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The Career Experiences of Noninstructional Itinerant Staff in K–12 Public Schools
with Demonstrated Longevity

Submitted to Southeastern University

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

Jessica K. Duncan

March 2023

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership
Southeastern University

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by:

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titled

**THE CAREER EXPERIENCES OF NONINSTRUCTIONAL ITINERANT
STAFF IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH
DEMONSTRATED LONGEVITY**

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requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Shortages in noninstructional itinerant staff (school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers) have been especially difficult for K–12 public school districts, as these individuals have critical responsibilities within the school setting that they are uniquely qualified to complete. Noninstructional itinerant employees face challenges such as isolation, role confusion, and high workloads that professionals who work in other settings or instructional colleagues may not encounter. They may also be impacted by their responsibilities related to meeting the increasing mental health needs of the students they support. The aim of this qualitative research study was to consider the experiences of 14 noninstructional itinerant professionals—five school nurses, five school psychologists, and four school social workers—who have been employed in the same K–12 public school setting for at least 10 years. Several themes emerged as the findings of the study: passion/purpose, expertise, working conditions, connections, and personal characteristics. A majority of the noninstitutional itinerants in this study reported finding deep purpose in their work and having a long-term impact on the lives of students. For most professionals, this factor may mitigate adverse working conditions such as lower pay and higher caseloads. In the area of working conditions, the school schedule emerged as a leading motivator, as it provided for a better work-life balance. Another dominant factor was connections with administration, which influenced the level of inclusion, provision of adequate workspace, and professional input. The personal factors that impacted longevity were the noninstructional itinerants' level of flexibility and resiliency.

Keywords: itinerants, longevity, school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom, Carolyn, who always inspired me to reach for the stars. I am blessed to have been raised by a life-long learner who consistently modeled strength and perseverance. You encouraged me to start this journey and supported me through many parts of this Ph.D. process. I wish you were still with us, but I am confident that you knew I would reach this goal. I feel your presence in different ways every day. I love and miss you.

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To my children, Kyle and Bridget: Be on the lookout for the many opportunities ahead as you continue to make your way through the world. Don't be afraid to follow a new path, and always be willing to learn new things. Whatever paths you choose, know that I am here for you.

To the school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists: Thank you for tirelessly supporting the students who benefit daily from your expertise. You make a difference in this world.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Over the next 10 years, the healthcare sector is expected to grow with an anticipated addition of 2.6 million jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020a). Community and social sector jobs are also anticipated to grow by 12% over this 10-year period (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020a). In February 2022, the healthcare sector and the community social services sector had the highest levels of industry turnover at 28% and the largest number of job openings (Payscale, 2022). Although more job openings provide new opportunities and greater mobility in the workforce, this mobility may be debilitating for K–12 public schools. Multiple teaching vacancies can negatively impact student outcomes and organizational operations through increased class size and teachers covering subject areas for which they do not possess the appropriate certification (Malkus et al., 2015). There are also negative consequences associated with vacancies in noninstructional itinerant positions, as these professionals are often the only ones who can perform the functions of their jobs. In the K–12 setting, the nonitinerant staff category consists of employees such as school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers.

Replacing noninstructional itinerant staff can be especially difficult for school districts. Although classroom personnel can teach in multiple subject areas or grade levels by passing a state-offered subject area certification test (FTCE, 2022), only staff who have completed educational programs in the specific areas of nursing, social work, and psychology can work in these roles. Noninstructional itinerant employees also face challenges not encountered by their instructional colleagues. Working in an itinerant capacity can be isolating for some employees (Yonkaitis, 2018), and there may be a limited understanding of the specialized work itinerants complete (Houlahan, 2018; Houlahan & Deveneau, 2019). Another challenge that Rabinsky (2013) noted was that itinerants must spend time driving between sites, taking away from downtime afforded to other professionals in the school. Adding to these challenges is that noninstructional itinerants have specialized skills they can use in various settings such as doctors' offices, hospitals, and private practices. Unlike their counterparts in other facilities, school-based itinerants must not only be

proficient in their field, but must also have a deep understanding of school-based issues such as discipline, bullying, poverty, homelessness, delinquency, and school safety (Cuellar et al., 2017; Kopels, 2016).

