences of burnout in Title I suburban schools was imperative to this study. Maslach and

Jackson Maslach (1982) extensively researched burnout, concluding it was a syndrome that primarily affects people who work with people. Burnout has also been defined as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity (Maslach et al., 1996). This shows that burnout is not only a syndrome but can be impacted in a variety of ways.

The conceptual framework was developed to understand the problem of practice (Teacher Burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools), and how teacher burnout relates to emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and detachment from the job. This model integrates the relationship between burnout and contributing factors that lead to teachers feeling inadequate for the job, increased teacher absences, and less commitment to the work. Based on the Maslach Theory, teacher occupational burnout in suburban Title I schools are impacted by work conditions, testing and accountability, lack of support from school leaders, challenges within the pandemic, and the work environment. The theory highlighted that burnout is an individual stress experience embedded in complex social relationships, and it involves the person's conception of both self and others (Maslach, 1998). The theory supports that burnout is a work-specific condition. It shows that when there is a disparity between the individual and the work (job), burnout is higher due to several causes. According to Lonsdorf & Westervelt (2016), low pay, lack of resources, nasty political environments, students not being allowed to fail, poor teacher preparation, and over emphasis on testing are factors increasing burnout in teachers and driving them to leave the teaching profession. While the factors mentioned above are challenges teachers face, if they do not receive the support needed, it can lead to less commitment, detachment, and a feeling of ineffectiveness.

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework***Organization of Study**

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction, which consists of the problem statement, research questions, purpose, and significance of the study, local context, conceptual framework, review of relevant terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 consists of the literature review that comprises an introduction, theoretical framework (Burnout Theory), literature review, summary, and implications. Chapter 3 includes the study's methodology, research questions, research design, setting (Title I suburban elementary school), and the sample population. Chapter four presented the findings of the study and chapter five summarizes the conclusion, limitations, implications, and recommendations.

Definitions of Terms and Further Explanations

As this study related to elementary school occupational burnout and perceived support that is needed, there is specific terminology needed to understand this study.

1. *Administrator*: Principals, assistant or vice principals, and other administrators responsible for the daily functioning and overall success of their schools (Bruens, 2020).
2. *Administrative Support*: The practice of managing the resources, tasks, and communications involved in running a school and making decisions that facilitate successful student learning-articulates a school's mission and goals and makes them happen by implementing programs, delegating tasks, and allocating resources (Dowd, 2019).
3. *Black*: A socially constructed category to describe a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).
4. *Burnout*: Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do "people work" of some kind (Igodan & Newcomb ,1986).
5. *Career Turnover*: a change in teachers from one year to the next in a particular school setting (Sorenson & Ladd, 2018).
6. *Coping strategies*: an action, a series of actions, or a thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying one's reaction to such a situation (American Psychological Association, 2011).

7. *COVID-19*: a potentially severe, primarily respiratory illness caused by a Coronavirus and characterized by fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. In some people, the disease also damages major organs, as the heart or kidneys.
8. *Demoralize*: to cause to turn aside or away from what is good or true or morally right (Merriam-Webster, 1828)
9. *Depersonalization*: act of developing a cynical attitude compacted with an emotional or physical detachment from work (Huk et al., ,2019).
10. *Elementary school*: a school that provides the first part of a child's education, usually for children between five and eleven years old (Merriam-Webster, 1828).
11. *Emotional competence*: The functional capacity wherein a human can reach their goals after an emotion-eliciting encounter (Cherland, 2004).
12. *Emotional Exhaustion*: refers to the physical manifestations of being tired. For example, when teachers are exhausted, they may report feeling drained or not having much energy (Huk et al., 2019).
13. *Latinx*: It is gendered for Latina and Latino and inclusive for all genders of Latin-American culture or other origins who are not Spanish.
14. *Occupational burnout*: a syndrome resulting from chronic work-related stress, with symptoms characterized by "feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy.
15. *Perceived*: regarded in a specified way —used to say how something or someone is seen or thought of (Merriam-Webster, 1828).

16. *Personal accomplishment*: fail to recognize the benefits of their efforts and generally feel incompetent (Huk et al., 2019).
17. *Principal*: a person who has controlling authority or is in a leading position (Merriam-Webster, 1828)
18. *Stress*: the physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave (American Psychological Association, 2011).
19. *Suburban*: a smaller community adjacent to or within commuting distance of a city (Merriam-Webster, 1828)
20. *Teacher leadership*: refers to that set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere (Lieberman & Miller, 2011).
21. *Title One School*: The basic principle of Title 1 is that schools with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting student's educational goals (Title I, 2018).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This qualitative study aimed to investigate teachers' experiences in Title I suburban elementary schools related to occupational burnout and teacher retention. The teacher shortage is not only increasing but also the turnover among teachers is increasing. Teacher *career turnover* is commonly used to describe transitions in the teaching profession (Rasanen et al., 2020). Teacher career turnover includes transfers as well as changing subjects or grades to be taught. Contributing to the teacher turnover problem, record numbers of beginning teachers are leaving the profession shortly after starting their careers (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). While it is known that teachers are leaving the profession, the reasons are unclear and do not address the occupational structures that cause burnout. The literature also showed a gap in burnout in suburban Title I elementary school teachers that the study addressed.

Teachers' experience in Title I suburban elementary schools can be diverse and different variables can lead to burnout. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2021) states, burnout is defined as exhaustion of physical, emotional strength or motivation due to prolonged stress or frustration. The literature review acknowledges numerous studies that focused on professional burnout: Stelmokienė et al. (2019), Bondarchuk et al. (2015), Pavlidou et al. (2020), Aydoğmuş & Tükel (2019). Teachers who experience burnout can develop symptoms of stress and frustration, which can impact their well-being as it relates to their professional careers.

This chapter includes background information on the problem of teacher burnout, followed by the theoretical framework (The Maslach Burnout theory) and a review of the literature. This theory was beneficial to this study because it clearly defines burnout as a psychological syndrome that emerges as an extended response to lingering interpersonal stressors on the job. The Maslach Burnout Theory (1982) was used to understand better teachers'

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment related to their burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools. The primary goals of the literature review were to explore teacher burnout, clarify and identify the reasons why teachers are experiencing burnout, the impact on teachers, and the problems specific to Title I suburban elementary schools. Teachers' perceptions of burnout, including the causes and what they lead to were reviewed to understand the conceptual framework. The literature review created the foundation for the conceptual framework that the researcher used to guide this study.

The literature review chapter concludes with a summary of the current research on the contributing factors of teacher burnout and the impact it plays in managing the three burnout dimensions (depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishment) to reduce teacher turnover. The chapter also included literature from different databases accessed through the Kennesaw State University Library. The databases included were Social Psychology of Education, ERIC, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, New Educational Review, and Education Source. The keywords used included *burnout, professional burnout, coping, occupational burnout, suburban, elementary, and Title I*. The literature chosen was full-text and dated within the last five to seven years. In addition, a few articles that were pertinent to professional burnout were selected and utilized to include in the literature. However, they were out of the five to seven years range because they were groundbreaking and seminal research that was important to the study. A few of the articles focused on United States experiences. However, many of the articles concentrated on Romanian, Malaysian, Swedish, and Portuguese experiences. Urban teachers' experiences with burnout were discovered (Camacho et al., 2021). A study investigated principal and teacher perception of practices that impact teacher job satisfaction and retention in Title I elementary schools in Virginia (Batts, 2021). However, examining how burnout and the three dimensions of

burnout impact teachers in suburban Title I elementary schools was a needed area of additional research.

Background

The purpose of this study was to understand teachers' experiences in Title I schools experiencing occupational burnout. Ideally, understanding the factors that cause burnout in teachers provided insight on how to help reduce occupational burnout and retain teachers within a school building and the field of education. Occupational burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic work-related stress, with symptoms characterized by feelings of energy exhaustion; feelings of emptiness related to one's job and reduced professional effectiveness (WHO, 2019). When the symptoms mentioned above are experienced, teachers will become distant from the career. 60% of teachers say they experience job-related stress regularly or always (Will, 2021). If teachers are stressed out, potentially the teaching and learning process is impacted. Persistent stress can result in professional burnout (Herman, 2018).

Teacher Burnout in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

According to the United States Department of Education (2018), Title I schools include a high percentage of children from low-income families. Students should be able to meet challenging state academic standards. For this to occur, teachers need to provide and carry out interventions that will better assist students. Teachers are still accountable for standardized testing for economically and disadvantaged students (Adler-Green, 2019). A study found that standardized testing places teachers in positions to teach to the district standards and make sure they are learning what they need to despite the standards (Layne, 2019). While Title I schools expect teachers to help all students, including the disadvantaged achieve success by providing additional academic support in specific areas, this expectation can impact teachers differently.

One study by Russell (2019) compared Title I and Non-Title I Elementary School Teachers. The focus was to determine if the type of school (Title or Non-Titled) played a role in teacher perceptions of burnout in an urban school district. Russell (2019) did not investigate suburban school districts. The null hypotheses stated that there was no difference between Title I and Non-Title teacher perceptions of burnout. However, the researcher used the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1986) to measure burnout in teachers. Russell (2019) found that teachers in Title I schools scored slightly higher on all three of the subscales of the MBI-ES than did teachers in non-Title I school, indicating marginally more significant burnout among teachers in Title I schools.

Another study by Jimenez-Castellanos (2010) compared Title I and Non-Title I in different areas, including but not limited to stress, pay, and teachers leaving the profession. This study found a relationship between educational resources (fiscal, personnel, and accommodations) and school achievement in a suburban school district. Jimenez-Castellanos's (2010) study relates to Russell's (2019) work in studying Title I schools. However, their studies intersect because Russell (2019) hypotheses stated that teachers in Title I and Non-Title schools' perceptions of burnout did not differ, but the results from the inventory showed differently. However, Jimenez-Castellanos (2010) focused on a large urban/suburban school district and showed that schools with different resources showed different patterns, including different student outcomes. The study contains policy and practice implications to improve opportunity in urban/suburban school districts. Together the sources tell the researcher that Title I schoolteachers experience burnout, but the extent of their experiences related to the dimensions of burnout are unclear. I concluded that further research was needed to investigate teachers' experiences in Title I suburban elementary schools and evaluate the extent of burnout among

teachers relating to emotional exhaustion, detachment, and reduced personal accomplishment in the job.

Most *teachers* are busy with their daily teaching duties, and the other responsibilities can impact them differently. Teachers experience intense, emotion-laden interactions every day and have many emotional demands placed on them during their professional careers (Fiorilli et al., 2017). The level of stress in schoolteachers is negatively affected by many factors, such as inadequate working environments with excessive students per class and extensive working hours (Montoya et al., 2021). Knowing this can lead to investigation of how the factors mentioned above impact teachers in suburban schools. Teachers can experience stress when they appraise a situation as threatening but have limited ability to change or improve it (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Furthermore, teachers in the United States experience stress due to accountability with the No Child Left Behind Act, high-stakes accountability, and general school accountability (Wronowski & Urick, 2021). This includes workload and responsibilities to holding high standards for students. Moreover, teachers in Title I schools are expected to meet the academic and emotional needs of students. Social and emotional development is complex and integral to academics—how school happens and how learning takes place (Jones & Kahn, 2017). Knowing how teachers deal with issues in other areas and countries can help consider the foundation for exploring an elementary school in the Southeastern United States to determine how teachers are negatively affected differently. Teachers' emotional state and mental state may impact their experiences with burnout and instead the new changes to education due to the pandemic.

Teacher Burnout in Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the teaching and learning process. Teachers all over the United States and other parts of the world were required to shift many different gears

with their roles and their teaching practices. The pandemic was a challenge in our lowest-income communities, which includes Title I schools. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, close to 8% of teachers were leaving teaching, with new teachers (<5 years) leaving at rates between 19% and 30% (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). As teachers returned to the classroom for the 2020–2021 school year, they faced new and challenging environments, instructional approaches, and a variety of roles as educators (Pressley, 2021). According to the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (2021), K-12 teachers' general satisfaction with their employers sank to 44% in October from 69% in March 2020. Of the roughly 3.5 million full- and part-time public-school teachers, 38% said that working during the pandemic has made them consider changing jobs. In 2020, economic conditions likely led more teachers to stay in their careers; however, working conditions and job satisfaction have not improved (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). Pressley (2021) also states that teachers faced additional requirements for instruction, different job expectations, and changes within the classroom environments. Districts put teachers in challenging situations to learn new virtual instruction pedagogy and platforms and made teachers the first resource for parents using district instructional technology (Pressley, 2021). These new demands added to teachers' already full workloads. Work hours have increased significantly in the pandemic. According to the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (2021), 41 % of teachers reported working more hours than before the pandemic. Due to the challenges COVID-19 has brought to education, teachers experiencing burnout may be pushed to the extreme. Furthermore, a teacher who may not have been experiencing professional burnout may begin due to the additional or new demands encountered.

What is burnout?

Every year, hundreds of teachers leave the field of education or change positions due to teacher burnout. Freudenberger (1974) first studied professional burnout. His work created a ground for burnout. Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as physical and mental exhaustion relating to interpersonal stressors at work. Maslach (1982) is known for her research on burnout, the definition, predictors, and measurement of job burnout. Burnout refers to "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment" observed in employees who are in intense relationships with others as part of their jobs (Maslach, 1982, as cited in Akin, 2019). Burnout is not limited to negative reactions, job withdrawal, and job dissatisfaction. It also leads to frustration, overwhelmingness, stress, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The feelings teachers experience can negatively impact their professional careers.

Teachers experience challenges and obstacles every day when they enter their school building. According to Akin (2019), teachers engage in intense communication and interaction that can contribute to their burnout. Studies found that teaching and learning have been impacted due to teachers feeling burned out (Jomuad et al., 2021; Ryan et al., 2017; Pressley, 2021). Burnout, in turn, is posited to have negative and harmful effects on teacher behavior, which results in negative student perceptions, behavior, and poor student performance (Wong et al., 2017). Burned-out teachers are seen as more distant and less sympathetic, and teachers with high levels of burnout tend to have more student problem behaviors and lower teaching effectiveness (Wong et al., 2017). However, preventing teacher burnout has been linked to decreases in disruptive behavior among students and greater general classroom stability [50–52] and student motivation and academic commitment (Rico et al., 2020). If teachers are burned out

then their ability to effectively teach can be impacted. Teachers need to be given opportunities to thrive within their profession, and if they are feeling burned out, this can be difficult. Teachers who experience burnout and stress should be provided with adequate instructional support to ensure high teaching quality and student engagement and helpful and emotional support to monitor students' long-term progress (Wong et al., 2017). If teachers are experiencing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, they will be negatively affected by burnout and their students.

Emotional Exhaustion

The three critical dimensions of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to the stress dimension of burnout and is defined as a loss of energy (Akin, 2019). Mäkikangas and Kinnunen (2016) mentioned, exhaustion manifests itself as chronic fatigue, tiredness and strenuous of emotional resources. Emotional exhaustion includes physical, mental, and emotional states that can occur with teachers when they feel drained or overwhelmed. Freudenberger (1974) describes this exhaustion as making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources in the workplace. The demands can contribute to burnout as teachers are experiencing difficulties meeting the needs of the profession. According to Freudenberger (1974), burnout is characterized by physical symptoms such as exhaustion, fatigue, headaches, sleeplessness, and shortness of breath. Emotional exhaustion is usually measured using Maslach (1981) Burnout Inventory. It measures how often one feels emotional or exhausted by work. When teachers are experiencing these conditions related to burnout, it can lead to them no longer wanting to be in the profession. Emotional exhaustion is associated with the turnover intention of the employees (Azharudeen & Arulrajah, 2021).

Depersonalization

Depersonalization arises from a decrease in the emotional resources of the individual and refers to the individual's negative and cynic attitudes, unfavorable feelings, and behaviors against their co-workers (Akin, 2019). Depersonalization is known as negative attitudes towards others and is considered the attitudinal element of burnout (Maslach et al., 2008).

Depersonalization occurs when teachers develop negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about their students (Teles et al., 2020). Cynicism means that people distance themselves and their work, developing adverse attitudes toward their duties and responsibilities (Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016). Cynicism does not usually occur overnight but can occur for numerous reasons. This feeling of depersonalization can also occur due to additional workload responsibilities and lead to the problem of burnout (Thakur, 2018).

Teachers interact with students for most of the school day, and if they are given a heavy workload, it can impact their ability to teach effectively. Depersonalization refers to detachment and being indifferent from the workplace (Thakur, 2018). When teachers begin to experience this, their effectiveness will lessen. Research shows that the primary sources of stress that lead to burnout were administrative interaction and support, individual student challenges, teacher perceptions, and state mandates (Haydon et al., 2018). Administrative support was number one. When teachers are experiencing depersonalization, support can make a difference. Administrators' specific practices that alleviate burnout include being trustful, allowing collaborative decision-making, communicating, having empathy, and making the mission and vision for the school clear (Haydon et al., 2018). If teachers are experiencing these positive practices, they may not feel detached or indifferent from their workplace. Research has not shown significant findings regarding depersonalization, as it has shown in emotional exhaustion

and personal accomplishment. However, Guedes and Gaspar (2016) found that depersonalization levels were higher in older teachers. Teachers with ten to twenty-nine years of experience were more likely to develop depersonalization (Teles et al., 2020). As previously stated, teachers can experience depersonalization that affects students and school administrators must get involved with their teachers, as it is a part of the burnout problem they are experiencing that is impacting students.

Reduced Personal Accomplishment

Maslach and Jackson (1981) identified *personal accomplishment* as the likelihood of teachers assessing themselves in a negative way, as it relates to students, as well as their professional careers. Reduced professional accomplishment is the loss of skill, productivity and a negative assessment made over past or present accomplishments (Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2016). Personal accomplishment is important when discussing teachers because many teachers are known to make an impact and inspire generations to come, as well as make a difference in student success. Teachers care about understanding and improving their practice, with the goal of impacting student learning (Butler & Kay, 2021). Nevertheless, when teachers can no longer see the value in their work — because they believe they are causing harm to students or denigrating the integrity of teaching by adhering to policy and practice mandates — they become demoralized (Santora, 2019). This feeling of reduced personal accomplishment that leads to the feeling of demoralization occurs when teachers feel frustrated, tired, detached, dehumanized, cynical, and a sense of low fulfilment to the job (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2016). In contrast, to say that they are demoralized is to acknowledge that they remain passionate and energetic and would love to be given opportunities to teach in ways that are fair and good (Santoro, 2019). Furthermore, while teachers are experiencing feelings such as the ones previously mentioned,

they are still expected to educate students. The students they are expected to educate may come from broken families, experience illness, or poverty, but they are still expected to be given a chance to learn (Garcia-Arroyo et al., 2019). As a result, teachers are expected to act as social workers, healthcare providers, and parents while educating children in various content areas, technology, and the global community (Garcia-Arroyo et al., 2019). Teachers want to engage in good work that benefits students, communities, and the profession, and they become frustrated when they cannot do so (Santoro, 2019). Although the dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) mentioned are different, they are still interrelated. When teachers no longer feel effective and not positively impacting students, then it is more than likely to play a role in professional burnout. Knowing and understanding the factors that contribute to emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization is important when exploring and identifying reasons for burnout in teachers.

Reasons for Occupational Burnout

Teachers experience numerous job pressures and responsibilities that interfere with their well-being and leads to burnout. Researchers confirmed several factors that contribute to teacher burnout (Santora, 2019; Maslach, 1981; Cooper, 2019; Sliskovic, 2019). Workload is interconnected with many psychological problems; burnout is among them (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Teachers are expected to plan, compile ,and complete paperwork, schedule parent conferences, and other daily tasks. The workload can include management of classroom daily activities, functions, procedures, and student discipline. They all can affect the flow of the day, and can significantly impact teacher burnout (Cooper, 2019). Teacher workload is largely impacted by accountability requirements. Teachers are responsible for the academic performance of their students. Although there is growing literature on the effects of accountability on schools

and teachers, relatively little is known about how early elementary teachers are affected by high stakes testing and associated accountability policies (Saeki et al., 2018). However, a study found multiple states that have test-based accountability policies report greater teacher turnover, as well as higher levels of teacher stress (Ryan et al., 2017). Furthermore, broader systemic working conditions like low salaries, changing academic requirements, and high workloads contribute to teacher stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction (Herman et al., 2021). Changing academic requirements includes but not limited to use of instructional strategies, expectations for lesson planning templates, use of curriculum, and expectations of what students need to do in each grade level. The constant changes can impact teachers inversely.

Teachers in high poverty or high minority schools, categorized as Title I schools, report low teacher job satisfaction levels and high teacher burnout ,translating into high teacher turnover (Batts, 2021). Burnout can have long-term negative impacts on individuals and organizations, and teachers who experience high levels of burnout are more at risk for physical and mental health problems (Brunsting et al., 2014). Reducing the number of teacher burnouts is critical to retaining teachers. If teachers are encountering challenges that can potentially lead to burnout, they may need coping strategies to prevent or reduce the burnout from occurring. Coping strategies play a critical role in an individual's physical and psychological well-being when faced with challenges, negative events, and stress (Albulescu et al., 2018). However, some individuals develop negative, unsuccessful coping strategies which can relieve the person of the stress burden for the moment but do not change the stressor at all which keeps producing stress (Smetackova, 2017). Acknowledging and recognizing that teachers may need coping strategies was important to my research study because the intent is not to only understand teachers' burnout experience, but to determine what can be done to make changes that will prevent

teachers from experiencing stress that leads to burnout and interferes with their abilities to cope.

Testing Accountability for Teachers

Accountability for teachers has been linked with testing and mandates that have contributed to burnout in teachers. The initiation of the NCLB placed a heavy toll on teachers by forcing many school districts to use only state generated modules, lessons, and scripts; many have questioned whether such an approach can effectively address the educational needs of the whole child (Levitt, 2017). Across the United States, with a federal mandate that requires states to test students and that makes high test scores a priority, many districts have abolished extracurricular areas, such as recess, art, music, and physical education; instead, they have substituted more blocks or periods focused on English Language Arts (ELA), math, and test preparation (Levitt, 2017). Teachers are being placed into a new normal that consists of testing on a daily, weekly, and ongoing basis. At their core, the foundational elements of NCLB assumed that the solution to improving student performance and closing gaps was to focus on what children should learn (Rimm-Kaufman & Jodl, 2020). Research indicates that policies centered on high-stakes testing influence the day-to-day instructional practices of classroom teachers (Plank & Condliffe, 2013). It influences how teachers teach the standards as they are focused on teaching to the test. If teachers are focusing solely on testing and accountability, rather than specific instructional practices that can benefit students, then it can lead to a bigger problem. The argument is that high-stakes testing prevents teachers from implementing effective instructional practices and reduces the education process by having teachers teach students how to pass tests rather than providing them with a thorough, critical education needed in today's society (Gonzalez et al., 2017).

As mentioned previously, if teachers are unable to meet the job demands and students' needs, it leads to dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout among themselves. A study found that teachers across all grade levels, including grade levels that require high-stakes testing had concerns with the regularly changing state curriculum, which affected their stress levels (Gonzalez et al., 2017). In this same study, 38% reported that teachers wanted to transfer to positions in other grade levels that did not have high-stakes testing associated with them (Gonzalez et al., 2017). Transferring to other positions is an aspect of teacher turnover caused by frustrations from testing and accountability in the education system. (Levitt, 2017). The pressure of testing causes teachers to dumb down the curriculum, reduce critical thinking activities, rely more heavily on drills and worksheets, and reduce the quality of education (Davidson, 2009). Furthermore, in the current climate of high stakes testing and increased teacher accountability and scrutiny, educators may experience stress as a function of their job (Huk et al., 2019). If teachers are stressed, causing them to feel symptoms of being burned out, then it can lead to ineffectiveness in the teaching and learning process if they feel as if their workload is too heavy.

Increased Workload

With extended hours and a heavy workload, it is easy to fall prey to teacher burnout (Jomuad et al., 2021). Teachers are overwhelmed with the amount of paperwork required to complete, daily meetings, and now teaching in 2020 and 2021 virtually and face to face. Research has shown that the workload varies between different schools. Work overload contributes to burnout by diminishing the capacity of teachers to meet the demands of the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This kind of overload is known as a chronic condition, which leaves teachers with little opportunity to rest, recover, and restore balance (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

The teaching profession involves taking part in many jobs demands that connects with a heavy workload, such as multiple meetings, paperwork, constant reforms and changes, and additional work tasks (Jomuad et al., 2021). Too much pressure at the job would lead to burnout due to the inability to handle the demands from work (Jomuad et al., 2021). Pressure impacts teachers because it can lead to stress and their inability to cope.

Lack of Coping Strategies

Coping strategies and resources found in schools can be necessary when exploring teacher burnout. Coping strategies can represent a valuable resource for individuals dealing with stressors and for improving their levels of well-being (Albulescu et al., 2018). The concept of "coping strategy" focuses on the techniques and methods by which the process of overcoming stress is carried out (Voitenko et al., 2021). Strategies can include journal writing, opportunity to discuss feelings, support from colleagues and administrators, and how to unwind. Burnout seems a natural consequence when individuals do not have sufficient coping resources to deal with life demands (McCarthy et al., 2009). Researchers have shown that a negative coping style can intensify job burnout (Ding et al., 2015). A variety of coping styles have different regulatory effects (Tsaur & Tang 2012). Positive coping strategies can lessen the impact of workload on job burnout (Wallace et al., 2011). However, a negative coping style has one of the main roles in predicting job burnout (Foley & Murphy, 2015).

Research shows that teachers with low-stress levels and no burnout symptoms and classes with high coping skills have been associated with positive student outcomes (Rico et al., 2020). Developing teachers' abilities to cope with negative affects plays a protective role in increasing the quality and health of their psychosocial environment and working life (Pozo-Rico et al., 2020). Chang and Chan (2015) found that proactive coping, along with optimism, play a role in

burnout prevention.

According to the American Psychological Association (2020), proactive coping is a stress-management strategy that reflects efforts to build up resources that facilitate promotion toward challenging goals and personal growth. Teachers often experience obstacles locating the resources and support needed to cope with occupational burnout. Kebbi's (2018) study found that general education teachers resorted to taking courses and workshops to improve skills, discussing problems with professional colleagues, discussing problems with personal friends and family, and getting professional counseling or therapy. However, the only strategy that directly related to the school was taking courses and workshops to improve skills because school administration arranged them (Kebbi, 2018). Another study done in the United States found that teachers experiencing stress, lack of support, and challenges with curriculum and planning coped by reaching out to teachers outside of their own school building (Dias-Lacy, 2017).

Supporting these educators so that they can support students is essential, especially in high-needs, under-resourced schools (Rimm-Kaufman & Jodl, 2020). It involves giving teachers opportunities to collaborate and communicate with their colleagues and positive encouragement from school administrators. Understanding how teachers navigate the challenges that burnout brings can potentially assist administrators with addressing teacher burnout in suburban Title I elementary schools deemed as high need. While teachers can implement coping strategies, the question remains whether teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools are provided with coping strategies and reducing teacher burnout and turnover.

Lack of Administrative Support

Administrators are known to be the number one leaders of a school building, whereas they provide a mission and vision for students, as well as teachers to be successful. The extent to

which burnout has been studied remains limited and unclear, as related to administrative support in Title I suburban schools. Environmental contingencies, such as school administration, resources, and support, as well as individual characteristics such as belief systems and cognitive attributions are essential in understanding teacher stress and possible burnout (Huk et al., 2019).

While there have been different studies on stress and burnout, administrative support has not been defined by researchers (Cancio et al., 2013). However, almost 30 years ago, a study conducted by House (1981) identified four specific behavioral components of administrative support: (a) emotional support, (b) instrumental support, (c) informational support, and (d) appraisal support. Emotional support includes administrators showing teachers that they are respected, trusted, and worthy by sustaining open communication, appreciation, showing interest in teachers' work, and providing recommendations. However, instrumental support includes administrators working directly with teachers and providing them with the necessary resources that they need and supporting them. Furthermore, informational support consists of administrators providing teachers with strategies or resources to improve their teaching practices, which includes staff development. Appraisal support includes administrators providing clear guidelines, responsibilities, and feedback regarding teachers' work.

Support is needed to adapt to the changes such as educational reforms, daily procedure, high number of duties and tasks, and high level of accountability that potentially affect teachers' well-being (Slišković et al., 2019). Pressley's study found that district and school administrators need to provide supportive environments and instructional guidance to teachers to ease anxiety around instruction by providing guidance on instructional expectations and support from the top-down. This includes encouraging teachers, communicating with them, guiding them, and making one self-available.

Teacher wellbeing is important as they work to manage the daily stresses that may come with teaching, which potentially can lead to lower burnout rates. Teacher's well-being as related to burnout can be positively developed by contextual factors such as a supportive school culture and collegial relationships (Jennings & Greenberg's, 2009). If teachers are feeling supported from their principals and able to engage in meaningful relationships with their peers, their well-being is healthy. Principals' leadership practices lay a foundation for teachers' personal resources and outcomes at work. (Collie, 2021). The way teachers view the support provided by their administrators is crucial in reducing the number of educator burnouts. A principal's behavior in interaction with teachers plays a crucial role in ensuring environmental resources and autonomy for teachers, but also in creating the emotional tone of a school climate (Sliskovic et al., 2019). Principal support is cited as one of the most promising explanatory constructs with respect to teachers' occupational well-being (Sliskovic et al., 2019). It is important that administrators are having meaningful, productive conversations with teachers, rather outside of the context of high-stakes accountability tasks and strengthening key aspects of the school climate; it is known to build important social resources within the school that can then be leveraged for other meaningful purposes, such as psychological needs on teacher burnout, commitment, and intent to leave (Ford et al., 2019). Teachers are more satisfied when school administrators provide them with opportunities to play a more active role in the decision making regarding the best learning approaches for their students Solomon & Lambie, 2020). It includes building in time for peer collaboration. The lack of administrative support and increase of support can play different roles on teachers concerning teacher burnout. Higher levels of perceived support predicted higher levels of positive emotions and work engagement, but lower levels of negative emotions and burnout (Sliskovic et al., 2019). On the other hand, lack of

support from the principal leads to negative emotions, which disturbs work engagement and may lead to burnout (Sliskovic et al., 2019). However, regular communication with administrators were suggested by teachers as strategies to deal with the increased workload and challenges (Chan et al., 2021). Administrators must protect, support, and give teachers confidence to succeed by providing them with mentors, providing tools to manage a classroom, and supporting their well-being (Whitaker et al., 2019).

Administrators are responsible for providing the support requested from the teachers within their building and being the leader that is firm and fair, aware of content knowledge and curriculum, and can provide resources and social emotional support. Furthermore, teachers who chronically find themselves unable to keep up with the demands of the teaching profession losing end of the demand/resource equation are the most vulnerable to stress and most at risk for lowered job satisfaction, greater burnout, and lowered occupational commitment (Fitchett et al., 2015). The role of the principal is vital with respect to overall performance of the school because the position is essential to address challenges and changes of varying nature (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). The changes of varying nature include the administrative support mentioned above, but also the nature of the environment of the workplace.

Environmental Impact

Given that teachers spend more time on the school premises than students, research shows that the school environment is likely to be influential on teachers' burnout. One of the factors that can affect performance is the work environment. Work environment includes but not limited to workload, available resources, professional learning opportunities, decision making and administrative support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Numerous studies have found that the work environment affects employees in different ways including their

performance (Sudibjo & Nasution, 2020; Shackleton, 2019; Narasuci, 2018; Bostrom et al., 2020). Over 70% of teacher burnout attributed to working conditions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). When the environment is not feasible to teachers and they become exhausted, they also become intolerant towards their students (Alhaija & Algani, 2021). This plays a role in emotional exhaustion mentioned previously as it relates to teacher burnout. The workplace where the employee stays for long hours is a significant social and psychological environment (Alhaija & Algani, 2021). Burnout reduction is possible in an optimal work environment characterized by four factors: physical conditions, status, functioning in the organization, psychological component, good social relations, and open communication (Alhaija & Algani, 2021). Principals should work both one-on-one as well as cooperatively with teachers to address the working conditions at school which support their psychological needs as learners and professionals (Ford et al., 2019). It is the expectation for teachers to be competent and accountable for many other individuals within the school building. Many teachers become dissatisfied not because they are exhausted and worn down but because they care deeply about students and the profession, and they realize that school policies and conditions make it difficult for them to do what is good, right, and just (Santoro, 2019). A study found an association with compositional factors (which people are found in a place) and contextual factors (the characteristics of a place) (Shackleton et al., 2019). Those factors of the environment can impact teachers' burnout as it relates to the context of the workplace. A teacher committed to his or her workplace usually tends to be involved. Involvement includes active participation in what is happening in the organization and effective performance (Alhaija & Algani, 2021). If teachers are not given the opportunity to apart of a working environment that allows them to be involved, it can cause teachers to withdraw from their jobs.

According to (Sliskovic et al., 2019), administrators are responsible for school management, and are the most important for the development of a positive tone of school climate that provides the fulfilment of teachers' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In addition, changing roles of teachers affect professional satisfaction and social well-being of teachers. This can be a cause of constant teacher professional burnout (Tutlys et al., 2021). As Akur (2018) stated, poor working conditions can cause teachers to experience work alienation and burnout, thereby decreasing their affective commitments with their schools. This study by Grant et al., (2019) found that, the data results suggest that teachers' well-being and perceived working conditions correlate with their intentions to remain at their job or within the field and to their commitment to the profession. Administrators can be influential in establishing effective working conditions in schools (Haydon et al., 2018). Working conditions play an important role in teachers' well-being and their ability to be successful, rather than burned out.

Impact of Burnout on Teachers in Title I Schools

Teacher burnout is known as a condition that drives many teachers out of the profession, especially in Title I schools. Turnover rates are known to be the highest in the South and 50 % higher in Title I schools, which serve many low-income students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The school of this study is a Title I school located in the suburbs. If teachers are consistently finding themselves in stressful situations, then it can lead to burning themselves out.

Challenges of Title I Schools

Burnout has the potential to impact teachers in many ways in their lives, as well as their professional career. The United States consistently works to bridge the academic gaps that

students face. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2021), technical assistance, resources, and program monitoring to local education agencies are provided to ensure all children have a “significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. Students from Title I schools tend to bring specific challenges, such as learning disabilities, low academic functioning, poverty, and lack of parental involvement, which can bring challenges for teachers (Solomon & Lambie, 2020). Teachers in Title I schools are expected to meet the academic and emotional needs of students. Social and emotional development is complex and integral to academics—to how school happens, and to how learning takes place (Jones & Kahn, 2017). A study conducted in an Eastern United States Title I school found that all teachers discussed how teaching at a Title I school caused stressful situations that may not be prevalent at non-Title I schools (Thompson, 2017). Low parental involvement, lack of resources, and demand to meet the needs of students were themes that made their job stressful and impacted their effectiveness (Thompson, 2017). According to (Gross, 2020), parent engagement is highlighted as a core component of US education policy because of its centrality in promoting children’s academic success.

Lack of Teacher Effectiveness

Typically, teachers are not successful in the classroom due to poor career fit or lack of preparation; they dislike working in “high-poverty” schools and leave when they have the opportunity; and because of “some sort of dissatisfaction” (Will, 2017). Santoro (2019) stated, when teachers can access what makes their work good, then they are often able to keep going. In education, burnout is most common when teachers do not see the results they aspire to create (Aguilar, 2020). Early research has noted that “Regarding influences on teachers, it should be emphasized that emotions related to burnout have an important role in forming teachers’

professional identity, commitment, effectiveness, and well-being making (Sliskovic et al.,2018). Therefore, it is imperative to understand how emotional exhaustion manifest in burned out teachers. This is important because if teachers can see their work and positive changes, it may or may not lead to emotional exhaustion, dissatisfaction and reduced personal accomplishment with their jobs that goes with teacher burnout.

Sense of Dissatisfaction

To the extent that they have studied teacher dissatisfaction, researchers have focused mostly on material sources (e.g., Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), such as the availability of classroom resources, the quality of school facilities, the capacity of school leaders and colleagues, curriculum mandates, and student demographics — i.e., factors that can make it easier or more difficult for teachers to do their jobs. This includes being pressured by school leaders and failing to meet the students' needs due to a scripted or mandated curriculum. Teachers who feel effective in the classroom will feel more satisfied in their profession and stay in the field longer and bring more energy, innovation, and creativity to their classrooms because of their job satisfaction (Cooper, 2019). Teachers appear to be more satisfied in a collaborative school system (including mutual support among teachers and school principals) (Akinyemi et al., 2019). They play an active part in school managing and decision-making (Sliskovic et al., 2019). Successfully responding to demoralization requires that school leaders recognize teachers' moral motivations, listen for moral concerns, and problem solve with teachers (Santora, 2018). Geiger & Pivovarova (2018) found that schools with higher rates of low-income and/or minority students were dissatisfied with their working conditions and had higher attrition rates. When teachers are given the resources and provided with the environment to teach and make a

difference, they potentially can avoid dissatisfaction that comes with being burned out and affecting their well-being.

Teachers' Well-being

Research shows that the list of aspects that affects teachers' well-being and contributes to teacher burnout can be in-depth and can potentially impact teaching as a profession. Educational reforms are generally aimed at the professionalism of teachers' occupations. From teachers' perspective, these changes are often reflected in less authority over teaching and students, limited over schools' daily procedures, a higher number of administrative duties and prescribed tasks, lower sense of autonomy, and higher level of accountability to the government, school managements, parents, students and society (Sliskovic et al., 2018). Before COVID-19 disrupted schools, teachers were already at risk of burnout, now the question is are teachers surviving or thriving during this pandemic (Dabrowski, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has shaped significant challenges on individuals, and teachers have faced significant stressors concerning their work (Collie, 2021). COVID-19 has brought many challenges to teachers and continues to bring challenges that can potentially affect them.

COVID-19 Impact

Before COVID-19, teachers were already experiencing burnout with an impact on their well-being. As a result of the COVID-19 lockdowns across the world, society has had to face significant challenges, which unavoidably affected the educational field, with undesirable effects for teachers working remotely (Panisoara et al., 2020). Teachers have had to teach face-to-face, mandate masks at school, take leave without pay, alter their instructional practices, and have contracted the virus. Teachers had to adapt to different scenarios in education such as access to the Internet, personal digital skills, student's digital skills, adapting the curriculum to virtual

education and choosing the appropriate contents that could be modified for online learning, and the necessary devices needed (Salceanu & Calin, 2021).

We can acknowledge that although the COVID-19 pandemic raised an educational crisis in our country, it also created an opportunity to reform the educational system (Salceanu & Calin, 2021). A report interviewed superintendents and administrators from 17 California school districts. The school leaders commonly expressed significant concerns on teacher mental health and workload and worsening teacher shortage in the COVID-19 context (Carver-Thomas et al., 2021). The concerns show that COVID-19 is affecting teachers worldwide, and school leaders must get involved to focus on the well-being of teachers. School leaders can mentor and support other teachers. Director, Seltz, & Slade (2014) found, school leadership is critical for really helping a school building build its capacity to increase student learning and student achievement and not only what that teacher does inside that school, but how that teacher leader works with the larger community to drive engagement and support for school goals and increasing youth success.

School leadership has the power to impact students, as well as teachers. In addressing existing shortfalls in support for teachers' psychological needs within a school, school leaders have a potentially vital mechanism to affect the attitudes and emotions of teachers, which precede turnover behavior (Ford et al., 2019). Furthermore, teacher leaders appear to address teachers' unmet professional needs by allowing them to continue instructing children while having more significant influence beyond their classrooms (Campbell & Wenner, 2017). However, training to prevent teacher burnout plays a protective role and improves teachers' work life's psychosocial environment *and* health (Poza-Rico, 2020). Providing a teacher training program to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on teacher burnout is considered imperative because

information and communications technology has become an essential resource in 21st-century education during the COVID-19 outbreak, during which face-to-face classes have not been possible (Poza-Rico, 2020). Teacher leaders create a collaborating culture and continuously knows to be reflective, grow and actively participate in professional development to allow them to continue to be innovative. Teacher leaders are creating tomorrow's workforce, yet not knowing what tomorrows works force may hold.

Summary and Conclusion

The literature focused on the contributing factors of teacher burnout and how teacher burnout plays a role in teacher turnover. The literature also included how the environment of a school can impact teacher burnout and how COVID-19 impacted teacher burnout in the past year. Certified teachers are 25% more likely to leave their school; The contributing factors to turnover include a lack of administrative support, dissatisfaction with testing and accountability pressures, lack of opportunities for advancement, and dissatisfaction with working conditions (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). Based on the literature review, there was a need to explore teacher burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools. By conducting a study that involved the facilitation of interviews, reflective journals, and a focus group with Title I certified elementary school teachers, I sought insight into the research questions and the phenomenon of teacher burnout in a suburban school. With the study, I investigated teachers' burnout experience and explore and determine the support needed from school leaders to assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions (depersonalization and personal accomplishment) of burnout.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the burnout theory (See Figure 2). The context of the burnout theory originally came about from Herbert J. Freudenberger. He defined burnout as a state of fatigue or frustration that resulted from professional relationships that failed to produce the expected rewards (Freudenberger, 1974). Maslach (1982) later defined burnout as a psychological syndrome involving emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment among several professionals who work with other people in challenging situations. Maslach & Jackson (1981) are the ones who allowed the concept of burnout to be furtherly developed. Burnout is also defined as a state of physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress (Dimitriu et al., 2020). Burnout has also been defined as a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (Who, 2019). Burnout results in decreased job satisfaction, chronic exhaustion, an impact on teachers' well-being, quality of the teaching process, and long-term stress (Smetackova et al., 2021). Burnout research suggests that burnout symptoms arise from chronic work stress, resulting from imbalances between personal and environmental job demands and resources, leading to negative consequences for institutions, workers, and service recipients (Trauernicht, 2021).

In the context of elementary public education, burnout is one of the most prevalent reasons that causes teachers to exit the teaching profession. Burnout is an ongoing challenge for schools regarding staffing and quality of instruction, especially in low-socioeconomic-level schools where attrition rates are highest (Leichtman, 2021). Herbert Freudenberger initially used job burnout in 1974. Freudenberger established the term and development of the concept when he conducted work in a free clinic movement and was geared towards young individuals who have forbidden the establishment. Fredudenberger (1974) stated that he noticed changes in mood,

attitude, motivation, and personalities of the workers. His research on burnout provided an understanding of the characteristics within feeling burned out. Freudenberger chose to look at the phenomenon of burnout as a syndrome. He found that physical signs of the syndrome consist of exhaustion, fatigue, headache, sleeplessness, and shortness of breath (Freudenberger, 1974). Behavioral signs included the inability to express feelings, irritation, and anger (Freudenberger, 1974). Freudenberger further discussed what happens when a job becomes routine and initially addressed the connection between burnout and the experience of caring for marginalized patients (Eisenstein, 2018).