Noninstructional itinerants are also essential members of school mental health teams. These mental health teams are critical to the well-being of school-aged students, as most mental health disorders have a childhood onset (Golberstein et al., 2020). Ali et al. (2019) noted that 58% of the adolescents who receive mental health services access them in the school setting. Additionally, increased periods of isolation and economic issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Golberstein et al., 2020) have exacerbated the mental health crisis in schools (Jones et al., 2016; Walsh, 2021). Itinerant members of the mental health teams work directly with individuals with trauma, which can result in vicarious trauma to the support provider (Ivicic & Motta, 2017; Wagaman et al., 2015). Challenges in providing mental health services in the school setting can be exacerbated by a lack of support from stakeholders in the organization (Willis et al., 2018). With the recent increase in mental health needs in public K–12 schools, these institutions must retain their noninstructional itinerant staff to ensure consistency and high-quality services for students (Wang et al., 2021).

Considering these potential challenges and outside opportunities, it is critical to understand why some noninstructional itinerants stay in the public K–12 system. The importance of career longevity is often overlooked in organizations that should focus on keeping essential staff. In this study, no specific conceptual framework was identified that supports longevity. Instead, several frameworks that may directly impact longevity were identified and placed into five categories: employee characteristics, job characteristics, job satisfaction, empowerment, and commitment. The conceptual frameworks selected that were specific to employee characteristics included the human capital theory, self-determination theory (SDT), person-environment fit (P-E fit), social exchange theory (SET), work as a calling, and the theory of job embeddedness (JE). Frameworks related to job characteristics are the job demands-resource (JD-R) theory and conservation of resources. Empowerment was considered through Kanter's (1993) theory of structural empowerment and psychological empowerment theory, while commitment was considered through

Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model. Finally, several theories regarding job satisfaction were reviewed, including Locke's (1969) range of affect, equity theory, and Herzberg's (1974) two-factor theory. Through the data collection and analysis process, the researcher determined whether any of the identified frameworks emerged as more applicable to the longevity of noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 public school system.

The potential outcome of supporting career longevity is the retention of veteran employees that bring stability and critical knowledge to the workplace and can mentor other employees (Jenkins, 2020). As life expectancies increase, people are working longer and continue to work when they are doing something they enjoy (Jenkins, 2020). Despite the ability of people to increase their workplace longevity, in January 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020a) shared that the median length of employment for all wage and salary earners in the United States was only 4.1 years.

With the ever-increasing demands in the K–12 public school system and so many other employment options, the leaders of K–12 schools are seeking to retain specialized personnel and support the career longevity of itinerant staff. To better understand this phenomenon, the current study focused on the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant staff with longevity. For the purposes of this study, longevity was defined as 10 or more years of experience in a role.

Statement of the Problem

The current dilemma in the public school setting is that schools cannot retain their critical noninstructional itinerant staff, creating issues with the quality of care for the students. Vacancies in school nursing, school social work and school psychology may result in reduced student access to mental health support, as these professionals play a vital role in providing these services. Additionally, a lack of understanding of the role of each of these professionals may result in these professional staff being assigned a limited range of tasks, as they are often overlooked and not used to their full capabilities (Anderson et al., 2018; Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018). Although school nurses administer medication, school social workers

work to decrease truancy, and school psychologists complete educational evaluations, limiting these professionals to these activities may lead to decreased job satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2018; Arthur, 2009; Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018; Panteri et al., 2021; Young et al., 2021). The inability to use the full range of one's professional skills may ultimately result in these professionals leaving the school setting (Mo & Lai, 2018; Stewart et al., 2020).

These subgroups are also often overlooked in current research, as the literature broadly focuses on these populations, specifically research on school social workers, school nurses, and school psychologists. The research that is specific to school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers focuses on topics such as educational outcomes, school safety, students with disabilities, and supporting students' mental health (Adams Rueda et al., 2014; Alvarez et al., 2013; Cuellar et al., 2017). There is limited research looking at longevity in some fields, but that research does not consider noninstructional itinerant staff in public education.

Much of the current research related to itinerant staff in the school setting focuses on instructional staff working with the deaf, visually impaired, and in special education (Norman & Jamieson, 2015; Rabinsky, 2013; Zhu et al., 2021). Zhu et al. found that most itinerants are trained to be classroom teachers but end up working in an itinerant capacity which requires specific skill development. This shift from how itinerants are trained compared to their work once they have acquired a position comes with particular challenges. This challenge related to the transition from training to independent work is similar to the one faced by noninstructional itinerants such as school nurses, who often receive training at sites different from their permanently scheduled sites and work with people who do not entirely understand their role (Campbell, 2017; Helleve et al., 2022). Another challenge is that itinerants must understand the different expectations of supervisors at each site (Barrett, 2020).