Burnout syndrome has been recognized as being highly prevalent in the teaching profession (Smetackova, 2017; Zicicova & Gullerova, 2018; Salmela et al., 2019). However, Maslach (1976) further researched burnout to determine and understand coping mechanisms of individuals related to stress at work and burnout. Maslach (1976) investigated burnout and its impact on educators. She developed a scale that measured emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. She found that burnout occurs as a condition associated with chronic stress in which one loses all concerns, feeling towards the person one works with and any individual that does not connect with them (Maslach, 1976). Moreover, there is a bias toward fixing people rather than fixing the job situation (Maslach, 2017). The focus should not solely be on the teachers. It should also be on the profession itself and looking into what is happening in the profession that is causing teachers to experience the sense of exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion is known as the first symptom of burnout but not the most detrimental. It transpires as a reaction to the job working conditions, pressures, and changes within life. Maslach and Jackson (1981) created items for the emotional exhaustion subscale to

describe feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. This burnout dimension affects teachers by making them feel tired and unable to face the demands of their job or engage with people. Symptoms of emotional exhaustion include feeling overwhelmed, fatigue and feebleness from an excessive amount of work. (Luisa et al., 2020). Emotional exhaustion draws attention to the fact that a person performs a given job above their limits while not receiving support from others (Tutly et al., 2021). A study suggested that reducing teachers' emotional exhaustion might contribute favorably and substantially to the improvement of teachers' organizational commitment (Wullur & Werand, 2020).

The depersonalization dimension of burnout correlates with a detachment towards individuals, as well as situations. It describes an unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). As stated by Luisa et al., (2020), depersonalization usually results in the subject feeling a critical dislike to the people they work with or service, which is a form of self-defense from becoming emotionally involved (Luisa et al., 2020). Furthermore, depersonalization refers to emotional and cognitive detachment from one's job and a distant, cynical attitude toward it. Depersonalization can cause teachers to become distant from students and act inhumanly and angrily (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). Maslach & Jackson (1981) also stated that burnout would manifest in teachers with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization combined.

The last dimension of burnout is one feeling insufficient to do the job. Maslach & Jackson (1981) included that personal accomplishment describes feelings of competence and achievement in an individual's work with others. Personal accomplishment describes the inability to be able to feel like a contributor within the environment. Lack of personal accomplishment is the state of creating self-doubt and underestimation of abilities that teachers

lack in effectively fulfilling their tasks and job duties (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). Teachers work under demanding conditions where they deal with the bulk of students, colleagues, parents, and school administration requirements, and certain expectations increase the chances of burnout among teachers (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2020). Low achievement in the workplace also generates feelings of incompetence and personal and professional failure (Luisa et al., 2020).

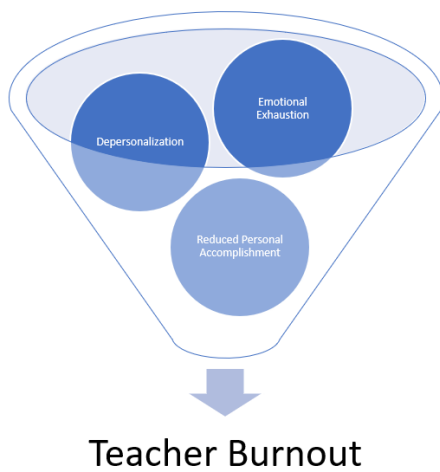
Freudenberger's (1974) and Maslach's (1976) research on the effects of burnout determined that individuals experiencing burnout developed a feeling of exhaustion that reduced personal attachment and detachment from the job. In his study of burnout, there is a relationship between job stress and burnout among the Science and Mathematics Teachers in primary education schools (Ciu et al., 2018). Teachers in primary education schools are under pressure of career development, workload, examinations, interpersonal relationship, roles, and responsibilities (Ciu et al., 2018). Maslach et al., (2001) also stated, the lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of appropriate resources. Exhaustion and cynicism emerge from the presence of work overload and dissatisfaction.

The Burnout Theory supported the problem in my study and the purpose of what is causing the increase in burnout with suburban Title I teachers and their experiences with professional burnout. This study sought to extend the Burnout Theory by applying it to groups of suburban Title I elementary school teachers and discovered how the three mechanisms (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) of teacher burnout impact professional burnout in their schools. Understanding teachers' perception of professional burnout in relation to the challenges that come with work and teaching was important to this study. A person's psychological syndrome has a negative impact in that it decreases that person's level of job satisfaction, increases their degree of absence, and can cause

carelessness in the job (Safari, 2020). I identified any significance in the findings that validate that individuals' professional burnout experiences may differ in the suburban environment. This research addressed an understudied topic of burnout in Title I suburban elementary schools. It informed school leaders, Title I schools, and other educators. The research questions and interview questions provided insight into teachers' experiences with burnout and how the three dimensions manifest. The questions also answered what support, including coping strategies, may be needed by school leaders.

Figure 2

Theoretical Framework



Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of how certified teachers in a K-5 Title I, suburban elementary school located in the Southeastern United States make sense of their experiences as teachers and how these experiences contribute to their professional burnout that can potentially lead to turnover. Based on the current demand of teachers, Viadero (2018) reported that in an analysis of federal education data from 2016- 2018, statewide teacher shortages were reported in all 50 states.

Research indicates that for many years, burnout has been recognized as an occupational danger for various people-oriented professions, such as human services, education, and health care (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The Burnout Theory was the theoretical framework for this study and consisted of three mechanisms, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. With teacher burnout being an ongoing problem and increasing teacher turnovers worldwide, studies must address teacher burnout in suburban schools, its causes, the impact, and how to reduce it. The literature showed that it is essential to understand that professional burnout manifests itself in exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal achievement (Tutlys et al., 2021). Teachers' physical, emotional, and psychological well-being are concerning as they are impacted by accountability with high-stakes testing, federal mandates, and working environment conditions (Santoro, 2021). The literature also showed that administrators are critical to improving schools, but job-related stress and burnout are factors that can limit principal effectiveness and lead to untimely turnover (DeMatthews et al., 2021). By supporting teachers and providing them with coping skills or strategies, it can reduce teacher burnout and turnover. While researchers have researched burnout and its causes (Santora, 2019; Maslach, 1981; Cooper, 2019; Sliskovic, 2019), they have not fully cited or acknowledged teacher burnout as a problem in suburban elementary Title I schools. Turnover rates are also 70% higher for teachers serving the largest concentrations of students of color (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). This study provided an opportunity to identify challenges teachers may face, such as the pandemic, and how to use their experiences to implement solutions that enhance their ability to remain in the profession.

While chapter two focused on the background of the literature, the framework, and the summary of the chapter, chapter 3 focuses on the methodology, which includes the research questions, research design, setting, and the data analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Extensive research exists regarding teacher burnout and the impact it has on teacher turnover. This study investigated how teachers describe their experiences with occupational burnout in a Title I suburban elementary school in which they are employed. The data from the study was utilized to show the role burnout plays in public education in Title I schools and determining what leaders can do to address teacher burnout in suburban Title I schools.

Research Design

Qualitative research addresses the “how” and the “why” and enables understanding of a problem. However, Johnson, Adkins, & Chauvin (2020) stated that the goal of rigor in qualitative research can be described as ensuring that the research design, method, and conclusions are explicit, public, replicable, open to critique, and free of bias. Qualitative researchers recognize that certain participants are more likely to be “rich” with data or insight than purely quantitative approaches to research. Therefore, qualitative descriptions are more relevant and useful in achieving the study’s purpose to describe the experiences around occupational burnout shared by teachers in a Title I elementary school. The qualitative tradition is also most fitting for answering the study’s research questions dedicated to uncovering the experiences, needs, and applications for teacher leadership practice shared by participants (Johnson, Adkins, Chauvin, 2020).

A collective case study allows investigation of "a phenomenon, population, or general condition (Glesne, 2016, p.290). Given this definition, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates the case or cases conforming to the abovementioned definition by addressing the "how" or "why" questions concerning the phenomenon of interest (Yazan, 2015). The case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation

of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Creswell et al., 2011). Case studies as specified by Gammelgaard (2017) are often used for inductive exploration of yet unknown phenomena, i.e., theory generation. When describing the steps undertaken while using a case study approach, this method of research allows the researcher to take a complex and broad topic, or phenomenon, and narrow it down into a manageable research question(s) (Heale & Twycross, 2018).

As a researcher with the initial objective to gain insight into teachers' lived experiences with professional burnout at a suburban Title I elementary school and how it impacted their profession, as related to burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment), I selected a qualitative case study. The study aimed to analyze the causes that contribute to teacher occupation burnout in suburban elementary schools and how burnout impacts them differently.

According to Glesne (2016), case study provides the research opportunity to honor participants by showing gratitude for their shared insights, acknowledging the importance of their time, creating a sense of cooperation in the research, and acknowledging your dependence upon their honest and open dialogue for the success of the study. The methodology and case study allowed me to dive deeper into an investigation of the study questions.

The case study design has five components: a study's questions; its propositions, if any; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yazan, 2015). The collective case study approach not only guided me as a researcher with answering research questions, but also provided me with opportunities to look at other factors that impacted the participants burnout. The case study approach

provided thick-rich descriptions and was best suitable for this qualitative research. It helped identify, understand, and discover experiences and provided insights into the phenomenon.

Several data gathering techniques were utilized, such as in-depth interviews, reflective journals, and a focus group. As Noble & Heale (2019) stated, triangulation can enrich research as it offers a variety of datasets to explain differing aspects of a phenomenon of interest and increases the credibility and validity of research findings. The interviews (see Appendix C) included open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their roles and responsibilities as a teacher, experiences with being burned out, and how do they manage their burnout. The interviews were beneficial as they provided the tone needed to help create a relaxed environment with minimal distractions. Participants were interviewed for twenty minutes to an hour at different times and dates that were convenient for the participants. In addition to the interviews, reflective journals (see Appendix D) were also utilized. They were used to understand participants day to day experience with burnout and specific experiences that has taken place in their work environment. Furthermore, a face-to-face focus group meeting was held after school with the participants (see Appendix E) to further discuss the different burnout dimensions as it relates to their unique and individual experiences.

Research Questions

- 1) In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school describe the reasons for feeling professional burnout?
- 2) How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools?

- 3) What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions of burnout?

Role of the Researcher

I grew up in a suburban area outside of Miami, Florida and attended elementary, middle, high school, and college in suburban areas. In 2013, I worked in an affluent suburb outside Birmingham, Alabama. However, in 2014, I transferred to a suburban school 30 minutes away, located outside of Atlanta reporting 78% of students receiving free and reduced lunch. For the last nine years, I have been employed in the same school district, and for the previous nine years, I taught fifth grade and served as the Gifted and Talented Specialist for three years. I served as a team leader, math leader for the team, representative for the teacher job fair, and a representative for the Principal's Advisory Committee at the school level. I also participated in delivering professional development at the school level. Furthermore, I am currently serving as the president for PTA for the 2021-2022 school year. As I stated, I am the Gifted Specialist and Advanced Learning teacher, so I have the pleasure of regularly working with all teachers and grade levels. The opportunities given to me allowed me to build rapport and trust with teachers and administrators. The rapport and trust I gained with teachers and administrators enabled me to collect candid responses. As aligned with the teacher leadership standards drafted by the Leadership Exploratory Consortium (National Education Association, 2020), teacher leaders model effective practices, engage in formal and informal contexts, while supporting a collaborative team structure within their school. Teacher leadership works as a team with a principal and one without the other is not effective. Teachers in leadership roles work in collaboration with principals and other school administrators by facilitating improvements in instruction and promoting practices among their peers that can lead to improved student learning

outcomes (National Education Association, 2020). Teacher leaders work to create an environment that is effective and conducive for students, as well as teachers.

Building rapport and establishing comfortable interactions in qualitative studies is essential and preferably done well before collecting data (McGrath et al., 2019). In the roles cited above, I made sure that I was accessible to all stakeholders within the building, which enabled me to build the necessary relationships needed to assist me in carrying out the research study.

According to Gao (2020), a researcher's bias refers to the researcher's tendency to have a partial perspective, favoring specific populations or opinions against the alternatives. Bias occurs either intentionally or unintentionally and may include researchers interpreting data to meet their hypothesis or only utilizing data that they deem as relevant (Simundic, 2013). I was familiar with the research site, as I have worked with and encountered all colleagues daily. To avoid researcher bias, I made my role known and clear, created a detailed research plan, and asked open-ended questions. I also summarized data using the original form and maintained research records.

Setting and Participants

For this study, I gathered data from Title I elementary school teachers in the Southeastern United States. The setting for the study is an elementary school within the second-largest school system in Georgia. The research site is known for working with children to meet challenging academic standards and known to have teachers transferring for a variety of reasons or leaving the profession. There has also been an increase in absenteeism among the teaching staff. The site that was best suitable for the study is a suburban Title I school. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2022), Title I is a program that provides supplemental funding to

support educators in improving the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), at least 40% of the students attending a public school must be considered low-income to receive Title I funds. My Title I population is reflective of a typical Title I school. It was essential because my study aligned with a Title I population. The Title I school has approximately 600 students from Kindergarten through fifth grade. Over 71% of students are from low-income families. Around 62 % of students are Black, 4% Multi-racial, 11% American Indian, 3 % Asian/Pacific Islanders and 20 % are Caucasian students.

I selected the site because of familiarity and accessibility. The teachers are diverse as far as years of experience, age, ethnic backgrounds, and subjects and grade levels taught. The school has thirty-nine certified teaching staff members. The participants' years of teaching experience in this Title I Suburban school ranges from 1 year to 30 years. Some transitioned from being a paraprofessional to teacher, directly from college, and for some teaching was their second career. There are twenty teachers with a bachelor's degree, twenty-three with a master's degree, six with a specialist's degree, and two with a doctoral degree. There are four males and forty-seven females. Twenty-one teachers are Black; twenty-six are White, two Latinx, and three Asian Americans. There are not any teachers with less than two years of experience, thirty with 1-10 years, fourteen with 11-20 years, and seven with 21-30 years of experience.

Population and Sampling Method

The logic and power of purposeful sampling leads to selecting information-rich cases for study (Glesne, 2016). The participants in this study were selected using purposeful sampling. A preliminary survey was created and sent to participants based on age, gender, demographics, and

participation criteria. Purposeful sampling was selected to represent the full spectrum of teachers experiencing professional burnout in a Title I elementary school. Purposeful sampling was defined as a particular group of participants who are chosen to participate in a study (Creswell, 2012). The selection process was based on the following criteria:

- Being a certified elementary teacher with at least one-year experience
- Employed at the research site (Title I school selected)
- Intent of remaining at the school site for 2022 school year
- Interested in learning about professional burnout
- Commitment to complete and participate in the interview, focus group, and reflective journals.
- Teacher agreement to participate in the research study

The participants were selected based on individuals who were willing to speak about their experiences, met the research criteria mentioned previously, knowledge about the topic, and the order in which the responses to participate were received. Specifically, two teachers from 0-10 years, two from 10-20 years, and two from 20-30 years was my expectation. I originally planned to have six participants, two from each experience band because based on the criteria for my research, a sample size of six would provide me with quality data for my case studies. However, more participants met the criteria, and they were allowed to participate.

Procedures were followed to make sure participants were aware of the expectations of the study. Once approval was given from IRB and the district, participants were selected by sending out an email requesting volunteer teachers from different grade levels whose years of teaching experience ranges from 0 years to 30 years of teaching experience. Teachers responded to the invitation by emailing their willingness to participate in the study. Limiting my research and

sample to teachers working in a suburban elementary environment was needed, given my interest area of teachers who are burned out in suburban schools and its impact on their emotional state, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. I opened the research study to both males and females, aged 21 to 65 years old. Given the environment where teachers are working through a pandemic with challenges, time was needed to collect data, transcribe, interpret, and code. Following the email, I provided participants with a consent form to complete. Participants were protected by keeping their names confidential and providing them with pseudonyms. They were also given open and honest communication regarding the work. It was shared with them that no harm will occur, results will be accessible, and the researcher will preserve records.

Furthermore, I arranged a meeting with the administrators to obtain permission. I asked the administrators to conduct the interviews and a focus group in the school. I was given permission to send out the email soliciting volunteers for the study. As stated, once all teachers agreed to be a part of the study, I provided participants with a consent form to sign. The data collection methods that were used were also explained. I held conversations to answer any clarifying questions about the research and its process. Additionally, I also collaborated with participants regarding a time and day to conduct individual interviews.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness has become an important concept and is about establishing different components in qualitative research. Trustworthiness deals with transferability, confirmability, credibility, and dependability. Glesne (2016) suggested several strategies to address these threats to validity: prolonged *involvement*, *triangulation*, *peer debriefing*, *member checking*, *negative case analysis*, and keeping an *audit trail*. As Holloway and Jefferson (2000) stated in Glesne (2016), four questions help integrate trustworthiness: What do you notice? Why do you notice?

How can you interpret what you notice? How can you know that your interpretation is the right one? To ensure validity and reliability, choosing an appropriate methodology, time frame, instrument, and sample is essential, along with exploring inter-rater reliability and the use of triangulation (Glesne, 2016). To establish trustworthiness with my participants, I made sure that the data was detailed and accurate, built rapport with participants and engaged in member-checks. I did not alter participants' responses from the interview, focus group, or reflective journals. I allowed participants to meet with me before and after school to review the transcripts and determine if the data reflects their experiences and responses.

Data Collection

I granted Kennesaw State University Institutional Review Board approval and the district where the research study was conducted. I also granted permission from the principal at the research site. I filled out a form to explain the purpose of the study and how it will be conducted. After approvals being granted, I sent out an email regarding the study details, the researcher's contact information, and the consent form to participate. Before conducting the interviews, I checked for consent forms and made sure participants were suitable for the research based on the criteria. I also checked to make sure recording devices and transcribing applications were working. I sent out a follow-up email to research participants explaining their roles, an overview of the study, and a survey requesting a face-to-face interview.

Interview Protocol

Each teacher participated in one semi structured interview. Generally, qualitative researchers use semi-structured interviews (Glesne, 2016). I conducted a semi-structured interview with pre-determined questions and engaged in probing questions based on individual interviews. As Glesne (2016) stated, the questions you bring to the interview are not set within a

binding contract. The interview questions were open-ended and presented in a logical order that avoided any discomfort. The questions created were not worded in a way that called for any yes or no responses, which encouraged in-depth answers, and did not leave any room for quiet time. As Glesne (2016) stated, developing different questions (experience, feeling, background, etc.) is the first step to a meaningful interview.

Interviewing allowed for opportunities to ask open-ended questions with the hope of being able to collect in-depth information. In-depth interviewing allows for the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see (Glesne, 2016). I explored everyone's understanding and experience of professional burnout by asking open-ended questions. The shaping of interview questions were essential regarding how the interview flowed. Throughout the interview process, a participant may not understand what is being asked, and the interviewer may not understand what is being said. Glesne (2016) states, if re-stating does not help, go on to other questions rather than risk conveying frustration or making the interviewee feel inadequate. During the interview, participants who needed clarification, I re-stated or asked probing questions to understand what the respondent was implying fully. It did not interfere with the interview process. Interviewing provides opportunities to exchange information and learn about how others think and feel about a topic, problem, or their world in general while understanding their message. As Glesne (2016) stated that your research questions identify what you want to understand; your interview questions generate the data you need to understand these things.

The interview protocol included the time, date, and pseudonym for each participant. I started the interviews with a thank you and appreciation for participating greeting. The participants proceeded by giving me the consent to begin asking questions and recording. I

actively listened, gained trust and rapport with my participants to gain an in-depth understanding the causes of their burnout and how it impacted them. I took notes during the interview, including the participants' facial expressions and body language. I allowed the participants to ask any questions regarding the interview or the study. The interviews were audio-recorded. Recording devices are known to be an advantage during interviews. They provide nearly complete documentation of what has been said and permit easier attention to the course of the interview (Glesne, 2016). The participants were given a chance to review them and determine whether they were correct.

Focus Group Protocol

Qualitative research is an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied (Aspers & Corte, 2019). One semi-structured focus group consisted of nine teachers. At the beginning of the study, participants were notified a tentative date and time of the focus group. Halfway through the study, they were asked to confirm the date, time, and location. The focus group took place for an hour and 15 minutes in a quiet room, away from everyone in the building. The focus group was audio-recorded using Otter Transcription.

The focus group provided further insight into which burnout dimension each participant connected with the most. Participants were encouraged to share their honest opinions and thoughts. Plummer (2017) explains, focus group methodology is a highly effective technique for gathering rich, in-depth accounts of people's thinking, experiences, and attitudes. This method was selected so participants would be encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with their peers and participants who may have experienced the same situation as

them. As Plummer (2017) stated, focus groups are not just group interviews; rather, they require careful planning and design and have unique investigative and reporting procedures to ensure credibility of the conclusions. Focus groups continue to be an insightful way of exploring people's views and how these are shaped by social interaction (Tritter & Landstad, 2020). The discussion encouraged participants to engage in in-depth conversations about their lived experiences with burnout. The incorporation of the focus group was used to explore common patterns related to causes of burnout and coping strategies among teachers. A focus group protocol containing ten questions (see Appendix E) was used to collect qualitative data from the participants.

Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information when interviewees are similar and cooperate with each other (Creswell, 2018). Throughout the focus group, participants were able to engage in group discussion and generate and share insights regarding occupational burnout. The focus group promoted interaction amongst all participants as they actively participated and shared their views. As the researcher, I was able to look at all facial expressions and body language that provided insight and understanding to the phenomenon.

Reflective Journals Protocol

Reflective teachers view themselves as more self-efficacious, which collectively prevents the gradual development of burnout (Dexter & Wall, 2021). I utilized reflective journals to analyze teachers' experiences working in Title I suburban elementary schools. The reflective journals also provided me with an opportunity to hear the voices of teachers in a narrative way. The journals provided participants with opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings, and

challenges that they were experiencing weekly, including their emotional state, detachment, or reduced personal accomplishment they may have had towards their work.

Each teacher participant was provided with four reflective journal prompts over a 6-week period. The participants were assigned a prompt using One Note every Monday to complete by the end of the week. One Note is a digital notebook that automatically saves and syncs your notes as working. I checked in with participants through One Note communication to make sure they were on the right track and did not need additional assistance. The fourth journal prompt was assigned after the focus group interview. In the first journal, participants were encouraged to share an individual burnout experience in a Title I suburban school or an experience that they have observed in another colleague. In the second journal, participants were encouraged to create a collage using any technology tool of their choice of their week of what may have caused them to feel overwhelmed, stressed, or burned out. They were instructed to save and upload the completion of their collage to One Note. The third journal required participants to reflect on how they realize when they are near to feelings of burnout. They also needed to reflect on how they set boundaries and avoid absorbing someone else's emotions and stress in the work environment. In the final journal prompt, participants were encouraged to reflect on their initial interview, journals, collage created, and the focus group and determine of the three burnout dimensions of teachers described by Researcher Maslach, which one resonates with them or has resonated with them.

Through the reflective journals, participants were able to access their journals at any given time through One Note. They were also able to print them out if needed. Participants reflected thoroughly through the journals. The first journal was utilized to gain an understanding of teachers' experiences related to the phenomena. While the second and third journal were

utilized to allow participants to share what contributes to their burnout and how do they overcome what they are experiencing. The final journal entry provided additional information and narrative responses regarding how participants resonated with the phenomenon. The reflective journals were the last piece of data collection that was collected. Once collected at the end of the study, the journals were coded and analyzed to add to an in-depth case study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis concerns how we move from the data to understanding, explaining, and interpreting the phenomena in question (Cohen et al., 2017). The data analysis process consisted of multiple steps. Data analysis is essential to the research process as it is used for interpretation and to derive insights. Glesne (2016) stated that when working on the data, you describe, compare, create explanations, link your story to other stories, and possibly pose hypotheses or develop theories. I analyzed the data from the interviews, focus group, and reflective journals to understand all participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The first step I took was to transcribe the interviews and the focus group. Following, the interview, focus group transcripts, and reflective journals were sorted into three piles. Next, I immersed myself in the data by reading it line to line.

Glesne (2016) stated that line-by-line coding helps immerse you in the data and discover what concepts they offer (p.196). As I read line by line, notes of possible codes were taken. Transcripts from the interviews were used to code line by line to immerse the researcher in the data and discover any other words that participants use to talk about their experiences. It led to engaging in another coding approach. Glesne (2016) states, it is called in vivo codes that are usually color or metaphoric or words that may be used differently than they are usually used. For example, a participant may describe their students as their "babies or kids." I began by

noting and coding the participants' metaphors throughout the interviews, reflective journals, and a focus group. Another type of coding that I engaged in was emotions coding during the focus group. This type of coding is linked with specific actions or behavior in the study (Glesne, 2016). After coding through interview transcripts, reflective journals, and the focus group, I followed with coding the data by searching for themes and patterns related to the participants' burnout experiences using thematic analysis.

The thematic analysis involves an active process where the researcher searches for patterns and compiles them to construct themes. An essential component of thematic analysis is segregating data into categories by codes or labels (Glesne, 2016). I familiarized myself with the data and analyzed it in different ways. I compared the participants' responses from the reflective journals and focus group to identify patterns and seek distinctions in the findings. The goal of thematic analysis is to arrive at a more complex understanding of a social phenomenon through understanding the processes that tend to involve that phenomenon and the perceptions, values, and beliefs of people toward it (Glesne, 2016).

Qualitative research seeks to understand subjectivity. Triangulation lets the qualitative researcher know what they have discovered is valid in addressing reliability and validity in a study (Creswell, 2018). However, qualitative research tries to identify the how and why behind a phenomenon. While researchers explore and analyze the phenomenon, trustworthiness is vital in the study being replicable. Reliability in qualitative studies concerns the faith that one can have in the data obtained from an instrument, that is, the degree to which measuring tools control for random error (Mohajan, 2017). Reliability is a matter of being thorough in carrying out the research that leads to the trustworthiness of the research study.

Triangulation was used to increase the validity of the research findings. Utilizing multiple methods rather than a single method is a part of triangulation (Glesne, 2016). As I analyzed the data, I asked myself questions: What is it that I notice? What data aligns with the research questions? During this process, notes were taken to assist me with my color-coding. Color coding allowed me to organize ideas and gather detailed descriptions according to the research questions by highlighting themes in color and compiling a word list that will be compared across the different interviews. Descriptive coding was also used. Descriptive coding was used to help identify “key words” to explore the topic (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Vivo coding was used to apply the actual words verbatim from the participants with quotation marks (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Coding was done by hand utilizing highlighters to organize and categorize the data. By utilizing interviews, reflective journals, and a focus group, thick descriptions were able to be used and rich data became present. Major and minor themes categories were identified and listed. Due to the interviews being done individually with a variety of participants, responses contained similarities and differences, which allowed me to immerse into the details. Verification of the data occurred by engaging in detailed, thick descriptions of the interview transcripts and writing descriptively, member checking, audit trailing, and prolonged engagement.

To ensure credibility, the strategies used were persistent observation, triangulation, and member checking (Glesne, 2016). Member checking determined if participants believed the transcripts reflected their responses from the interview and assess if the analyses were credible. I utilized various data sources to support that the findings were credible, reliable, and valid. I used persistent observation to focus on the focus group's aspects that were relevant to the different burnout dimensions and teachers experiences in Title I schools, focusing on the causes and what support is needed. To ensure transferability, making use of reflective journals and the focus

group were necessary. Transferability is describing not just the behavior and experiences, but their context as well, so that the behavior and experiences become meaningful to an outsider (Lorstjens & Moser, 2018). Direct quotation and thick descriptions were used to provide participants with opportunities to member check. It allowed options for transparency to be assessed by the researcher (myself) and records to be maintained of the research process.

To ensure dependability and to show as a record of the research process, all data was organized using an audit trail (Glesne, 2016). I used an audit trail to ensure interpretations came from documents related to the research and not individual preferences and opinions. I saved all documents related to the study to provide a clear record of the research process and the path taken from the beginning to the end of the research study. It showed the development and the final reporting of all findings. Protecting the intersubjectivity of the data was imperative. The research participants were given pseudonyms initially to make sure identification was possible when assessing the data.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting qualitative research requires attending to ethical principles. Before conducting research, I gained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), school district, and administrator of the site. According to Glesne (2016), the charge of IRBs is to review all studies proposed at their instruction that involve human subjects and ensure that research participants are protected and treated ethically. Researcher bias can also contribute to threats in reliability and validity. Participants were encouraged to explore and share their own experiences and perceptions related to the study. In addition, participants' time were respected. Participants were given the opportunity to check the transcripts of the interviews for accuracy.

As Glesne (2016) stated, the closer the relationship between researcher and research participants, the more specific the obligations, expectations, and possibility for reciprocity emerge. Creating transparency before, during, and after the research process was crucial. Transparency involves making principle decisions before beginning the research and encouraging participation, engagement, and open debate throughout its course (Glesne, 2017). It was essential for me to remain transparent with the participants about their rights and makes sure I honored participants' voices by allowing them to be heard. To prevent participants from any harm, I also made sure to present the questions openly during the interview and focus group.

As an added measure of making sure specific ethical procedures were followed throughout the study, I was the only one handling the research data. I took several steps to make sure the participants were aware of their rights (anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy) and that they were being protected. They were given consent forms and informed about the research process. I secured and protected collected data that was printed in a secure location (mini suitcase with a lock). Data collected digitally was stored on a computer device that required a password and encrypted to avoid any security breaches. Participants were also assigned pseudonyms. I only conducted the study with participants who volunteered and completed the consent form.

This paper adheres to the ethical procedures needed in research. Participants were assured that I would strive for honesty, integrity and avoid any researcher bias. Information was presented accurately, and results were reported based on factual information.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to: (RQ1) Identify sources and effects of burnout that teachers in a Title I suburban school [Fame Elementary School] experience. (RQ2) Examine how burnout manifests in the three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, detachment, reduced personal accomplishment) of burnout (Maslach, 1981). (RQ3) Identify strategies and/or supports that help suburban elementary teachers manage burnout.

The first three chapters of this study included the introduction of the study, the literature that supports the study, and the methodology. This chapter includes a brief description of the participants demographics and the findings of the research regarding teachers experience at Fame Elementary School. This study was guided by three research questions: 1. In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school describe the reasons for feeling occupational burnout? 2. How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools? 3. What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary school teachers with managing the dimensions of burnout? Data was collected using interviews, participant reflective journals, and a focus group discussion to explore the study research questions and form a deeper understanding of these teachers' experiences.

Description of the Participants

Demographics of the Participants

The ten participants selected for this study responded to a questionnaire sent via email to a total of 52 certified teachers in a suburban Title I elementary school situated in a southeastern state. Each of the selected participants met the criteria as outlined in chapter 3 of TEACHERS'

BURNOUT EXPERIENCE. Table 1 displays the self-reported demographical data obtained from the research participants. Pseudonyms are used in Table 2 to name the participants and maintain the anonymity of each.

Table 1

Demographics of Teacher Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Title	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Age band	Education Background	Years of Teaching experience	Years taught at a Title I suburban elementary school	Grade band
Flame	Teacher	Female	Black	50-59	Master's	17	17	K-5
Stormy	Teacher	Female	Black	50-59	Education Specialist	31	16	K-2
Ginger	Academic coach	Female	Black	40-49	Master's	16	4	All
Priscilla	Teacher	Female	Black	40-49	Master's	12	12	K-2
Princess	Interventionist	Female	Black	40-49	Education Specialist	22	14	K-2
Sherly	Teacher	Female	Black	20-29	Bachelor's	4	4	3-5
Barbara	Teacher	Female	Black	40-49	Master's	12	4	3-5
Blue	Teacher	Female	White	30-39	Bachelor's	10	10	K-2
Angel	Teacher	Female	White	20-29	Master's	5	5	3-5
John	Teacher	Male	Black	30-39	Master's	11	11	3-5

Despite being in a global pandemic, 100% the participants completed the interview and reflective journals. Most of the participants attended the focus group (90%). Due to going on

medical leave, one of the participants did not attend the focus group. However, the participant stated that she engaged in conversations with a peer who attended the focus group.

Table 2

Participation Data: Interview, Journal Entries, and Focus Group

Data	Participants Out of 10	Total Percentage
Completed Interview	10	100%
Completed Journals	10	100%
Focus Group Attendance	9	90%

Results

The results begin with background information about each participant and their responses to the three research questions. The rationale for including participants description in this chapter was to shed light on the participants educational background regarding Title I schools and their professional experiences, along with how each, if at all, may have influenced their occupational burnout when teaching at a Title I suburban elementary school. This qualitative case study addressed the research questions for the reasons participants experience occupational burnout, how it manifests into the burnout dimensions, and specific supports needed from school leaders to manage burnout. The data utilized contributed to the understanding of teacher burnout experiences in suburban schools and the supports needed to assist them. The findings indicated that participants self-reflected and conveyed they experienced burnout in different ways and attempted to manage burnout using multiple coping mechanisms. Below is a description of each participant and what led to them experiencing occupational burnout.

Participants Backgrounds

Participant 1: Flame

Flame has 17 years of teaching experience at a Title I school. She previously held the title as an emotional behavior teacher for numerous years. However, she was new in the Special Education role she had during the duration of the study. Flame described her role as different. To her, the main goal of teaching is to create a safe and loving environment for her students. She is currently counting down her years to retirement. Flame entered the profession with the intentions on exceeding the years needed to retire but has since changed her mind. Flame stated she will be leaving the profession in the next five years. Nearly one in four teachers said that they were likely to leave their jobs by the end of the 2020–2021 school year, compared with the one in six teachers who were likely to leave, on average, prior to the pandemic (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Although, Flame is an experienced teacher who wants to leave the career now but unable to afford leaving early. Experienced teachers that are leaving the profession early perceive that their working conditions are evolving in a negative direction, such as lack of financial resources, or diverse expectations on teaching work (Rasanen et al., 2020). They feel as if the working conditions are also challenging to cope with. Flame shared that a lack of materials, job responsibilities, behavior problems, and financial burdens were the reasons for feeling burnout.

Participant 2: Stormy

Stormy is a veteran teacher with 31 years of teaching experience. Her experiences are all from Title I schools. She recently went back to earn a graduate degree in Instructional Technology. She considers herself a mama, nurse, teacher, and coach. She believes that at Title I schools, students require more as far as not having the necessary materials and more emotional issues. She still believes working in a Title I school is a loving environment because often

students feel safe at school, so attendance is good, and they are happy to be there. She has gone through phases of burnout but does not feel as if she is in a burnout stage where she does not want to teach anymore. However, she mentioned that she is usually willing to sign her contract, but this year she hesitated about signing it. She questioned whether she really wanted to continue teaching, especially when kids are being affected by the things that she does. Stormy shared that she is experiencing a lot of stress with family and school.

Participant 3: Ginger

Ginger has been employed as a teacher for 16 years. She has experiences teaching at Title I Urban and Title I Suburban schools. She recently just earned her Education Specialist degree. In the last few years, she has been experiencing occupational burnout related to teaching. She views her roles and responsibilities as working with kids, implementing lessons, dealing with behavior (not necessarily negatively), and making sure kids are learning the standards. She enjoys going to her students' sports games, as it allows her to build rapport with them. She stated her experience at a Title I school has been positive, rather what others view Title I as. She stated, "I think when people hear Title I, they kind of think oh, struggle, kids struggle, they do not know stuff, you know, their family, you know, don't have money." Ginger expresses that her experiences are with middle class families, where parents work and kids live in homes, rather than what others view Title I students as. She further explained they do have a lot of knowledge; they go places, and they do things. Ginger shared lack of support has contributed to her burnout.

Participant 4: Priscilla

Priscilla has 12 years of teaching experience. She has admitted to experiencing burnout across several years. She has experiences being a team leader and served as committee member at the school level. She recently received her coaching endorsement. She is currently pursuing

another graduate degree. She is accustomed to working at schools with high parental involvement, but her current school lack parental involvement. Priscilla expressed that there is a lack of parental involvement at her current school, which contributes to her burnout. She shared that she has challenging families who are not supportive and unwilling to adjust to support their child at school.

Participant 5: Princess

Princess has 22 years of experience teaching, with 14 being in Title I suburban schools, and the other 8 years in urban schools. She has experiences teaching various grades and working with struggling students. She doesn't believe there is a difference between urban and suburban in terms of the population and the students she serves. However, she feels teachers in Title I schools work the hardest and they have resources, but some may not be useful resources. She also believes students are more challenging due to them not coming with the background knowledge needed but it can be rewarding. She has explored other careers and different things, but she continues to come back to the teaching profession. Princess shared one word, "workload" as her way to describe her burnout.

Participant 6: Sherly

Sherly, a fourth-year teacher at this site, began her career 4 years ago at a suburban elementary school. She has the least teaching experience of all the participants. She recently just earned a graduate degree and immediately started pursuing another one. She describes her responsibilities as a teacher who provides a positive environment for her students and making sure that they gain the knowledge and information that they need to move on to the next grade. Sherly is currently experiencing burnout. She shares her frustrations are with administrators, student behavior, and workload.

Participant 7: Barbara

Barbara has 12 years of teaching experience, with 4 being in a Title I suburban school. Her background is in special education. She has experiences working as a collaborative teacher for various grade levels. She believes her role is to support general education teachers with students who have challenges emotionally, academically, and socially. Barbara has experience working with children who have academic issues, but also issues with their home lives. Barbara has experienced burnout in the past and is currently at a burnout stage. Barbara shares lack of parental support, workload, and behavior problems in the classroom at her local school as a part of the problem.

Participant 8: Blue

Blue has 10 years teaching experience teaching primary and intermediate grades at Title I schools. She views her responsibilities as taking care of everything that happens in the classroom and making sure everyone on her team is communicating. Blue indicated that she currently does not feel burned out but previously experienced burnout. Blue shared teachers who are burned out usually does not have a passion for teaching. She also shared those teachers with negative attitudes are the ones who she experienced being burnout.

Participant 9: Angel

Angel is young in her teaching career with 5 years of teaching experience. She feels as if she wears different hats. She views her responsibilities as teaching grade level curriculum, teaching students social emotional learning, and addressing their needs including but not limited to being hungry, not ready to learn, or needing someone to talk to. She has a rewarding feeling when she makes a difference with kids in Title I schools. She believes at other schools; they are probably going to succeed regardless because their parents are putting them into tutoring and

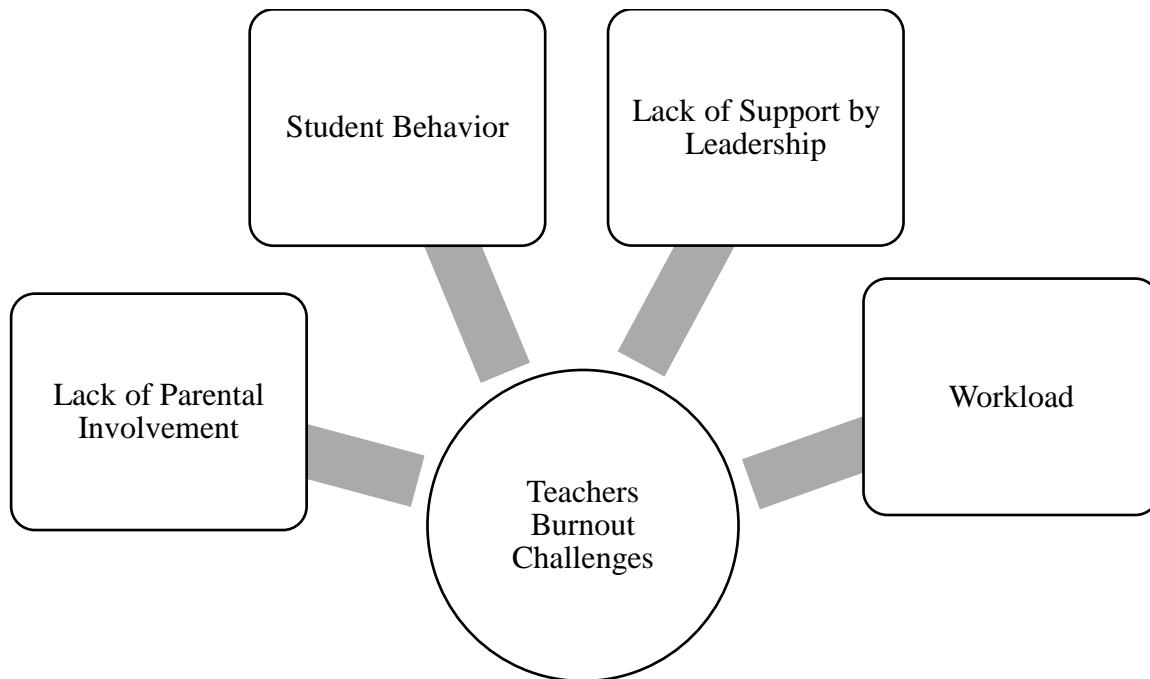
extracurricular activities. Angel shared teachers are burned out due to being overworked and stressed due to the duties being assigned to them.

Participant 10: John

John has 11 years of teaching experience in a Title I suburban elementary school. John revealed at the beginning of the study, he was not burned out, but changed his thoughts during the focus group. John believes his main role is to instruct students, help administrators, and fill in gaps where it is needed. John enjoys working at a Title I school. He realized that it reminds him of the school settings in which he grew up. He did not have black male teachers growing up and believe there are benefits of having a positive black male teacher in elementary schools. He is happy that he can be a part of that and is motivated to teach in the environment in which he teaches in. John feels like burnout is a part of the job and teachers must control how much it affects them. John shared that in Title I schools funding, administrators not doing what is needed adds to burnout, and less parental involvement are reasons for feeling burnout.

Emergent Themes

An analysis of the participants' interviews, journals, and focus group revealed common themes in the causes of teacher burnout, manifestation of teacher burnout, and support with managing teacher burnout. Below is a description of these commonalities. Based on research question 1, several themes emerged regarding the reasons that contributed to the participants feelings of occupational burnout: Workload, Student Behavior, Lack of Support by Leadership, and Lack of Parental Involvement. Based on research question 2, several themes emerged: Emotional Effects, Mental Effects, and Physical Effects. Based on research question 3, several themes emerged: Administrative Support, County Level Support, and Coaches Support. In the next section, the findings of this study are arranged by the research questions.