School Nurses

One noninstructional itinerant in the public school setting who plays an active role in student support is the school nurse. The availability of healthcare services in the school setting positively impacts the academic and social outcomes of approximately 50 million students in public schools (Bartlett, 2015; Yonkaitis, 2018).

Attendance first became mandatory in the United States in 1852 in Massachusetts, with New York following suit in 1874 (Jones, 1967). Two issues that impacted attendance were that treatable medical issues, such as eczema, resulted in school exclusion, while highly contagious diseases, such as measles and diphtheria, were often overlooked resulting in unnecessary spread (Houlahan, 2018). Lillian Wald, a nurse providing home health services, often saw children in their homes who had been excluded from school unnecessarily for treatable medical issues (Houlahan, 2018). In 1902, she proposed a 1-month trial of a school nurse, a recommendation that eventually led to the hiring of a full-time nurse (Houlahan, 2018). The first school nurse, Lina Rogers, was an itinerant employee who supported four schools in New York City to provide basic health services to support attendance (Houlahan, 2018). This need for school nurses to provide basic health care is still an essential part of a school nurse's role today. Students often seek out health services at school because school nurses are not hindered by the typical barriers that community health care services face, such as the need for transportation or referrals (Evans, 2022). School nurses are easily accessible in the school setting (Helleve et al., 2022), and there is little to no stigma attached to the services they provide (Gibbons et al., 2021). Bennett (2021) noted that individuals working in nursing professions are consistently ranked as the most trusted individuals in Gallup polls.

Although students seek out health services in the school setting, it may be difficult for them to access the school nurse. Though the previously recommended ratio was one nurse for every 750 students (Best et al., 2021), the National Association for School Nurses (NASN) currently recommends that students have daily access to nursing services. This daily access is designed to help mitigate challenges posed by poor nutrition, limited access to medical care, and substandard living situations (Best et al., 2021). Even with this recommendation, more than half of public schools do not have a full-time nurse (Willgerodt et al., 2018), and many nurses cover two to three schools (Mangena & Maughan, 2015). Helleve et al. (2022) reported that nurses who cover multiple schools are typically responsible for determining how they allocate their time at sites based on student needs.

School Nurses and Role Confusion. There is considerable confusion regarding the school nurse role. They are often the only medical professionals in a school building and are sometimes viewed as the individuals who oversee medication administration and provide basic first aid (Anderson et al., 2018); their role is much more expansive. School nurses conduct hearing and vision screenings and provide nutritional support (Evans, 2022). They may be directly involved in obesity management, obesity prevention, oral health (Levinson et al., 2019), and the coordination of health services at the individual level (Willgerodt et al., 2018). On the behavioral management side, nurses provide mental health support and work to decrease absenteeism (Evans, 2022; Levinson et al., 2019). At the community level, school nurses are involved in activities such as vaccine workshops and building awareness of current issues such as bullying on social media (Anderson et al., 2018). School nurses report only spending 65% of their time working with individual students and the other 35% of their time at the community and systems levels (Anderson et al., 2018).

Role confusion has also led to a lack of appropriate funding (Houlahan & Deveneau, 2019), and school nurses reported feeling that administrators are removed from their daily work (Anttila et al., 2020). Powell et al. (2018) noted that this lack of understanding also means that school nurses face ethical dilemmas when they are asked to engage in activities that are not aligned with their scope and standards of practice. This challenge can be mitigated by ensuring that others have a deeper understanding of the school nurse's role. This role clarification can happen by sharing information in newsletters, 5-minute classroom pop-ins (Kilfoy, 2020), regularly scheduled staff meetings, and participation in interdisciplinary teams (Helleve et al., 2022).

School Nurses and Student Mental Health. Another significant challenge of itinerant nursing is the need to meet increasing demands related to students' mental health. Due to socioeconomic factors, many students access mental health services at school (Ali et al., 2019). School nurses play an essential role in the early identification of mental health issues (Bennett, 2021), as they are often the first to come into contact with students with mental health needs (Anttila et al., 2020). The

need for these services is paramount as suicide is a leading cause of death for adolescents between the ages of 10–14 years in the United States, second only to unintentional injuries (Banspach et al., 2016; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], n.d.-b). The CDC reports that suicide is the third leading cause of death behind unintentional injuries and homicide for individuals between the ages of 15–24. Due to students' increasing mental health needs in the school setting, school nurses report the need for more current training in this area (Anttila et al., 2020). School nurses with the appropriate training are more able to allocate their limited time proportionately to support student needs (Ravenna & Cleaver, 2016).

There is currently little information available about school nurse workloads and training programs (Bergren, 2021). This issue is compounded by the absence of a national school nursing database that has prevented researchers from accessing empirical data on a larger scale within the profession (Davis et al., 2019). Additionally, no empirical data are available related to the amount of collaboration school nurses have in the educational setting or their impact on student outcomes (Bergren, 2021).

School Social Workers

Another noninstructional itinerant who plays a vital role in the public-school setting is the school social worker. A certified school social worker specialist (C-SSWS) has obtained the advanced credentialing available to social workers in the school setting (NASW, 2003). This position requires a master's degree in social work and 2 years of experience working in a school setting while receiving supervision (NASW, 2003). Additionally, C-SSWSs must pass a state licensure examination (NASW, 2003), pass a skills examination provided by the supervisor, and be referred for work by a C-SSWS colleague (NASW, 2003). All C-SWSS must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers' *Code of Ethics and Standards for Continuing Professional Education* (NASW, 2003, p. 63). School social workers assess student needs and work collaboratively with students, teachers, families, and the community to meet those needs (Kopels, 2016; School Social Work Association of America, n.d.). Their deep understanding of both students and societal conditions (Kopels, 2016) and their level of training and knowledge related to current

educational research make them uniquely poised to play a key role in policymaking (Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018; Kopels, 2016). Regardless of these skills, social workers in the school setting may often be underutilized because administrators do not fully understand the full potential of these professionals (Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018). This role confusion has contributed to the discrepancies in school social work support. Alvarez et al. (2013) looked at the number of social workers in the 100 largest districts in the United States and found that the number ranged anywhere from zero to 1,734 per district, although the recommended ratio is one school social worker per 250 students (NASW, n.d.). This discrepancy shows that the potential impacts of school social workers are overlooked; schools with a higher level of social work support also reported higher graduation rates (Alvarez et al., 2013).

Social Worker Turnover. School social worker data across the United States is difficult to collect because these data are not tracked by the Institute of Education Services (IES) in Washington (Alvarez et al., 2013). Although information specific to school social workers is limited, the information related to the broad field of social work shows that turnover has reached epic proportions in the last several years (Barrett, 2016). Wermeling (2013) noted that in a study of 3,706 social workers, 44% left or considered leaving the profession. In 2016, one third of social workers in Kentucky left the profession, and in Texas, one quarter left after their first year (Barrett, 2016).

Disparities Within the Field of Social Work. Within the broad social work field, differences related to workplace settings increase the likelihood that a professional will leave the field. There is a disparity in pay in different social worker positions; social workers in an executive office make an average of \$55,000, those going through insurance companies make an average of \$53,000, and the average salary in a hospital is \$50,000 (Salsberg et al., 2017). These locations all have higher average salaries than school social workers who make an average of \$46,000 (Salsberg et al., 2017). This disparity may be attributed to the fact that only 5.2% of social workers work in education, with the majority working in a medical or social assistance setting (Salsberg et al., 2017). In the educational setting, disparities can be exacerbated when the funding is determined by leaders who do not have a deep

understanding of specialized noninstructional positions (Houlahan & Deveneau, 2019). School administrators can increase their awareness of the funding for and functions of school social workers in order to fully understand the benefit of this role (Poppy, 2012). This knowledge could help to decrease disparities between social work positions in various geographical settings (Poppy, 20212), other occupational settings, or even other school districts.

Another disparity is in the resources social workers can obtain based on their geographical location. Social workers who work in rural areas with higher levels of poverty often have access to fewer resources (Branson, 2019). This is especially true for rural school social workers, who are often isolated from resources available to their colleagues in suburban or urban areas (Heinrich, 2017). This is significant, as individuals in rural areas have more challenges related to the four areas identified on the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI): socioeconomic status, household composition/disability, minority status/language, and housing/transportation.