Figure 3*Teachers' Burnout Challenges*

Research Question 1: *In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school describe the reasons for feeling occupational burnout?*

The purpose of this question was to determine how the participants identify the causes for feeling occupational burnout at their school. From the data collected and analyzed, themes emerged such as *Workload, Student Behavior Problems, Lack of Support by Leadership, and Lack of Parental Involvement.*

Theme 1: Workload

According to Ganster & Rosen (2013), workload is interconnected with many psychological problems; burnout is among one of them. In their journals and interviews, seven participants reported that workload is a reason for feeling burnout. Participants viewed workload as collecting data for Response to Intervention, working on Special Education goals, writing initiatives and grants, implementing new initiatives, paperwork, team planning, providing

physical assistance to special education students, and differentiating assignments and assessments. They also shared that they do not have the necessary resources and materials needed for their workload.

At Title I schools, many of the children are failing or most at risk of failing, funds are given so teachers can provide extra instruction in content areas, extend, and reinforce the regular school curriculum (U.S Department of Education, 2018). However, Princess shared that her school does have a lot of resources, but most of them are not useful and funds were not used in an effective manner. Princess is still expected to provide intervention strategies and remedial work to her students. In her interview, she stated, "Students in Title I schools are more challenging, because they don't come with a background and schema, so you have to build that and work really hard." This shows that Princess must spend time building students' prior knowledge and skills before proceeding with the instruction.

As noted in the literature, teachers perceive that they are simultaneously and continuously facing new developmental tasks in the form of ongoing school reforms and educational innovations. This means less time to perform increased amount of work (Rasanen et al., 2020). The findings shows that teachers are expected to complete many tasks, but not enough time is given to be attentive to them all with the additional workload responsibilities. During the interviews, two of the participants professed that they are more than just a teacher at their Title I suburban school. Title I teachers are expected to provide supplemental assistance to children who face unique educational barriers, including children who come from families with low literacy, the children of migrant agricultural workers, and children who are neglected or delinquent (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The findings showed that not only are teachers having to teach, but they are dealing with the need to work with

students who may be struggling in other areas due to their socioeconomic status. Barbara said “Teachers are counselors and everything else. There are so many things on your shoulders, things that you have to do other than just teach these kids.” She then shared, “They come with a lot more problems probably more than your average school and the lack of parental support and especially special education kids.” Sherly shared “The new initiatives enforced by the district, most of my students are Early Intervention students {struggling} or has an Individualized Education Plan, and I am still responsible for finding time in the day to teach them and catch them up on any content missed when they are pulled out of class.” The participants are engaging in many roles on a daily basis.

In the interviews, participants were asked how they would categorize or describe their roles and responsibilities as a teacher. Flame responded “This year my students are in wheelchairs. I have to lift them up to place them on a table to change their diapers and they're non-verbal. I also have to administer medicine daily.” Teachers are expected to act as social workers, healthcare providers, and parents while educating children in various content areas, technology, and the global community (Garcia-Arroyo et al., 2019). From the data gathered, teachers' workloads are not limited to paperwork and teaching.

In the teaching profession, as noted by Jomuad et al., (2021), the teaching profession involves taking part in many jobs demands that connects with a heavy workload, such as multiple meetings, paperwork, constant reforms and changes, and additional work tasks. This was the beginning to the teacher's workload challenges as they are expected to attend special education meetings, complete individualized paperwork, and find time to give grades to students who they did not serve throughout the school day. But more so, the workload that came with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data collection for this study began during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the variant began to spread, school closures started to take place. During this part of the study, the participants suffered a lot of changes in their school building and school district. The findings from the journal responses found that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted teachers' workload. As the literature stated, due to the COVID-19 lockdowns all over the world, society has had to face significant challenges, which inevitably affected the educational field, with undesirable effects for teachers working remotely (Panisoara et al., 2020). Teachers in this study were not only working remotely, but they were also teaching in the building at the same time. Sherly shared,

Due to the result of COVID, "Students were just coming back to school fully face to face and unfortunately their overall motivation, productivity, and readiness to learn had plummeted. Despite my efforts, my students were not grasping the content I was teaching nor were they performing well on assessments, both in my classroom and school wide.

COVID-19 placed teachers in the position to not only have to teach virtually and in person, but also find ways to increase student motivation and productivity. As the literature noted, Teachers had to adapt to different scenarios in education such as access to the Internet, personal digital skills, student's digital skills, adapting the curriculum to virtual education and choosing the appropriate contents that could be modified for online learning, and the necessary devices needed (Salceanu & Calin, 2021). Barbara shared that she felt as if she was hanging on by a rope trying to make it through the challenges that COVID-19 has brought to her. For example, she stated, "It was difficult meeting with my special education students virtually and not being able to give them hands on instruction." This most certainly increased teachers' workload because they are having to think outside of the box of how to meet their kids needs

virtually and in-person, simultaneously as well. The literature noted, school leaders commonly expressed significant concerns on teacher mental health and workload and worsening teacher shortage in the COVID-19 context (Carver-Thomas et al., 2021). The statement coincides with the participants responses regarding the impact of COVID-19 on their workload.

Theme 2: Student Behavior Problems

When asked how well they deal effectively with students' behavior, three participants responded in the focus group. Priscilla shared "I am burned out dealing with behavior issues. I want to use my time to prepare my students..... and not spend so much time, effort, and energy in getting students to walk quietly in the halls, interact appropriately, demonstrate personal and collective responsibility." The literature noted, teachers with high levels of burnout tend to have more student problem behaviors and lower teaching effectiveness (Wong et al., 2017). The participants are bringing light to if they are spending time dealing with behaviors, they are unable to meet the academic needs of their students, which leads to them feeling ineffective.

Flame shared, "I recently was the Emotional Behavior teacher, and I was burned out because my kids were aggressive, impulsive, verbal, and physical. This caused me to have a lot of push backs." Angel shared, "I get annoyed with my students, and I start getting frustrated with behaviors that I have overlooked for a while." As the literature noted, teachers are interested in good work that benefits students, communities, and the profession, and they become frustrated when they cannot do so (Santoro, 2019). The participants want to do well and engage in being effective, but when student behavior problems arise it is difficult for them to focus on what their purpose is, which is teaching.

Theme 3: Lack of Support by Leadership

In their journals and focus group, when describing what contributes to their stress and/or burnout, the participants exclaimed “a lack of support by leadership!” Priscilla states, “Feelings of frustration, anger and disappointment is evident when administration is not as supportive, and some kids get away more rope than others.” This shows that not only is student behavior a problem, but when it involves a lack of leadership supporting teachers, the emotions of teachers begin to rise. The literature states, burnout is defined as “exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation due to prolonged stress or frustration (Merriam-Webster, 2021). This highlights how a lack of support that teachers do not receive, not only leads to burnout but added stress. Sherly shares her frustration regarding administrators, “they are taking away planning times at times and being asked to stay after school, which leads to me having to take work home to complete it or find time during the day and it adds to my burnout.” Barbara also noted, “there is a lack of communication between administration and teachers, and not given enough time to get the professional development that is needed.” Angel resonated with what Barbara discussed. She stated, “teachers are also burned out due to not have professional development on self-care.” As the literature noted, school leadership is important for helping a school building reach its highest potential of goals to increase student achievement and learning and not only what that teacher does inside that school, but how that teacher leader works with the larger community to drive engagement and support for school goals and increasing youth success (Director et al., 2014). This shows in the findings that if teachers are not healthy and not receiving the support needed, it is difficult for them to perform for their students due to the increase in stress.

During the focus group, participants were asked what they think contributes to them feeling stressed or overwhelmed in your profession. All participants apart from Sherly and John responded to this question. Ginger quoted, “I think the word is at the center of the leadership

appearing to not care". Stormy specified "Administrators not being apathetic and showing a general disinterest is a concern." Principal support is viewed as one of the most promising explanatory constructs with respect to teachers' occupational well-being (Sliskovic et al., 2019). This highlights the importance of leadership ensuring teachers' work needs are met or addressed. Priscilla stated there is an inconsistency in leadership when dealing with situations. She voiced specifically, "For example, in certain situations, its handled in one way. A similar situation might be handled different, so it is hard to know what the expectation is and how things will be handled from one thing to the next." Blue revealed that when her voice is not being heard from administrators, she feels a sense of discouragement.

Theme 4: Lack of Parental Involvement

Title I schools are required to have a parent involvement policy with a plan for parent and school collaboration to promote student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In the journal responses, 6 teacher participants reported lack of parent support were a part of their burnout reasons. Flame shared "Helicopter parents! I am constantly under a microscope when it comes to the care of these students." Angel shared the lack of parental support when trying to get students evaluated or for them to show up at meetings is extreme. She stated "Sometimes, it is as little as them not signing and returning a letter." According to Gross (2020), parent involvement is highlighted as a core component of US education policy because of its centrality in promoting children's academic success. The findings show the importance of parental support.

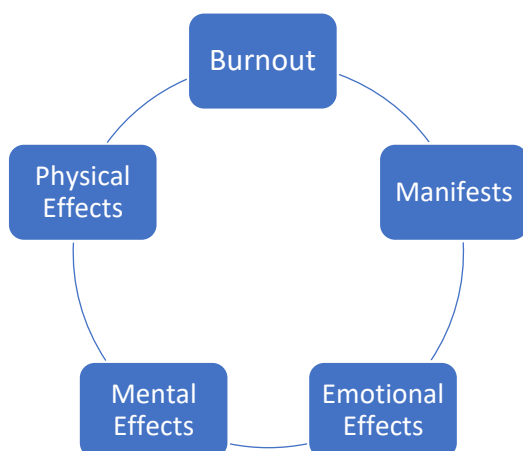
Lack of parent support is connected to positive teacher-parent communication. If parents are not being active participants, teachers do not feel the support needed to be successful. Priscilla shared, "some of my families this year are completely against hearing any feedback which does not describe their child as an angel." John shared, "assuming a parent would be

difficult in a meeting and the parent ends up being receptive is a good feeling, but that's not always the case." Teachers need parents as its two-way communication for the better of the students.

Teacher leaders are responsible for building positive relationships with families. Families want to feel accepted and supported. Getting parents involved and finding ways that allow them to demonstrate their strengths will play a role in creating positive relationships. As aligned with teacher leadership standard 6 drafted by the Leadership Exploratory Consortium (National Education Association, 2020), teacher leaders work with colleagues to promote ongoing systematic collaboration with families, community members, and other stakeholders to improve the educational system and develop opportunities for student learning. Teacher leaders can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement (Georgia Department of Education, 2022). The role of support for Parent and Family engagement that can be offered by teacher leaders are engaging and empowering parents, as well as other stakeholders to become active participants in their children's success.

Figure 4

Emergent Themes Manifestations



Research Question 2: *How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools?*

The purpose of this question was to determine how the participants burnout experiences manifest into the three burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). From the data collected and analyzed, themes such as *Emotionally Effects, Mental Effects, and Physical Effects* emerged.

Theme 1: Emotional Effects

Maslach and Jackson Maslach (1982) declared burnout is a syndrome represented by three dimensions. Emotional exhaustion is the aspect of burnout that correlates with feeling stressed, fatigued, and overwhelmed. It is predicted by stressors involving work overload, insufficient use of skills, and unable to engage with people (Maslach, 2016). As the literature stated, emotional exhaustion refers to the stress dimension of burnout and is defined as a loss of energy (Akin, 2019). After attending the focus group, in journal # 4, participants were asked to respond to which burnout dimension they resonate with and their reasoning behind thinking so. Emotional effects that were spoken of were anxiety, sadness, anger, and depression. Ginger responded "I feel as if I am drowning and there is no relief. Most nights I get 5 hours of sleep. I am literally running on fumes." Stormy then shared, "I have multiple days at work that were emotional for me that leads to me having meltdowns out of nowhere and unable to pin-point the cause." Sherly shared an intense moment that occurred this school year,

One morning before I even stepped foot in the school building, I immediately felt the stress of the how the day was going I tried to suck it up and put on a "strong" face for my students and the hopes of having a good productive day. However, that was short

lived. As soon I entered my classroom and sat at my desk the magnitude of everything, I was feeling over the past few months began to feel so heavy. Before I knew what hit me, I was having a full-on anxiety attack. I rushed out my room, so my students wouldn't witness my now visible burnout. I was met with my colleagues and assistant principal trying to calm me down. My assistant principal insisted I go home and take care of myself even though I fought to stay. This was an unfortunate experience and as much as I would like to say it won't happen again, I know that I will continue to experience burnout working at a Title-1 school. It's almost inevitable.

The literature noted, teachers are responsible for preparing the coming generations to face different challenges; however, teachers' psychological well-being needs to be prioritized and maintained before dealing with other challenges in the education world (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The findings show, if teachers are experiencing challenges that are leading to them experiencing emotional effects, such as anxiety, it is hard for them to perform expected teaching duties. Stormy shared, "When I am near feeling of burnout, I get super emotional. Things that should not affect me may make me burst into tears. I want to just hang out in the bed and its usually due to a high level of stress." Barbara associated her burnout with emotional and physical pain. She shared, "In all honesty because of this overload, I felt like I was not truly meeting the needs of my students. I had to see a therapist because I began to feel extremely depressed and unmotivated." Barbara shared,

I have break down ins class, and "It has to be some type of balance, I guess even for myself. And it's so hard because you're a teacher not just for the job but you are emotionally invested. You can't turn your emotions off. When do you say? I have done

everything and given my all to this child, and it's okay. I can't do that. I cannot say that. I cannot. And I go home, and I struggle....

Barbara started crying and was unable to finish sharing her thoughts. She broke down as other participants provided her with tissues. She followed up with saying, "I feel like it is my job, and I do not know what to do. I literally do not know what to do." This moment of the focus group showed and confirmed from the literature that teachers experience breakdowns that lead to them feeling inadequate.

Theme 2: Mental Effects

Mental effects were defined as the psychological and social well-being of an individual. Participants referenced in their journals how their thoughts, feelings, and actions were affected. Ginger, Stormy, Angel, Sherly, John, Flame, Barbara, Blue, and Priscilla all expressed there are times they think they are ineffective. Stormy shared, "This discussion and reflection made me realize and think what I am doing. I am more aware that there are days that I am ineffective." Blue shared, "I am good with reaching kids social emotional needs, but not academically in this work environment." Reduced personal accomplishment is in which individuals are feeling insufficient and ineffective with their performance (Maslach, 2016). This shows in the findings that when teachers are feeling ineffective, their performance declines because mentally they feel as if they are incapable of meeting their instructional needs and their students. Teachers care about understanding and improving their practice, with the goal of impacting student learning (Butler & Kay, 2021). They want to do well by meeting their student's needs, but they feel as if there are so many obstacles beyond their control that hinders them from staying focused and motivated. Princess shared, "My fervent efforts I displayed was never enough and went unrecognized in moments that really matter the most to me." Barbara further elaborated in her

journal about her experiences that made her feel insufficient regarding her inability to handle her teaching duties. Barbara stated,

No matter how much time I put into planning, providing instruction and remediation/small group, I still feel ineffective. I feel like there must be something I am not doing to meet their needs. I leave work feeling like a total failure especially when I am not seeing enough improvement with student performance.

Flame shared, "Teaching is something I am dedicated to, but when I am at a burnout point, I do not feel like I am giving my all to my students." As noted in the literature, when teachers can no longer see the value in their work because they are causing harm to students, they become demoralized (Santora, 2019). This highlights that if teachers are burned out and unable to meet their students' academic and social needs, they start to think they are not worthy enough for the job. Flame shares,

I kind of feel like that I have lost my fire. Not to say that I am not capable not to say that I do not want my kids to have the best but just the day-to-day mundane. Its tiring. It feels like I am experiencing several battles. At one time, I am battling to make sure that I create that safe environment. I am battling to make sure that my kids get exactly what they need.

As stated in the literature, when teachers are demoralized, it is to acknowledge that they remain passionate and energetic and would love to be given opportunities to teach in ways that are fair and good (Santoro, 2019). In the findings, the participants acknowledge that they want the best for their students, but it is a constant battle for them. Stormy shared "When the duties of being a teacher override your mindset to do well and you begin to say to yourself that you can't do all of this, leads to burnout." This is a feeling of reduced personal accomplishment that leads

to the feeling of demoralization which occurs when teachers feel frustrated, tired, detached, dehumanized, cynical, and a sense of low fulfilment to the job (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2016).

This shows in the findings that when participants are experiencing the mental effects of burnout, they are not giving lessons and doing things the way they want to with their students because they are mentally detached from the work. It leads to the inability to perform at the level in which one should be performing.

As Ginger shared, "You are late because you don't want to be here or maybe early but either way, it's like you start to feel stagnant." As Santoro (2019) noted, when teachers can access what makes their work good, then they are often able to keep going. This highlights that when teachers can self-reflect on their struggles, they are willing to think about ways to improve to keep them motivated to continue striving for the best for themselves as well as their students. Sherly believes burnout leads to when you are mentally tired, and your motivation is not where it should be. She states, "It manifests into doing the bare minimum and just enough to get by and maintain sanity." She goes on to say, "There are many days that she wants to quit and thinks about what else can she do in the education field." According to John after listening to other participants and reflecting on his initial interview, his opinion changed in the focus group. In the beginning, he did not feel as if he was burned out because he did not associate being stagnant with burn out. He further shared, "I can admit I am stagnant had mental conversations with myself about what are you about to do next, you know your problems, but are you going to continue doing the same thing." This highlights that burnout is a mental condition because although John was not experiencing physical burnout, mentally he was affected.

Theme 3: Physical Effects

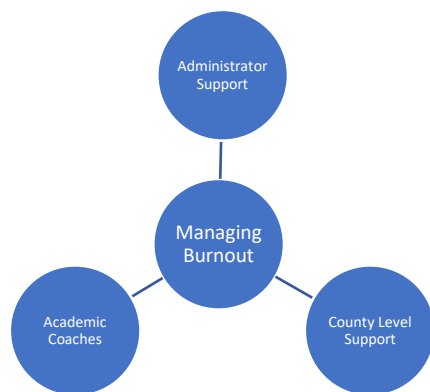
Physical effects were defined as an adverse effect on one's body. Four participants made references to how burnout impacted them physically. According to (Brunsting et al., 2014), Burnout can have long-term negative impacts on individuals and organizations, and teachers who experience high levels of burnout are more at risk for physical and mental health problems. The findings showed that the impact of being burned out leads to participants experiencing not only mental problems, but physical.

When Priscilla was asked how she realizes when she is getting near to feelings of burnout, she shared, "Sometimes my body tells me I am at the point of burnout because I have low energy and have even gotten extremely sick." Barbara shared she experienced physical pain and trauma. She stated, "I spent thousands of dollars on medical testing such as MRI, CAT scans, and blood work because of severe headaches and my blood pressure was extremely high and I needed to seek medical attention immediately." Barbara was put on medical leave by her physician for the rest of the academic school year. She further shared, "Unfortunately, my burnout had caused such a traumatic experience I was diagnosed with PTSD and unable to take the assignment. After three years of extensive therapy, I was finally able to return to teaching." Too much pressure at the job would lead to burnout due to the inability to handle the demands from work (Jomuad et al., 2021). As a result of job pressure, the participants were experiencing not only lead to burnout, but it led to them not being to be there for their students, paperwork, and other job responsibilities. Blue shared, "After talking to you in the interview and in my journals, I realized that I am fatigued, and it led to me being unable to engage with people as I am rushing out the door at 2:45 and do not stay to collaborate or plan." With burnout having many different aspects, teachers sometimes do not realize being fatigued is a part of it as confirmed in the literature.

Ginger further discussed the impact of burnout on her ability to sleep. She stated, “When I am getting near burnout, I start to feel stressed and anxious. I typically have a hard time sleeping and eating. I am up late at night and up very early in the morning.” Princess made known, “I realize that I am getting near burnout when I cannot overcome the feeling of fatigue, mental exhaustion, and hopelessness. Also, when the periods of “rest” or vacation don’t seem to combat the aforementioned feelings.” Though feeling burned out and unable to express it all, the participants seemed to be very aware of how burnout impacts them physically.

Figure 5

Emergent Themes Support



Research Question 3: *What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions of burnout?*

The purpose of this question was to identify what specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary school teachers with managing the dimensions of burnout. From the data collected and analyzed, themes such as *Administrative Support*, *County Level Support*, and *Academic Coaches* emerged that assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimension of burnout.

Theme 1: Administrator Support

Lack of administrative support was an emerging theme throughout the journals and focus group. While lack of support by leadership emerged in the interviews, participants focused on administrators throughout their journals. During the focus group, participants were asked about their relationships with other school holders in the building. Stormy shared "School administrators need to have an open-door policy where teachers can talk to them about what they are experiencing." As noted in the literature, in addressing existing shortfalls in support for teachers' psychological needs within a school, school leaders have a potentially vital mechanism to affect the attitudes and emotions of teachers, which precede turnover behavior (Ford et al., 2019). This showed in the findings that if teachers can share their thoughts and feelings, it creates an outlet for them that allows them to have that outlet to refresh themselves. Stormy specified that teachers including herself at the school does not necessarily feel comfortable going to their administrators and telling them she feels stressed out about something related to the job. She shared "I would appreciate if school administrators came into the room and taught a lesson, instead of doing things to do a check off list." She further stated:

I feel like our leaders are checking it off. We are working our tails off to do it. But I do not know that our leaders even care about it. I think they are just checking it out to say to the district they did it. So, we internalize it you do not care. You know, you do not really care about this.