School Psychologists

The third public-school professional frequently hired in an itinerant capacity is the school psychologist. School psychologists work with teachers, families, and other mental health team members to support students in various areas, such as behavior, mental health, special education evaluations, and academic intervention (NASP, n.d.-a). Unlike traditional psychologists, they must have advanced studies in both psychology and education, but training programs are limited (NASP, n.d.-a). Although they have additional educational requirements, school psychologists may not have the level of autonomy or increased salary commensurate with their colleagues in private practice (Wiens et al., 2022). After the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975) was passed, the number of psychologists in the school setting increased, but there is still a shortage (Castillo et al., 2014). In 2014, Castillo et al. projected that 45,593 school psychologists, with respect to retirements, attrition, and new graduates, would result in a national deficit of at least 1,055 professionals by 2025. They asserted that there is the possibility that the number of vacancies will be closer to 3,500 (Castillo et al., 2014). In addition to current shortages, there is the potential for more turnover within the profession. In a study of

177 school psychologists, Young et al. (2021) found that 49% of the participants considered leaving the profession. Considering the potential for turnover, school administrators must make a concerted effort to retain school psychologists through support and opportunities for professional development (Young et al., 2021). Administrators can also ensure a reasonable workload. The current NASP (n.d.-a) recommendation is a 1:500 student ratio, although many psychologists across the United States have caseloads that may be more than double that recommendation. For schools with more limited resources, another way to support school psychologists is by reducing role confusion (Pepe, 2016).

School Psychologists and Role Confusion. School psychologists often face the challenge of role confusion when the professional identity of this group is not understood by other professionals in the school setting (Pepe, 2016). School psychologists are the only ones in the school setting trained to complete their specific duties; as a result, many people do not understand their role. Teachers often believe that school psychologists' primary function is to evaluate students (Panteri et al., 2021). The school psychologist's role is much broader, however; in addition to their work with individual students, they can work at the district or school level on curriculum, intervention, and policy (NASP, n.d.-b). Young et al. (2021) noted that dissatisfaction increased among school psychologists when administrators completed budgets that impacted their roles with little understanding of the importance of comprehensive services (Young et al., 2021). Some districts do not see school psychologists as essential personnel, and Philadelphia Public Schools attempted to lay off 50% of these staff in February 2011 (Weir, 2012). Although some districts are decreasing school psychologists, some of these professionals opt to leave on their own. Castillo et al. (2014) shared that some school psychologists leave the public school system due to limited educational opportunities and restrictive educational practices.

School Psychologists and Private Practice Opportunities. Finding current research regarding school psychologists was challenging, and Wiens et al. (2022) noted that when psychologists in the public sector dislike their job, they can go into private practice. Psychologists in private practice report high levels of job satisfaction

(Wiens et al., 2022), but the work environment and level of autonomy are not comparable to employment in the public school environment. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, n.d.-a.) recommends one school psychologist for every 500 students, yet the current average ratio is one school psychologist to every 1,162 students. Additionally, some school psychologists are expected to support as many as seven schools (Weir, 2012). As a result of the time constraints and high caseloads, school psychologists must rely on staff that often lack the skills or the buy-in to ensure treatment integrity (Cochrane et al., 2019). Private practice psychologists have more control over treatment integrity in private practice and may not face the same time constraints or burden of high caseloads found in the public school setting.

Longevity

Longevity is a critical area of focus for organizations, as longer employee tenure is associated with lower turnover (Pugh, 2016). When looking at the literature, research on the longevity of itinerant staff in public schools is scarce (Self, 2022), with even less related to noninstructional itinerant staff in public schools. Additionally, the current research is often focused on adverse occupational outcomes such as turnover, burnout, or intent to leave rather than longevity (Adams et al., 2019; Barrett, 2020; Gellatly et al., 2014; Hussein et al., 2014; Martínez-López et al., 2021; Russo & Buonocore, 2012; Wermeling, 2013; Young et al., 2021). Schmitz et al. (2019) found that employers can create policies in the workplace that promote longevity. The challenge for itinerant staff in public education is that they work at multiple sites, and the policies that impact them could be different at every site (Barrett, 2020).

When analyzing job longevity for noninstructional itinerant personnel in the public school setting, organizational commitment (OC), job satisfaction (JS), and work engagement (WE) can directly impact how long someone stays in a position. Cowden and Cummings (2012) categorized OC as a cognitive response to work and JS as an affective response. A cognitive response is based on beliefs, while an affective response is based on feelings (Cowden & Cummings, 2012). Nguyen and Tran (2018) found a strong correlation between OC and the intent to stay. Employees

with longevity also demonstrated a higher level of AC when high-performance work systems were evident in the organization (Hu et al., 2019). Likewise, Halcomb and Bird (2020) found that a higher level of JS is more likely to result in employee retention.

Although many studies are related to career longevity and JS, there is limited current research on noninstructional itinerant staff in the K–12 setting. It is important to note that much of the information on career longevity and JS was collected before the pandemic. The pandemic affected many professions internationally and created high levels of job insecurity (Hite & McDonald, 2020), impacting career commitment and JS. As a result of the pandemic, the National Association for School Nurses noted that from a sample of 977 K–12 school nurses, 68% reported an increase in work and 73% reported an increase in work hours (CDC Foundation, n.d.). Additionally, 61% of the nurses surveyed had an increase in job-related stress (CDC Foundation, n.d.). Similarly, psychologists reported a 25% increase in referrals and 70% increase in waitlists since the onset of the pandemic (Bethune, 2021). Social workers were deemed essential workers during the pandemic and the federal government recommended work-related barriers be reduced or removed to ensure social worker services could be delivered (NASW, 2020).

Organizational Commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) asserted that there are three types of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance. Employees with an affective commitment have deep loyalty to their job, while employees with normative commitment feel obligated to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1991). With normative commitment, the obligation can be internal (they may have been taught to be loyal growing up), or it can be based on other things such as rewards or work to cover the cost of paid training (Meyer & Allen, 1991). With continuance commitment, employees believe the cost to leave is greater than the cost to stay in an organization even when they are unhappy in their role (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and workplace interactions are more transactional (Gellatly et al., 2014). These perceived costs can be different for each person and may be associated with factors such as the market value of a specific skill (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Gellatly et al. (2014) noted that

nurses with affirmative and normative commitment are more connected to the organization.

Lin et al. (2013) found that the strongest predictor of commitment of all three components is perceived organizational support (POS). The same has been shown for nurses in the hospital setting, where a higher level of caring was correlated with more substantial commitment and reduced turnover (Abou Hashish, 2017). This impact of POS may be an issue in a school setting, where school nurses report that they do not feel connected to school-based administrators (Anttila et al., 2020). Another factor that impacts OC is harmonious passion, which is the “desire to engage in activities under their control” (Phillippe et al., 2010, p. 918). In conjunction with harmonious passion, organizational commitment has also been shown to decrease voluntary turnover (Scales & Quincy Brown, 2020).

Although there is limited information regarding itinerants such as school nurses and OC, there is research on nurses and social workers outside the school setting. The available literature covers a variety of topics related to the OC of nurses in public hospitals (Al-Haroon & Al-Qahtani, 2020; Mon et al., 2022) on their performance reviews (Sepahvand et al., 2020) and in rural areas (Stewart et al., 2020). Similarly, with school social workers, there are studies in the general field of social work (Brown et al., 2019), social workers in municipal services (Geisler et al., 2019), and those who work in Child Protective Services (Ross, 2022). Additionally, there is research on the organizational commitment of mental health counselors. A study conducted by Knudsen et al. (2013) with 934 counselors showed that quality supervision had the most significant influence over OC and job commitment. Additionally, organizations that promote the use of personal time off to mitigate burnout can positively impact employee longevity (Ross, 2022). The current researcher could identify no studies regarding OC and school psychologists.

Research on social workers has shown that workload and increasing job demands impact OC (Geisler et al., 2019). Brown et al. (2019) determined that when social workers experience burnout, their commitment to the organization decreases. In a similar study, Yoon and Cho (2022) noted that job demands had the most significant impact on the stress level of nurses. This impact of job demands was

increasingly evident and exacerbated by COVID-19 (García & Calvo, 2021). The increased needs led to burnout for social workers (Peinado & Anderson, 2022) and nurses (García & Calvo, 2021).

Work Engagement (WE). A critical component of longevity is WE defined as the “positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). When employees are engaged, they find meaningfulness in their work that is expressed through physical, cognitive, and emotional behaviors that benefit both the employer and the organization (Khan, 1990). Engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of autonomy and passion for their work (Bakker et al., 2011). They are also more likely to report higher levels of OC and JS (Chang, 2015) and support colleagues through organizational citizenship behavior (Deepa et al., 2014).