Students should be able to meet challenging state academic standards. For this to occur, teachers are expected to provide and carry out interventions that will better assist students. If their leaders in the school building are not taking pride into what is needed for the teaching and learning process to be effective, then as Stormy shared, it shows that its not a collaborative effort.

As Sliskovic et al., (2019), reciprocal support among teachers and school principal in which they play an active part in school managing and decision-making makes teachers more fulfilled. The support includes but not limited to assessments and making appropriate decisions. The teacher leader shares this knowledge and collaborates with colleagues to use assessment and other data to make informed decisions that improve learning for all students and to inform school and district improvement strategies (National Education Association, 2020). Participants shared the need for school leaders getting involved with the assessment process. Stormy felt administrators could add value to the assessment process. Teachers are still accountable for standardized testing for economically and disadvantaged students (Adler-Green, 2019). She believes that as teachers and school leaders enough time is not allotted to dig deep into assessments and get value from it. She shared,

We do not allow enough time for real risk to get real value from it. Like we take it. We look at it, we move on because there is a whole another test coming up. Can we just look at all the grade level and say, Hey, these are the areas we need to work on. I do think the data when it is in the comparison can really lead to frustration and burnout.

While participants are aware that assessments are a part of their work, they expressed the need for needing administrators to put more value on them if they are held accountable for them.

In the journal responses, Barbara and Sherly reported that the lack of administrative support contributes to their burnout. Sherly specified, "Having to deal with problems in the classroom without administrative support can cause little motivation to do anything." As noted in the literature, Administrators' specific practices that alleviate burnout include being trustful, allowing collaborative decision-making, communicating, having empathy, and making the mission and vision for the school clear (Haydon et al., 2018). Teachers need administrators to be

empathetic when they are dealing with challenges within the school day as it can cause teachers to feel as if they do not serve a purpose at their workplace, as shown in the findings. Barbara further added, "I feel that if I had the administrative support I needed, it would not have led to a loss of motivation and depression. They were not assisting me with the 27 students I had on my caseload although I cried out for help." Angel voiced, "I observed a colleague anxiety increase due to lack of administrative support and not having an outlet to reset." This is highlighted in the literature that teachers need administrative support when attempting to manage their burnout.

School leaders are important stakeholders in helping teachers receive the resources they need to successfully navigate the high stress teaching profession. As acknowledged in the literature, principals' leadership practices lay a foundation for teachers' personal resources and outcomes at work (Collie, 2021). Principals' leadership practices are also evident in the findings of this study as what is important when referring to administrative support. Administrators must be able to lead in a way that is cohesive for their teachers. Ginger shares, "teachers are not in the best position for teams and things where they can share the responsibility and the changes starts at the top of the administration." She wants administrators to make sure that they are building cohesive collaborative teams for professional learning, as well as grade level teams. As the literature stated, increased support from the administration was associated with less overall teacher burnout and a greater sense of attachment to students (Huk et al., 2019). The literature and the participants responses highlight if administrators are putting structure and expectations in place, instead of teachers having to figure it all out on their own, teachers could benefit from positive teacher-administrator relationship that will promote better relationships with their students and protect their well-being.

Occupational burnout literature notes that teacher's well-being can be positively developed by contextual factors such as a supportive school culture and collegial relationships (Jennings & Greenberg's, 2009). Priscilla suggested that administrators stand on what they say regarding a particular issue, instead of going back and changing it later in reference to student discipline and teacher accountability. For example, administrators may state a consequence for a student, then as the day continues, they change it. Furthermore, she shared, "School leaders should stop providing things just to do it, rather than providing solutions or some alternative outcomes for teachers." As noted in the literature, administrators must protect, support, and give teachers confidence to succeed by providing them with mentors, providing tools to manage a classroom, and supporting their well-being (Whitaker et al., 2019). The findings in this literature highlights the teachers need for meaningful solutions, strategies, and tools that supports their burnout along with their individual well-being. For instance, Priscilla stated, "There are opportunities for school chat, professional development, and random sessions but I feel like it's just lip service and the things are more theatrics and for show." Princess shares "Everything else that is taken place in schools such as initiatives and professional development are beyond teacher's control." She suggests that school leaders be empathetic and compassionate. Princess further elaborated and shared:

Administrators need to understand the balance between understanding and supporting but also knowing that there is a job that needs to be done and for them to also find their individual niche and how to deal with certain situations and scenarios to where the teacher feel support.

In a collaborative school culture, teachers' satisfaction not only increases but can result in better student achievement as shared in the findings. According to Akinyemi et al., (2019),

teachers appear to be more satisfied in a collaborative school system (including mutual support among teachers and school principals. Princess response shows that a collaborative school system is what is needed. Blue shared “I want to continue to be happy in this profession and continue to make a positive impact on the lives of my students. I want a school with a positive culture, collaborative staff, and empathetic administration.” Barbara goes on to share, “Administrators have the power to create and offer more professional development and stress management, self-care things that can help teachers in the field better take care of themselves.” John suggested that “Administrators create staff morale booster activities. For example, buying lunch, offering early in, early out, and late in passes could potentially boost the morale of everyone in the building.” During the focus group, Stormy shared that “I don’t feel as if stakeholder collaboration is cultivated enough by administration.” The findings shows that when there is a positive culture, collaborative staff with an empathetic administration, not only leads to a better well-being of the teachers but also provides an environment for teachers to have positive interactions with other colleagues and administrators. When one feels affirmed, they feel heard, understood, and believed (Lee, 2018).

The findings in this study show that teachers will thrive and succeed when they feel their administrators has their best interest. As Akin (2019) stated, the issue of burnout is experienced more particularly by employees who are employed in areas of profession which require powerful communication and collaboration. The participants enunciated that they never took the time out to communicate or collaborate with their peers and was not aware individuals in the building with them were experiencing what they shared. They stated being able to engage in intense conversations in an effective manner was conducive to them. Barbara shared “I think it would be

beneficial if we came together as a staff, then have these conversations like we're having now, you know, but we don't get the opportunity to do that.”

In the focus group, the participants discussed and elaborated in-depth regarding their work environment. Ginger described her work environment as hostile, and it is a losing battle daily. Although she shared that she loves the people that she works with, she feels that we can benefit from having a different leadership to help with the environment. She discussed, “Its hostile not only for academic reasons, but for personal reasons because stuff [is] being let go and not being handled. They are too busy worried about hurting people feelings.” Stormy giggled after Ginger’s response and stated that she agreed. She feels as if leadership does not want to do things to make it better. She shares, “Teaching is not the same anymore. The top can affect everybody else, and it is a trickle-down effect.” The findings in the study highlights that burnout is a trickle-down effect. If administrators are not supporting teachers, then teachers cannot support students. The word appreciation was quoted by John numerous times. When asked what is appreciation to you? John shared “It’s going up at bat for your teachers.” As noted in the literature, supporting these educators so that they can support students is essential, especially in high-needs, under-resourced schools (Rimm-Kaufman & Jodl, 2020). Priscilla also identified the need for a village. She stated, “Another success is when I have a village of people that I can tap into that can help support my kids, which helps support me.” Blue then shared, “If we do our job together and encourage each other, things will not be as difficult.” The site in which this study was done is a high-needs Title I school, and the findings show that teachers need consistent and active support.

In the focus group, participants were asked how burnout affects students holistically in the teaching and learning process. Barbara shares that it is impossible for teachers to help kids

holistically if teachers are receiving the support in which they need. She shares “Not just giving academic support but looking at maintaining those teachers and keeping them in the field by looking at them holistically. Administrators need to ask, what can you do outside of education or their job as a teacher to help them?”

When support is not readily available at schools, teachers seek other forms of support and find coping mechanisms. As cited in the literature, coping strategies play a critical role in an individual's physical and psychological well-being when faced with challenges, negative events, and stress (Albulescu et al., 2018). Sherly mentions that her current administrators give her jeans day and that does not motivate her but having variations of treatment for burnout is important. She stated, “Just different ways to address it is needed. Not just you know, one cookie cutter way to where this will fix burnout for all teachers or for everybody because I do not feel that that is the case.” This shows that teachers desire healthy coping strategies because not only does it teaches them how to deal with difficult challenges, but it helps them become more resilient. The findings also showed that addressing burnout is not a one size fits all approach and participants are left to determine their own coping mechanisms.

Coping Mechanisms Support

According to Totawar and Nambudiri (2012), depersonalization is described as a defensive coping strategy, where an individual limits one's own involvement with others and creates a psychological distance. Based on the findings, this is what many of the participants are experiencing “just to get by with their days.” However, the coping approaches are temporarily.

Coping mechanisms does not address the research questions specifically, but it was an emerging theme that administrators and school leaders can assist teachers with. After engaging in in-depth conversations, reflective journaling, interviews, and focus group, participants realized

that they had triggers and needed to implement coping mechanisms that they may have not had in place previously before this study. Not only did the participants realize that they need to implement their own coping mechanisms, but they stated that they need school leaders to support them. A variety of coping mechanisms were communicated, as well as their triggers. Flame shared coping mechanisms that have helped manage her burnout. She shared self-reflection, quiet time, classical music, and the lighting. Stormy stated, "Sometimes I need to check out and take off a weekend from grading papers." She is becoming better with leaving schoolwork at school. She discussed the importance of having an outlet like reading, dancing, going out to eat with friends, and staying away from an outlet that's school related. She shared, Zumba, reading, and exercising releases those endorphins and the stress levels are not as high." Furthermore, Ginger expressed the ways she manages her feelings of burnout is venting to teammates, but it does not solve the problem; it makes her feel better. She made it clear, "Venting is good to get things off your chest, but it does not eliminate the stress by any means. It is probably not a great strategy." Ginger expressed that she does not do well with cutting things off at a certain time and needs assistance with that. Priscilla shared that she tries to disassociate and find time to do things that are not work related. Going to the gym, listening to music, going for a walk, and out to dinner with friends allows her to separate from the burnout. She stated, "You know talk to my family, just trying to do something that brings me some kind of joy so that I don't feel so immersed in the feeling of being burned out."

Sherly works out to relieve stress, colors, and watch shows to keep her mind off work. She clearly states, "Work is what burns me out. It stresses me out." The coping mechanisms helps when she is away, but when she returns to the workplace and its environment, it seems as if the mechanisms no longer work. Barbara found it helpful to set out goals and check them off as

she goes. She created boundaries and stopping points, along with taking time for self-care. She mentions that the strategies are not always successful due to the deadlines and constant push for more things to get accomplished. Princess believes in taking time for herself outside of work by traveling, reading, and engaging in relaxation exercises. Being able to have breaks helps as well with her ability to cope through different work-related problems. John has found success with exercising and planning vacations. John does well with separating his work life and physical life. He noted that he does not allow his job to stress him because education is not his life. He further explained that its something that he does to provide for his life. John elaborated by saying ,

I just know me personally I cannot let education take over and consume every bit of time of my day.” So having that type of mentality of leaving my physical life at the front door when I walk in and then leave an education at the front door when I walk out an afternoon is something that helps me from getting burnt out a lot.

Table 3

Summary of Participants Triggers and Coping

Participants	Triggers	Coping/Approaches
John	Behavior Problems; Repetitiveness with close minded parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep busy with other jobs • Gravitate towards receptive parents
Angel	Unfocused students; new students; making copies; testing; behavior problems; collecting RTI data; and lack of sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counting down to weekend • Chocolate • Exercise • Collaborative with colleagues • Behavior incentives • Morning meetings
Blue	Testing; students unprepared, observations, initiatives; commute to work; pulls out from support teachers (Early Intervention, Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counting down to weekend • Having library time • Paraprofessional assistance

	Development, and Special Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor lessons • Recess • Silence phone at 3 pm • Having collaboration
Ginger	Graduate school; work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being with friends • Cooking
Priscilla	Graduate school; work environment; student behavior, parent complaints; numerous school disruptions (unorganized picture day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise
Sherly	Unfocused students; not being appreciated; not having principal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Meditation
Barbara	Brain overwhelmed; meetings; initiatives; professional developments not meaningful; hanging on by a thread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running out at 2:30
Flame	Overwhelmed with tasks, information overload, changing pampers; pandemic protocols; special ed paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise
Stormy	Teaching them variety of technology tools with no support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping • Zumba
Princess	Student behavior; Student frustration with technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for students specifically behaving, doing their work, and paying attention

Theme 2: County Level Support

Throughout the focus group, when asked about what contributes to their feeling of stress, burnout, or overwhelmingness, a few participants quoted the lack of training for the job they are expected to do, and it increased their burnout. Research states, training to prevent teacher burnout plays a protective role and improves teachers' work life's psychosocial environment and health (Poza-Rico, 2020). Flame revealed,

Its sometimes the little things. Its admin and the county of special ed, everything is outnumbered. And I have been losing ground in the last three years. I have signed up for one thing. I did that for three years, but I have just been frustrated. This year especially I am in an area that I have never been in. And there are very high expectations, with no guidance.

If teachers are on their own without direction or leadership, then their thoughts, behaviors, and health are impacted. Barbara shared, "It can sometimes the lack of training when you are put into those positions that Flame referenced to regarding not receiving the tools needed to do the job and protect our well-being." Ginger shared, "They don't have an understanding of what everyone does and how much work it takes for things to run smoothly." As noted in the literature, support is needed to adapt to the changes such as educational reforms, daily procedure, high number of duties and tasks, and high level of accountability that potentially affect teachers' well-being (Slišković et al., 2019). The findings illustrate a picture of what teachers are experiencing daily with educational changes, accountability, and increase number of responsibilities. Flame shares that not receiving the necessary materials needed including but not limited to school equipment, markers, and the type of buses that we use for fieldtrips does not look like the non-title I schools buses. Flame shares,

I am physically doing a lot of work by picking up my students and moving them from one place to another. I visited another school across town [non-Title] and teachers did not have to physically do that. They were provided with the tools needed to lift kids and everything was done electronically. I am always fending for myself [doing things without any assistance given] and having to use my personal money, which all leads to my burnout. A stipend would be useful to purchase necessary materials.

As noted in the literature, students from Title I schools tend to bring specific challenges, such as learning disabilities, low academic functioning, poverty, and lack of parental involvement, which can bring challenges for teachers (Solomon & Lambie, 2020). The participants in this study are aware of the challenges Title I schools brings, but that does not take away the need for support. Flame finds herself in situations trying to keep up with the work demands. As stated in the literature, teachers who chronically find themselves unable to keep up with the demands of the teaching profession losing end of the demand/resource equation are the most vulnerable to stress and most at risk for lowered job satisfaction, greater burnout, and lowered occupational commitment (Fitchett et al., 2015). Flame reiterates that its above her current administrator, and special education administrator. There are higher ups [bosses of current administrators and area superintendents] that can be instrumental and making a difference. She suggested having a sit-down conversation about her concerns and good things that are going on in Title I schools. She wants someone to listen to her and take her seriously. She does not want someone sitting behind a desk and assuming what her job consists of, instead of asking and coming in to find out. The county level individuals [area superintendents, county level superintendents, leadership team departments] are the ones who have the power to make changes. Flame mentions "The county people are not in the trenches. I may see them once a year with a camera behind them." This shows that county level support is not there. They are not concerned about what teachers are not concerned about what teachers are doing to make these kids successful.

Teachers want the support not eyes watching them. Blue goes on to share "County level has the ultimate control of limiting professional learning that's repetitive and done to check off a box." Teachers want meaningful professional learning. Angel shares "Professional development

on curriculum is offered but not enough on how teachers should take care of themselves and manage their time.” In the journals, participants were asked about what is holding them back from a goal that they want to achieve and what specific supports are needed to reach their goal. Flame shares “I want the county to understand that I want my voice heard at times when it relates to my job description and my students.” Barbara shared, “I am not sure what is holding me back. I think I need to seek professional counseling services to dig deeper as to why I feel this way. Unfortunately, the services provided by the district are limited in scope.” From the responses provided by the participants, it shows that a few teachers could benefit from additional support in the areas of counseling services, meaningful professional learning, and tools needed to meet their students with disabilities.

Theme 3: Coaches Support

During the interviews, journals, and focus group, a few participants revealed the need for coaches' support. According to Callaghan (2022), Coaching and mentoring approach allows for reflection, improved mutual understanding and individual empowerment. In the findings, participants shared the benefits of having coaching support and the need to have it when it comes to the impact on their instruction, well-being, and relationships with students. Sherly stated, “Having that push and encouragement from coaches can ease that burden and give us the momentum that we need to keep going.” Ginger shared, “There needs to be a culture of coaching in the building. Everybody needs a coach, even me.” While Ginger is a coach, the findings showed that she can benefit from mentoring and coaching as well. It allows her to be more reflective and have more of an impact with the teachers she works with. John stated, “One goal I would like to accomplish is becoming a stronger reading teacher. The support I need is for me to

light the fire and shake up the way I do things.” This shows that mentoring and coaching can be a positive impact.

Teacher leaders support colleagues ‘individual and collective reflection and professional growth by serving in roles such as mentor, coach, and content facilitator (National Education Association, 2020). The findings highlight, coaches can do so when collaborating with other colleagues. Priscilla shared in her journal, “I would like to eventually transition into Coaching. This year has made me reconsider coaching because I have struggled so much. I needed my own regular coaching to figure out ways to meet the needs of my students.” This showed that although she wanted to coach, her confidence in her ability deflated and she realized she needs a coach. As the literature noted, the end goal of teacher–coach collaborations are the implementation of instruction that results in improved student learning (L’Allier et al., 2021). Priscilla concluded support from coaches are beneficial to her well-being and success as a teacher.

Summary

According to the Teacher Leader Model Standards (2008), teacher leadership is defined as the process by which teachers influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement. Based on my findings, it supported the literature that teachers are burned out for various reasons, and they need support. However, the findings added to the literature that county level support is needed in equivalence to administrative support. Academic coaches are also needed for one-on-one coaching. The participants identified how some students’ behaviors added to their burnout and triggered reactions. The participants also recognized how their burnout led to a detachment from their work and students. Furthermore, participants shared

the need for needing administrative, county level, and academic support. Thus, school and district leaders would recognize the need for advocating for student learning and the profession by providing more professional development for all stakeholders and mentoring and coaching. The participants culminated this study by advocating for suburban teachers and teacher leaders by promoting and encouraging a collaborative and shared leadership environment.

The purpose of this chapter was to report and present the findings of teacher experiences with occupational burnout in Title I suburban schools. The data collected was from the ten participants from their interviews, reflective journals, and focus group. All data collection were analyzed, color coded, and categorized. The data collection findings for the study focused on teacher experiences with burnout, how it manifested, and the support in which they need from school leaders. Three research questions were utilized to guide this qualitative study. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, themes emerged: Workload, Student Behavior, Lack of Support by Leadership, Lack of Parental Involvement, Emotional Effects, Physical Effects, Mental Effects, Administrative Support, County Level Support, and Academic Coaches Support. Workload, Student Behavior, Lack of Support by Leadership, and Lack of Parental Involvement focused on the reasons for feeling and experiencing occupational burnout at Fame Elementary School. Participants shared several things that contribute to their increase workload with COVID-19 being a huge contribution to it. Emotional Effects, Physical Effects, and Mental Effects described the way that occupational burnout manifest in three burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment). Participants shared several instances where they were experiencing all effects at once, but more emphasis was placed on the emotional and physical aspect. Administrative Support, County Level Support, and Academic Coaches Support shed light on to the specific supports that are needed to assist

teachers at Fame Elementary School with managing the dimensions of burnout. The participants responses were more focused on administrative support being needed. They shared several instances where they felt their administrators were not there for them and they needed them. The findings also revealed that teachers identify well with coping mechanisms and collaborated practices with other teachers were deemed as necessary and successful. Other approaches were exercising, self-care days, and traveling. Furthermore, the participants felt that their burnout not only negatively impacted their health, but also their success with their students, personal lives, and their ability to remain in the profession. Based on the findings, participants have commonalities with their burnout experiences, however there is not solely one reason for feeling burnout. The study's findings also showed that there is not a one size fits all approach to what participants need from school leaders. By providing the ten participants time to share their experiences, as well as their perspectives, they were able to shed light into their occupational burnout experience at Fame Elementary School.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Many reasons exist for Title I suburban elementary school teachers experiencing occupational burnout. As referenced in the literature, research shows that professional burnout and professional satisfaction have a significant impact on choosing a teaching profession and teachers' career development (Tutly et al., 2021). The workload, lack of administrative support, and lack of coping mechanisms are becoming more prominent (Chan et al., 2021). The occupational burnout experiences teachers face not only weakens teachers' ability to be effective but leads to them questioning whether they belong in the teaching profession and often counting down the days until holiday breaks and retirement. Research studies focused on professional burnout as related to job demands-resources, personal resources, safety, social support from supervisors and colleagues (Stelmokienė et al., 2019; Bondarchuk et al., 2015; Pavlidou et al., 2020; Aydoğmuş & Tukul 2019), Urban teachers' experiences with burnout were discovered as related to their mental health, occupational functioning, and alarming rates of attrition (Camacho et al., 2021), Principal and Teacher Perception of Practices that impact teacher job satisfaction and retention in Title I Suburban elementary schools in Virginia (Batts, 2021). This study focused on principal and teacher perceptions to identify the practices that impacted retention and job satisfaction in Virginia teachers.

Although there was substantial research on burnout in the United States, there was not as much regarding elementary suburban Title I schools. There was a lack of studies seeking to share the experiences and perspectives of Title I suburban elementary school teachers. Therefore, this research was conducted with suburban Title I elementary school teachers to answer (1) In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school described the reasons for feeling occupational burnout; (2) How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools; (3) What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions of burnout? The aim of this work was to allow the participants to express their voices as it related to their occupational burnout experiences at Fame Elementary School, and gain insight on the challenges Title I schoolteachers face.

The research took place in a suburban school district in Georgia. The participants were 10 certified elementary school teachers. Before participating in the focus group, eight participants communicated they experienced burnout or are currently experiencing burnout. After reading, analyzing, and coding the journals, many of the experiences and information participants made known in the journals were present during the focus group interview. However, I was able to detect more of their emotions in their journal responses. In the focus group, I was able to take note of their body language and expressions. At the end of the focus group, all ten participants concluded they all have experienced burnout, but their burnout looks different. Participants shared that they experienced anxiety, physical pain, PTSD, and stress which are emotional, mental, and physical effects to occupational burnout. Findings showed that they created their own mechanisms to cope through burnout, but school leaders can do more to support them. Based on findings from the data, the following themes emerged: Workload, Student Behavior, Lack of Support by Leadership, Lack of Parent Involvement, Emotional Effects, Mental Effects, Physical Effects, Administrator Support, County Level Support, and Academic Coaches Support.

Research Question 1: *In what ways do teachers in a Title I suburban elementary school describe the reasons for feeling occupational burnout?*

The purpose of this question was to understand how participants describe the reasons for feeling occupational burnout in their suburban Title I school. All participants shared various burnout experiences from previous and current suburban schools that they work in. At the beginning of the study, participants agreed that burnout was a critical problem that needed more attention brought to it. Participants acknowledged that one of the main reasons for experiencing occupational burnout was due to the workload in the profession.

When teacher's workload is manageable, it balances teachers' well-being and allows them to reach their students unique needs. Nine of the ten participants in this study felt that their workload was heavy. As professed in the literature, Workload is one of the basic requirements of work, and is increased by working under arduous pressure, including having to do a lot of work with insufficient time (Jasinski, 2021). The findings showed that when teachers are given numerous tasks to complete that is impossible to complete during the school day, they start to feel the pressure of having to stay after school and work at home. This leads to them experiencing an increase in burnout. School leaders must create an environment where teachers are given work to correlate with the time that is given to them. Research shows that workload is very significantly related with stress (Zydxuinaite, 2020). The results also showed that participants experienced burnout and stress due to COVID-19 protocols and the interference with their teaching and success of student learning. The COVID-19 pandemic created a necessity for school systems to quickly pivot to remote teaching, resulting in significant, worldwide changes to instructional practices. Teachers, as the front-line workers in the education system, were tasked with quickly implementing the new teaching practices in ways that promoted student learning while maximizing student safety (Sokal et al., 2020). The adjustments to instructional practices that needed to be made due to the pandemic placed teachers in difficult situations.

While the teachers at Fame Elementary School stated that that the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to their burnout, they also acknowledged the workload that comes with testing is stressful. Teachers in the United States experience stress due to accountability with No Child Left Behind Act, high-stakes accountability, and general school accountability (Wronowski & Urick, 2021). If teachers are focusing on testing and accountability daily, then their instructional practices diminish because they are attempting to teach to the test. The research indicated that policies centered on high-stakes testing influence the day-to-day instructional practices of classroom teachers (Plank & Condliffe, 2013). The participants in this study indicated the need for their workload to be considered when making daily decisions as it impacts them in many ways, as well as their students.

In the process of sharing what causes burnout in teachers, the findings showed when teachers are not burned out, less student behavior problems occur. The results showed that participants described being unmotivated, frustrated, irritated, tired, and annoyed when dealing with students' behavior. These are signs of occupational burnout manifesting into the burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion. Tutlys et al., (2021) states, the teacher is intensely confronted with the students' problems, while at the same time feeling responsible for their own destiny and begins to blame themselves for not providing effective help in a timely manner.

The teachers at Fame Elementary School indicated that they thought they had good management skills, but the behaviors they are experiencing shows otherwise. Meeting the needs of behaviorally challenging students can be especially difficult even with the wide range of classroom behavior management tools and strategies available to teachers and schools (Wink et al., 2021). The participants shared that they do not really receive tools and strategies that can be used for the intense behaviors that they encounter on a daily. Interestingly, one of the

participants shared she does not encounter behavior problems because she is not with students every day. However, she shared being fair and stern is key to success. According to Wink et al., (2021), Teachers' abilities to understand their students' perspectives and struggles, as well as the tendency to be affected emotionally, could be addressed as part of training, and supporting teachers in behavior management strategies and interventions. This must be an opportunity for teachers to engage in managing student behavior as it is imperative that educators address what is causing them to feel burned out.

Throughout the interviews and journals collected, all of teachers were able to provide information about what is a lack of support by leadership. Most teachers were able to acknowledge a lack of support by leadership affects them. Participants declared during their interview, journals, and focus group that administrative support is needed. They all look forward to their administrators supporting them, helping them find coping strategies, and building the morale to keep them in the profession. This isn't only for the better of themselves, but also their students. Principals in low-achieving or high poverty, minority schools tend to have a greater impact on student outcomes than principals at less challenging schools (Holmes et al., 2019). The participants indicated a lack of support by leadership impacted student success in the classroom, as well as their behaviors. However, they believe their leadership has the capabilities to make a positive change.

The results showed that all participants felt like there was a lack of parental support in Title I schools. As noted in the literature, students from Title I schools tend to bring specific challenges, such as learning disabilities, low academic functioning, poverty, and lack of parental involvement, which can bring challenges for teachers (Solomon & Lambie, 2020). The participants noted that parental involvement has been linked with the academic success of

students. The need for parents offering support but also following through with the support were evident amongst the participants responses.

Within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change (National Education Association, 2020). Teacher leaders understand that families, communities, and all stakeholders have a substantial impact on educational progressions, student learning, and the profession. In this study, teachers described reasons for feeling occupational burnout and noted that there are challenges and obstacles that they encounter that interferes with them being able to handle the demands of their work.

Research Question 2: *How does occupational burnout manifest in the three (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) burnout dimensions for teachers in Title I suburban elementary schools?*

Based on this question, I sought to assess participants' experiences of occupational burnout as it relates to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. A journal entry and focus group questions were centered around answering this research question. The journal entry was designed to allow participants to share which dimension they feel they resonate the most with. The focus group questions were organized by burnout dimensions to see which dimension participants correlated with. The focus group also served to further discuss the common reasons of what contributes to their burnout and stress at Fame Elementary, how their teaching style and practice changed, and how they describe their ineffectiveness or effectiveness regarding their work. Through participants' responses, I discovered during the journals that a few participants were not sure if their burnout manifest into emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or reduced personal accomplishment. All participants shared examples of emotional, mental, or physical aspects of their burnout. They shared these

effects were the most extreme, such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Based on the journals, participants connected in many ways with the mental and physical effects they faced due to their occupational burnout. These connections supported that burnout is physical and mental exhaustion relating to interpersonal stressors at work (Freudenberger, 1974). Participants were entirely active participants throughout the focus group. The focus group supported the research, "Focus groups intention is to create a 'safe space' and encourage all participants to share their views and experiences in a way that gives them confidence that their identities will not be disclosed inappropriately (Tritter & Landstad, 2020)." Participants were supported through reflective practice, open communication, and a comfortable atmosphere.

According to the findings in the study, teachers shared how their occupational burnout manifest in the three burnout dimensions, and they do not receive the professional development needed to assist them with their burnout, as well as the teaching and learning process. Teacher leaders uses information about adult learning to respond to the diverse learning needs of colleagues by identifying, promoting, and facilitating varied and differentiated professional learning (National Education Association, 2020). Teachers need individuals to advocate for them in contexts inside and outside of the classroom that affects their work, as well as their well-being.

Research Question 3: *What specific supports from school leaders assist Title I suburban elementary schoolteachers with managing the dimensions of burnout?*

Research question three was designed for participants to reflect on their burnout and what specific supports could assist them. Though the participants described their needed support as: administrative support, county level support, and academic coaches support, they also revealed the need for coping strategies. Participants shared that when administrative support is given, their well-being, burnout, and students are positively impacted. Research shows, "Teachers need to

have the opportunity to discuss their attitudes towards strategies and approaches they see as meaningful so that they might develop their leadership through teaching, implementing changes at school, and so on(Zydziunaite et al.,2020). Teachers want their voices heard and not disregarded.

The literature noted, effectively responding to discouragement requires that school leaders recognize teachers' moral motivations, listen for moral concerns, and problem solve with teachers (Santora, 2018). Participants believe academic coaches, county level personnel, and administrators can contribute to a collaborative effort with teachers. Teachers need open, clear, and respectful communication from school administrators (Zydziunaite et al.,2020). Indicatives of support included administrators and county level personnel being visible as well as approachable. Additionally, teachers shared that they like the ability to be able to share concerns with their administrators with feeling like their door is an open policy. A collaborative culture was also shared as the support needed and helpful to many teachers. There were teachers who thought administrators and county level personnel can be doing more. Fame Elementary teachers expressed that county level support is needed, as they do not always have the necessary resources needed to do their work. Participants also shared the need for coaching one-on-one to help with their individual instructional growth, personal growth, and well-being.

According to the findings, a majority of teachers mentioned that school level administration, teacher leader support, and county level support is needed to manage their burnout. School leaders and teacher leaders must work together to identify, replicate, and scale up programs and practices deemed effective in supporting student learning and teachers (National Education Association, 2020). This means that school leaders, administrators, county level leaders, and teacher leaders should support one another and work in a collaborative

environment that consist of sharing responsibility for development and results. Teacher leaders shares information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state, and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning (National Education Association, 2020). The teacher leader is using information given to advocate for the profession, as well as the students.

Limitations of the Study

After completing this study, I identified a few limitations of this study. This study focused and was limited to teacher's occupational burnout experiences at one Title I suburban school. This led to a small sampling of ten teacher participants from Fame Elementary School. Small sample size for interviews can potentially prevent researchers from creating generalizations in case study research (Creswell, 2018). This literature supported my study as the small sample size allowed me to yield applicable information and results. However, within qualitative traditions 6-12 participants is key with focus groups to generate insights (Tritter & Landstad, 2020). Despite the study being opened to all teachers, some teachers decided not to select to participate due to them feeling as if they never experienced burnout. They shared they would not have anything to contribute to the study. Teachers also shared they feared backlash from the local school or school district due to the topic focusing on their experiences at the current school. The timing of this study was also a limitation because teachers were arriving back from their winter break and getting ready for state testing. This is a time when teachers are meeting with parents, writing up retentions, and preparing their students for state mandated testing. There was also a concern from the research office regarding the time allotted for the journal prompts being too long (30 minutes). Although this study was with limitations, the

findings provided in-depth insight on teachers experiences in a Title I Suburban Elementary School.

Researcher Comments

While completing my study, I found it beneficial that maintaining confidentiality created a sense of trust amongst the participants that their experiences, opinions, and feelings would not be revealed to others without their permission, other than for the purpose of the research study. I made sure that I used rapport-building skills to allow my participants to feel comfortable with not only the other participants, but comfortable to share what they wanted. Roller & Lavrakas (2015) stated, establishing rapport in the socially more complex research environment of the group discussion is critical to creating an atmosphere where participants feel free to express their doubt or lack of awareness, where they are comfortable admitting information to the researcher and other participants. The participants were also assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. They were made aware that their responses will only be shared and used solely for research purposes. Also, the data collected was stored and locked away. Participants were seated in a circle seating which allowed additional comfort.

As I spent eight weeks working with participants and actively listening to their individual experiences, I spent significant time finding patterns amongst the data. The participants in this study willingly talked about their burnout experiences at suburban's Title I schools. They shared that the focus group was extremely beneficial and allowed them identify signs of occupational burnout within themselves through the processes of reflection and dialogue. Participants also identified coping methods. They were reflective about their individual burnout experiences and the impact it has on them. By the end of this research study, participants shared that participating in the study helped them learn new information about identifying and addressing professional

burnout. Based on the discussion during the focus group and the tears that were shed, the participants wanted schools to implement more groups such as the one we engaged in. They stated that the focus group allowed them to be vulnerable and it felt like a safe space. The participants were eager to know if the information will be shared with school leaders because they wanted a change. They did not want their voices to end at the focus group. Participants were made aware of the time allotted for the focus group and all participants were willing to stay longer to engage in the in-depth discussion regarding their burnout experiences.

As the researcher, I engaged in active listening as participants responded to each question. The dialogue with participants was meaningful because it provided a clear understanding of participant burnout and the dimension of occupational burnout to which they related the most. The experience of listening to participants openly share opinions, thoughts, and feelings, I saw the importance of teachers having a safe place and opportunities to decompress. It would be beneficial for academic coaches, teachers, or other teacher leaders to create opportunities such as the focus group to allow teachers to have that "safe place." Teachers want their voices heard and this opportunity allows for teacher leaders to not only gather rich, insightful information but it informs them on which mechanisms or strategies would be for the better of all.

As teacher shortages continue to deepen, educators are still feeling burned out. As the researcher, I was able to respect their time and value their input. To be successful and productive, equal and reciprocal partnerships are needed among schools and external partners that focus on common goals and a mutual sharing of resources and expertise (National Education Association, 2020). Throughout my study, emphasis is placed on the reasons for experiencing burnout and how burnout manifests within teachers at Fame Elementary school. Therefore, this

is why its imperative to develop a school culture that is conducive to all that allows opportunities for collaboration, professional development for academic, as well as personal needs (burnout coping strategies), and meaningful approaches in regard to the challenges when they encounter setbacks or difficulties.

Connecting the Results to the Literature

This 8-week study consisted of ten participants from one Title I suburban elementary school. They participated in interviewing, reflective journaling, and a focus group regarding occupational burnout. Utilizing three different forms of data collection allowed me to engage thoroughly into the data and understand the participants experiences with burnout. Previous literature supports those turnover rates are significantly higher in Title I schools and in schools with large populations of students of color (NEA, 2021). This study revealed that teachers who experienced burnout in Title I suburban schools has left the profession or has questioned whether they belong in the teaching profession. This study also revealed that 9 of the ten teachers experienced emotional exhaustion at most.

Based on my review of previous literature, I expected the common causes of my study to include working conditions, expectations, job demands and lack of resources as those were cited in previous literature. In addition, I expected COVID-19 to be present as it was stated briefly in the literature. The top three common causes that came out in the study were lack of administrative support, parental support, and student behavior problems. As specified in the literature, without teacher leaders and administrators working together, they will inadvertently work against each other, make each other frustrated, stymie school improvement progress and lose energy that can be used to lead to great student success (Berg, 2018). Following that were workload and lack of county level support. As the literature noted, these decisions add to educators'

workloads are made without teacher input and without regard to how it impacts them, their students, and their families (NEA, 2021). While teachers find their jobs challenging, not having a voice is more frustrating and leads to them experiencing a lack of support.

The literature supports that idea that teachers need support. Ferlazzo (2015) suggests that teachers do not leave hard to staff schools; they are simply exiled. Teachers are exiled by fractious decision-making systems, lack of support by school leaders and by policy priorities that do not focus on student learning and developing professional learning communities. The top three causes for teachers' burnout were lack of administrative support, lack of parental support, and student behavior problems. The literature states that districts and schools can build toward making teachers' jobs more rewarding and sustainable by investing in the kinds of structures and conditions that matter most —supportive school leadership, sufficient time for collaboration, and teaching loads that make it possible to build relationships with their students and adjust approaches to meet their needs (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). This study revealed that teachers who lack administrative support and school level support experience burnout and stress on multiple occasions and could benefit from a school culture that makes collaborating a priority.

Implications for Future Practice

After analyzing the findings and the literature, recommendations for teachers, teacher leaders, and school and district leaders were created. Future studies may consider opening the study to multiple suburban schools, including teachers from suburban Title I schools in the local area. Although there are many causes that contribute to feelings related to occupational burnout with teachers, the research conducted in this study revealed that teachers need administrative support to limit and eliminate their burnout experiences. Teachers revealed that their mental state was better when they felt appreciated by their administrators. Lack of parental involvement was

a contributing cause of burnout. They also stated they were able to handle the pressure that comes with job expectations when parents were involved with student success and behavior. The teachers shared that self-care opportunities, mental health professional development, and the ability to engage in open discussions such as focus groups improved their well-being and reduces their burnout experiences. Participants freely shared and were open throughout the focus group. With the success of the focus group, I recommend that future studies include at least two focus group meetings. One meeting at the beginning of the study and one at the end. This additional focus group may offer an in-depth understanding of teachers' initial and post knowledge, beliefs, and understandings of the occupational burn out phenomenon. This can help researchers better understand how engaging teachers in conversations and reflection around work stress might improve overall well-being for teachers.

Some of the participants did not thoroughly respond to the journal entries, but they did elaborate on their collage entry. Participants seemed to prefer completing the interview, focus group, and collage entry. Future studies could also include administrators' experiences working at a Title I suburban school and the impact it has on meeting or being unable to meet teacher needs. To expand this work, future studies may also bring teachers who left the teaching profession or retired during or after Covid into the conversation to investigate their burnout experiences at Suburban and Urban schools.

Recommendations for Teachers

Based on the findings from this study, it is imperative that teachers not only recognize that their profession can cause burnout but examine when they are near burnout and the reasons behind it. Teachers must be able to self-reflect (Bozkurt, 2022). With this, teachers can learn to be proactive instead of reactive in ways that can better assist them with their burnout or their

colleagues. Educators must inform themselves on what Title I schools are and what they entail according to the Department of Education. Title I schools are eligible to use Title I funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students (Department of Education, 2018). For example, if teachers are experiencing that their local school is not providing the materials they need to be successful, they could reach out to education agencies or schools groups to explore ways to seek the materials or funding in which they may need. Based on the literature review and the research participants' analysis of this study, teachers are more interesting in positive coping strategies (Albulescu et al., 2018; Smetackova, 2017; Voitenko et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2011). Teachers must be willing to find and utilize coping strategies received from their school leaders. They must also understand it can be a process.

Some individuals develop negative, unsuccessful coping strategies which can relieve the person of the stress burden for the moment, but do not alleviate the stressor (Smetackova, 2017). Teachers must identify positive coping strategies. Research shows that teachers with low-stress levels and no burnout symptoms and classes with high coping skills have been associated with enriched student outcomes (Rico et al., 2020). Teachers must also reflect on their instructional practices and how it affects students when they are experiencing burnout. They must seek opportunities to take part in trainings that better supports the teaching and learning process. Teachers must also seek opportunities to take part in mental health and/or training regarding burnout. "Training to prevent teacher burnout plays a protective role and improves teachers' work life's *psychosocial environment and health*" (Poza-Rico, 2020). Teachers must then use what they have learned from the trainings to incorporate strategies to reduce burnout and adjust their instructional practices.

Recommendations for School and District Leaders

Based on the findings of this study, it highlights school leaders in Title I schools need to support teachers. School leaders need to understand implementing strategies that assist teachers in Title I schools can reduce the burnout and stress that teachers face daily. As Albulescu et al., (2018) stated, coping strategies play an imperative role in an individual's physical and psychological well-being when faced with challenges, negative events, and stress. School leaders must examine what is causing their teachers to burnout, as well as how it relates to their well-being and effectiveness with the teaching and learning process. They must also examine how occupational burnout manifest into teachers leaving Title I schools or the profession. Retaining highly qualified teachers is important to the school, as well as the school district. We must provide extra supports and funding to high-poverty schools, where teacher shortages are even more of a problem (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Teachers must, then, utilize the administrative and school leader support and funding for school improvement received.

Based on the literature review and the research participants' critique of this study, teachers prefer supportive school leadership, sufficient time for collaboration, and teaching workloads that make it possible to build relationships with their students and adjust approaches to meet their needs (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). School leaders should not only be aware of the causes that enhance burnout in Title I schoolteachers but examine what they are currently doing to support their teachers. School leaders must provide opportunities for their teachers to engage in a collaborative culture that can benefit their professional work and well-being. This can be done weekly or bi-monthly in an environment arranged like a focus group where teachers can discuss, share, and decompress what their problems are. According to the National Education Association (2021), unions have been pushing districts to address shortages, reduce

the extreme demand on educators, and hire more health and wellness coordinators. District leaders can provide professional development or mental health programs that can alleviate the challenges that teachers face. Based on the findings, this can potentially reduce the burnout and stress on teachers. Teachers need to be provided with tools such as ways to collect data, resources, and support needed to do their job successfully and effectively, due to burnout being a phenomenon that can extend beyond the classroom.

School leaders should consider recruiting volunteers for the school and find different ways to utilize the volunteers that's beneficial to all teachers. Based on the findings in my study, school and district leaders play an important role in addressing the causes of burnout by implementing systematic changes that improves teachers well-being and the working conditions. According to the National Education Association (2021), research shows that school leaders who protect teachers' time, invite their input, and support their mental health and well-being through comprehensive programs see higher levels of satisfaction. School leaders should allow Title I coaches and county level academic coaches to work with teachers on an individual basis. They should seek to hire teacher burnout experts who display an in depth understanding of teacher burnout.

In addition, school and district leaders can provide high-quality professional development. As noted by Vinson (2022), when new initiatives are introduced, ensure there is adequate time for training and rollout, while protecting time for teachers to meet their existing obligations. As shown in the findings, school leaders should consider that creating new initiatives without these measures in place impacts teachers' ability to implement them effectively. If teachers aren't receiving the necessary training needed to carry out the initiative,

then they are placed in a situation of not only delivering the content ineffectively but impacting student learning.

Recommendations for Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders can play in an important role in school improvement including but not limited to teacher support and student achievement. Based on the findings, teacher leaders should not rely solely on school and district administrators. When teacher leaders are utilized to lead the way for other teachers, they can make an impact on the instruction, initiatives, and the work itself. Teacher leaders hold the responsibility of not only supporting staff, but they should be seeking opportunities to make changes, which includes but not limited to professional development, coaching, and mentoring others and serving on professional committees. Teacher leaders also can create work-based learning activities included sharing knowledge and experiences amongst colleagues, in some cases guided by a coach from outside school (Admiraal et al., 2021). Based on the findings of this study, teachers in Title I schools seem to benefit from coaches outside of the school who recognize the need for successful and effective strategies for supporting students in Title I schools.

Cheung & Reinhardt (2018) concluded that being a teacher leader involves four main activities: collaborating with teachers, modeling effective instruction, providing resources, and advocating on teachers' behalf. Based on the teacher leadership standards drafted by the (National Education Association, 2020), teacher burnout advocates who are teacher leaders can support burned out teachers by (a) foster a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning, (b) improve outreach and collaboration with families and community, (c) advocate for the profession, and (d) promote professional learning for continuous improvement. Teacher leaders such as coaches, team leaders, and interventionists should work with

administrators for the better of the school and the other individuals. According to Berg (2018), effective co-performance of leadership requires teachers and principals to be on the same page about the vision they are trying to create their understanding of the complementary roles each will play to reach that vision, and the trust required to make it work.

Implications for Future Research

As identified in the literature review, sources of burnout that lead to stress were job responsibilities, standards, working conditions, COVID-19 pandemic, workload, accountability, and lack of resources. The literature also identified the burnout impacts student achievement, intention to leave the job, frustration, high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (negative reactions), reduced personal accomplishment, and low commitment. School leaders including but not limited to administrators should work to ease these causes and factors to prevent teachers from experiencing stress and burnout.

Additional research is needed to deepen the understanding of occupational burnout in suburban schools and administrative ways of build staffing morale in schools. There is currently a teacher shortage all over the United States, it is important to not only find ways but implement ways that can build staff morale. Additional research is also needed to deepen the understanding of students' perception of how their teacher burnout may impact them. An assessment of student perceptions could also be done. A quantitative research design can also be used to determine the level of burnout by utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Using a quantitative approach allows for administrators to see the similarities and differences among the burnout levels in their teachers and can compare the first half of the year to the second half. Future studies could also address suburban Title I and Non-Title Schools within the same school district and determine if there is a difference with teachers burnout experiences and the way in which their administration

incorporates activities or things to build staff morale. Future research could examine whether the differences in degrees, teaching background, and years of teaching play a role in their occupational burnout in Title I suburban schools. It is important for teachers to have self-care and meaningful professional development, coaches support, administrative support, and a collaborative environment to support them with managing the dimensions of burnout. Researchers can interview individuals who have experienced burnout and left the profession to investigate what drove them to leaving and what could have been done to retain them. This information can be used to better support the current teachers in the field and retaining them and protecting their mental, emotional, and physical health.

Conclusions

“If you want to address the burnout problem, the first step is repeating and internalizing this mantra: Burnout is about your organization, not your people.” —Jennifer Moss, *The Burnout Epidemic* (Moss, 2021). Burnout is not related to teachers alone; its also about the work environment in which teachers are expected to work in.

Chapter 5 concludes the research on ten Title I suburban elementary school teachers and their experiences with occupational burnout. There is not one sole experience that causes teachers to feel burnout, which means there is not a one size fits all approach. NEA (2021) stated, “This is a five-alarm crisis. We are facing an exodus as more than half of our nation’s teachers and other school staff are now indicating they will be leaving education sooner than planned.” Burnout is not a new problem, but it is critical that we continue to pin-point what is affecting our teachers and what can be done to retain them in the profession.

In this study, participants were able to provide in-depth insights into their burnout experiences in suburban Title I schools. The teaching profession is known to have a high

turnover rate. My study could be used to assist teachers, teacher leaders, and school and district leaders with addressing the burnout that teachers experience. According to the findings of this study, administrative support, self-care and mental health support, parental involvement, meaningful professional development, are vital to the success of teachers. As the National Education Association (2021) stated, to create more supportive environments for educators, district and school leaders should avoid superficial wellness programs and take a system-wide, comprehensive approach. Thus, I urge administrators, county level personnel, teacher leaders, and other stakeholders to acknowledge and address the needs of teachers experiencing occupational burnout by enhancing and providing ongoing professional development and self-care opportunities. This not only supports teachers but foster an environment that is suitable for teachers, as well as the students they serve in suburban Title I schools.

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Appendix A

Participant Invitation Email

Dear Colleague,

As a doctoral candidate in the Teacher Leadership program at Kennesaw State University, I, Shakoiya Aiken, am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation research project on Teacher Burnout in Title I suburban schools. I am looking for participants over the age of 18 that are certified elementary teachers who teaches in suburban elementary schools. I am looking for participants willing to participate in an interview, reflective journaling, and a focus group focused on occupational burnout in suburban schools. The study is also designed to gather evidence to possibly identify strategies that help reduce teacher burnout and turnover.

Attached to this email, you will find an informed consent letter and a participant questionnaire. Before you decide to voluntarily participate in this study, please read the consent letter carefully and completely. After reading this consent letter, please ask any questions about anything that you do not understand. If you have any questions after reading the informed consent, please feel free to contact me at saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu or [REDACTED] to answer your questions before signing and returning the consent letter and completing the [Participant Questionnaire](#)

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research project regarding Occupational-Teacher Burnout. To be considered for the study, please complete this form by 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday March 2, 2022.

Sincerely,

Shakoiya Aiken
Doctoral Candidate, Teacher Leadership
Kennesaw State University

IRB Study Number: FY22-296

Title of Research Study: Teachers' Burnout Experiences in Title I Suburban Elementary Schools.

Principal Investigator: Shakoiya Aiken, Bagwell College of Education Doctoral Candidate, Kennesaw State University, saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu, [REDACTED]

Appendix B

Participant Selection Questionnaire

Anticipated Questionnaire Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/TgW6rpqgpJ>

Title of Research Study: Teacher's Burnout Experience in Title I Suburban Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: Shakoiya Aiken, Bagwell College of Education Doctoral Candidate, Kennesaw State University, saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu, [REDACTED]

Also listed below:

1. Are you interested in learning more about occupational burnout in Title I suburban schools?
2. Are you willing to participate in an 8-week research study in the Spring of 2022 that will involve a commitment to engaging in one focus group, an interview, and four reflective journal entries? All components of the study will take place in the gifted classroom room.
3. Are you currently a certified teacher at a K-5 elementary Title I suburban school?
4. How many years have you been teaching?
5. Which grade level do you currently teach?
6. What are your preferred pronouns to be identified and referred to as?
7. Which is the highest degree you have obtained?
8. Which range best identifies your age?
9. Which racial/ethnic background describes you?
10. Do you intend to remain at the school site for the remaining of the 2021-2022 school year?
11. Have you participated in any projects, studies, or professional development related to teacher burnout? If so, please describe your learning experience.
12. If you are still interested in being a voluntary participant in this study, please provide your first and last name, as well as your preferred email address.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Introduction Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to interview me today to talk about Occupational Burnout in Title I suburban schools. I am hoping this is a rewarding experience for both of us. The purpose of the research is to find out about your experiences with teacher burnout and perhaps how support from school leaders plays a role in the experiences. I expect this interview to last between 30-60 minutes. I appreciate you for taking the time and interest to answer the questions. If, at any time, questions arise that you prefer to skip, please let me know. This interview will be audio recorded and transcribed, so that I can accurately document our conversation. On the transcript and final research report, your name will be replaced with pseudonym. Do you have any questions for me? Do I have your permission to proceed with conducting and audio recording this interview?

Interview Questions

1. How would you categorize and/or describe your roles and responsibilities as a teacher?
2. Describe your experience teaching at a Title I Suburban elementary School?
3. What does professional burnout mean to you?
4. What does professional burnout look like to you?
5. What do you do to help manage your feelings of professional burnout? Have you found success with the strategies?
6. What do you think can be done to reduce the incidence of burnout in suburban Title I elementary school settings?
7. How do you think school leaders can support teachers who are struggling with feelings of stress and fatigue?

8. How does burnout affect your desire to stay in the profession?
9. What other thoughts do you have related to teacher burnout?

Closing: I truly appreciate you for taking time to participate in my research and share valuable information with me today.

Appendix D

Reflective Journal Protocol

Thank you for participating in this reflective portion of the study and agreeing to complete this digitally. Your journals will only be accessible to you and the researcher. Your responses will be confidential and only used for the purpose of this research study.

Journal Entry # 1

- Please write about a time in your teaching when you felt burned out or a time you have heard of a coworker in the building experiencing burnout?

Journal Entry # 2

- As you start your Monday, reflect on each day this week (Monday through Friday).
 - Create a collage of pictures/images of how your week went. Include pictures (real life/internet images) of what may have caused you to feel overwhelmed, stressed, or burned out.
 - You may also include what may have caused you to feel good and/or assisted you with reducing feelings of burn out.
 - You may add words and/or captions if you choose.
 - It can be done using any technology tool (Canva, Adobe Spark, Piktochart, PowerPoint, or paper and pencil.... etc.).
 - General ways to save and upload

*Save collage to your computer and insert it into journal # 2 document.

*Snip the completion of your collage using the snipping tool on your laptop and insert it.

*Take a picture of it and upload it to journal #2.

Journal Entry # 3

- How do you realize when you're getting near to feelings of burnout? How do you set boundaries and avoid absorbing someone else's emotions and stress in the work environment?
- Take a moment to reflect on the initial interview, journals, collage created, and the focus group.

Journal Entry # 4

As discussed in the focus group, **Emotional exhaustion** is the aspect of burnout that correlates with feeling stressed, fatigued, and overwhelmed. It is predicted by stressors involving work overload, insufficient use of skills, and unable to engage with people. **Depersonalization** is in which individuals become detached. **Reduced personal accomplishment** is in which individuals are feeling insufficient and ineffective with their performance.

- Of the three burnout dimensions of teachers described by Researcher Maslach, which one resonates with you or has resonated with you? Explain your thinking.

Appendix E

Focus Group Protocol

Script: Thank you for participating in this portion of the study by agreeing to engage in an interview with other participants. Your responses will be used solely for the purpose of this research study and will be kept confidential. The focus group interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Please share your open and honest thoughts regarding each question.

Emotional Exhaustion:

The research literature identifies three dimensions of burnout, which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (cynicism), and reduced personal accomplishment (detachment). With emotional exhaustion, teachers are feeling fatigue, stressed, and overwhelmed.

1. How often do you feel stressed or overwhelmed? On a daily, weekly, or monthly basis?
2. What do you think contributes to you feeling stressed or overwhelmed in your profession?
3. How would you describe your workload at the Title I suburban school in which you are employed?
4. How are your relationships with other school holders in your building?

Depersonalization:

5. How has your teaching style and practice changed or developed over the years?
6. Describe how you think teacher burnout affects students holistically, including in the teaching and learning process.
7. How would you describe your work environment?

Personal Accomplishment

8. Do you feel as if you are effective in your work?
9. How well do you deal effectively with students' behavior?
10. Describe your success and/or accomplishment at your job?

Appendix F

Research Approval Notification from Kennesaw State University

Date: 6-23-2022

IRB #: IRB-FY22-296

Title: TEACHERS' BURNOUT EXPERIENCE IN A TITLE I SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Creation Date: 12-11-2021

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Shakoiya Aiken

Review Board: KSU IRB 2021-2022

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Tamela Thomas	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	tthom388@kennesaw.edu
Member	Shakoiya Aiken	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu
Member	Shakoiya Aiken	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu
Member	Arvin Johnson	Role	Investigator	Contact	ajohn560@kennesaw.edu
Member	Miyoshi Juergensen	Role	Investigator	Contact	mjuerge1@kennesaw.edu

Appendix G**Research Approval Notification from the School District**

February 9, 2022

Ms. Shakoiya Aiken

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Ms. Aiken,

Your research project titled, Teacher Burnout in Title I Suburban Elementary Schools, has been approved. Listed below is the school where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

Schools

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the department of Accountability, Research & Grants prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact my office at

Sincerely,
Assistant Director, Grants & Research
Office of Accountability & Research

Appendix H

Informed Consent Letter

Title of Research Study: Teacher's Burnout Experience in Title I Suburban Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: Shakoiya Aiken, Bagwell College of Education Doctoral Candidate, Kennesaw State University, saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu,

Introduction

Dear Colleague,

As a doctoral candidate in the Teacher Leadership program at Kennesaw State University, I, Shakoiya Aiken, am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation research project on teacher's burnout experience in Title I suburban schools. Before you decide to voluntarily participate in this study, please read this form carefully and completely. After reading this consent letter, please ask any questions about anything that you do not understand.

Description of Project

The purpose of the present study is threefold: (a) Identify the main sources and effects of burnout that teachers in Title I suburban schools experience, b) examine how burnout manifest into the three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, detachment, reduced personal accomplishment) of burnout and (c) gather evidence to possibly identify strategies or professional development that help reduce teacher burnout and turnover. This study is also designed to determine the impact of leadership (administrative support) as related to teacher's burnout experiences.

Explanation of Procedures

If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete an interest survey for the selection process. If selected as a voluntary participant, you will be asked to complete an interview. You will also be asked to respond to four reflective journal entries related to occupational burnout. After completing three of the reflective journals, you will be asked to attend a focus group before completing the last reflective journal entry. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the interview and focus group will take place in the gifted classroom to allow for enough room between participants. The interview will take place during the first month of the research study in Spring of 2022. The reflective journal entries will be given to you once a week for three consecutive weeks after the interviews of all participants are completed. The focus group will take place after completing the third journal entry. It will also take place in the target room. The final follow up journal entry will take place after the focus group. The interview and focus group will take place after school hours and will not interfere with your instructional time with students.

Time Required

The entire study will span over an 8-week period and require approximately 4-5 hours of your time. This time includes:

Research Project Tasks and Approximate Time for Each	Approximate Total Time
1 Focus group (1 hour)	1 hour
4 Reflective Journal Entries (30 minutes per entry)	2 hours
1 Interview (45-60 minutes)	1 hour

Potential Risks and Benefits

Although there will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, the study is designed to focus on teachers experiences with occupational burnout. The study will allow teachers to engage in conversations and reflection related to occupational burnout. The researcher does not anticipate any risks; however, recalling traumatic or distressing events related to the topic (occupational burnout) may be uncomfortable. You may choose to stop participating at any time throughout the study. Please keep in mind pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants and participants will be given the opportunity to check the transcripts of the interview and focus group for accuracy. The goal of this study will be to engage teachers in discussion that can ultimately lead to effective strategies and/or professional development that administrators can implement to support teachers in reducing their burnout. Due to teacher burnout being associated with student achievement and motivation, the ultimate goal of the interview, reflective journals and focus group is to develop teachers' understandings on how occupational burnout impacts them, as well as the students. Hence, students may ultimately benefit from the study as the desired result is to reduce teachers burnout that possibly impact the teaching and learning process for all.

Confidentiality

The results of this participation will be anonymous. The data collected will be password protected. Once the data is downloaded for analysis, it will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked file cabinet and destroyed by January, 2023. You will be asked to keep any information shared by others during the focus group confidential. The data collected from the participants will be used solely for the purpose of the research and all names and identifying information will be removed to protect their identity. To protect your identity, your name and school will be replaced with pseudonyms.

Compensation

As an incentive to participate in the study, \$10 Amazon gift cards will be awarded to all participants after completing all components of the study at the designated times/day discussed and given. All participants will also receive snacks and water during the focus group,

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

You must be over the age of 18 to participate in the study. If you would like to be a voluntary participant in the study, please sign this informed consent letter and complete the questionnaire. Signed consent forms may be returned by email or place in my mailbox. Six to ten participants will be selected based on the alignment of their questionnaire responses to the research study criteria along with the order in which the completed surveys are received.

Voluntary Participation

Please remember your participation in the study is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions concerning my research project or your role as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact me at saiken6@students.kennesaw.edu or [REDACTED] You may also contact my Kennesaw State University faculty advisor (Dr. Tamela Thomas). tthom388@kennesaw.edu

I look forward to engaging and learning with you!

Sincerely,

Shakoiya K. Aiken
 Doctoral Candidate, Teacher Leadership
 Kennesaw State University

Signed Consent

I have read the above information regarding this research study on the experience of Teacher Burnout, and consent to participate voluntarily in this study. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

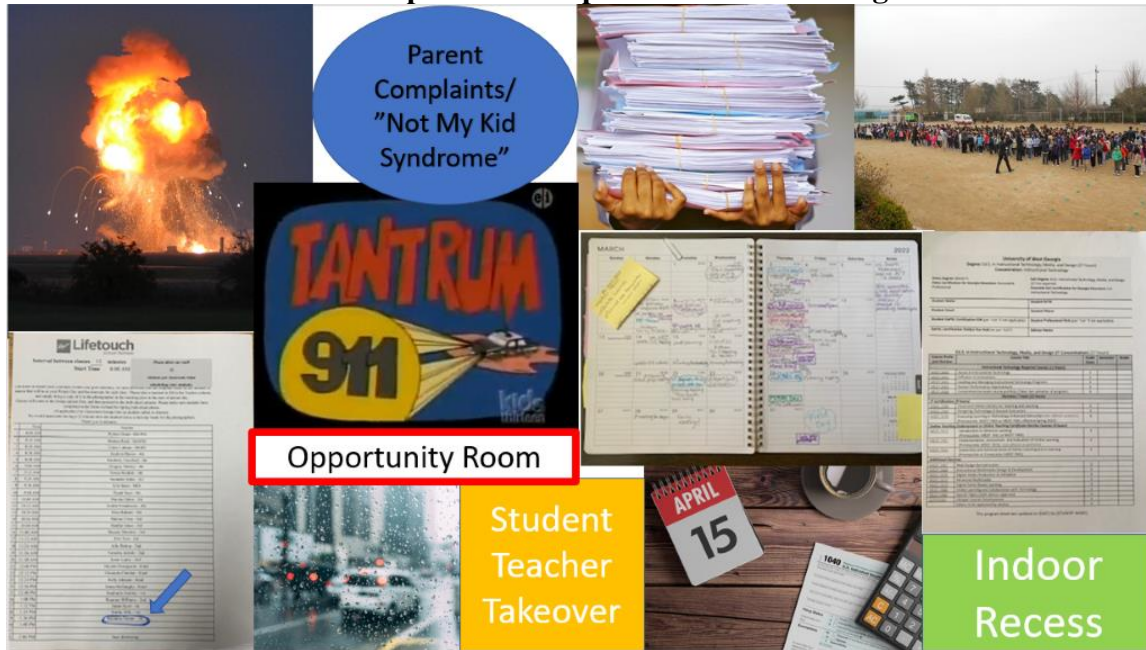
Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name (Printed): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3417, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (470) 578-7721

Appendix I Sample of Participants' Burnout Collages





MY WEEK

IN A NUTSHELL:

Monday

We had a student call another student the 'N-word'
Students consistently making bad choices
adds up over time.



Tuesday

Seemed like our students forgot every classroom rule
and did whatever they wanted.



Wednesday

Today was a negative turned positive. Thought a
parent wasn't going to be receptive during a meeting
but I was wrong. Great meeting!



Thursday

Met with a parent that takes the side of her son
every time he gets in trouble. Gets very
repetitive having meetings with close-minded
parents.



Friday

Knowing that the weekend is right around the
corner always makes things a little brighter.





Stress of a new student, making copies, teaching routines, learning about what the student knows and behavior.



Students weren't focused and trying their best today.

Monday



M&M's and exercise were my coping mechanism at the end of the day.



Collaborating with colleagues helped with dealing with a stressful situation.



During morning meeting students reflected on their day yesterday and set goals on how to be more focused today.

Tuesday



Going for a run after school helped decompress and recharge for the next day.



Tried to new incentive for the month of March to encourage good behavior. One way to prevent burnout before Spring Break.



Collaborated with my team to make test review less stressful.

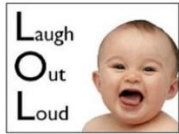
Wednesday



Visited my parents after school.



Students arguing made it more challenging to teach. Class was interrupted to help them solve their problems.

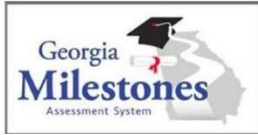


Friendly conversation with colleagues and being able to laugh at your own mistakes helped relieve stress.

Thursday



Counting down or constantly thinking about the upcoming break made the day or days feel longer.



Preparing for standardized testing or feeling like your students aren't prepared adds extra stress.



Going for a run and getting fresh air helps reset for the next day.



Knowing we made it to Friday is a small victory.

Friday



Collecting RTI data for tier 3 students and inputting it in the system every Friday.



Lack of quality sleep led to being annoyed with my students.



The online assessment system has not worked since the beginning of the year, yet students are still required to complete the assessments.

Square box, round pizza, triangle slices.
...I'M CONFUSED!

Burn Out Week