Despite the importance of WE and the benefits to the organization, the information regarding the WE of school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers is limited. It has been noted that their work engagement is often hindered by role confusion (Nellis & Wood, 2021). School psychologists who can work in a variety of capacities in a school such as assessing students, supporting academic interventions, coaching teachers, and helping to develop policy at the school and district level (NASP, n.d.-b) are often limited to assessing students for special education services (Lisbon-Peoples, 2015). Nellis and Wood (2021) reported that fewer than 12% of school psychologists are involved in system-level support, indicating that their talents are not being used to their fullest potential.

Likewise, school social workers are often relegated to working on attendance and truancy (Arthur, 2009) when they are skilled in providing mental health support (Cuellar et al., 2017) and working with community agencies to support families struggling with poverty and homelessness who need access to basic resources (Kopels, 2016). Social worker engagement would increase if they were able to engage in work that they perceived to be more meaningful, such as advocacy and professional development (Arthur, 2009). School nurses who are viewed as being responsible for first aid and medication administration should be engaged on a much broader level to provide mental health support (Evans, 2022), vaccine workshops,

and coordination with other health agencies to increase student access to healthcare (Anderson et al., 2018). Instead, they spend 65% of their time addressing student health needs (Anderson et al., 2018). When noninstructional itinerants are not provided the opportunity to fully apply themselves in the various areas of the work in which they have trained, they may not possess the vigor, dedication, and absorption that Schaufeli et al. (2002) noted in highly engaged employees.

Job Satisfaction (JS). Job satisfaction is how much an employee likes or dislikes various aspects of their job. JS can vary from person to person (Kumar, 2017) due to personal characteristics such as resilience and adaptability (Collins, 2017; Kašpárková et al., 2018). Four categories of JS identified by Abu-Shamaa et al. (2015) are “environmental factors, strategic employee recognition factors, individual factors, and psychological well-being” (p. 12). JS also plays a significant role in organizational commitment (Chegini et al., 2019).

Castillo et al. (2014) noted that overall, many school psychologists enjoy the role. Despite this report of JS, chronic shortages of school psychologists continue to plague the public school system (Castillo et al., 2014). The 2022 *U.S. News & World Report* (2022) ranked school psychology as the fifth-best job in the social services category. Social work, which is listed in that same category, ranks at the nineteenth (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2022). Even with overall JS levels that may be higher than they are for other noninstructional public-school itinerants, a study by Wiens et al. (2022) found that psychologists in the public sector were often dissatisfied with the politics and bureaucracy. Another issue with public sector service for psychologists was that evaluation preferences were often not aligned with organizational practices, negatively impacting job satisfaction (Cottrell & Barrett, 2016).

School psychologists reported that not feeling valued by their supervisors and not being effective in their role decreased their JS (Young et al., 2021). Being undervalued has also been reported by social workers (Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018; YouGov, 2020) and school nurses (Dawe & Sealey, 2019). Although they perceive they are undervalued, school psychologists reported that they enjoy their roles overall (Young et al., 2021). Social workers reported enjoying their roles more when there is

a centralized social work department (Pugh, 2016). This impact of centralization is a potential issue for noninstructional itinerant social workers, who are likely the only social worker at the school they support.

Another area of dissatisfaction among some psychologists is compensation, as 70% report being dissatisfied with their salaries (Young et al., 2021). The salary of nurses has also been found to be directly related to their JS (Chegini et al., 2019). Pugh (2016) reported that for social workers, salary does not impact JS when it is perceived as fair. Instead, social workers find JS in factors such as “achievement, recognition, interesting work, autonomy, and the challenge of the job” (Pugh, 2016, p. 486). Although recognition was associated with social worker JS, the perceived lack of respect is an international issue and 76% of social workers in England reported not being respected in a 2020 survey (YouGov, 2020). Autonomy and respect were also essential factors in nurse job satisfaction (Steinke et al., 2018). The desire for respect may be another challenge for school social workers and school nurses who may receive limited recognition and respect due to a lack of understanding regarding their roles.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant K–12 staff with longevity. The data were collected from first-hand experiences of noninstructional itinerant staff (school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers) currently working in the K–12 public school system who have been in this role for at least 10 years. By applying a qualitative approach and gaining information about the lived experiences of these individuals, that information can be provided to school-based administrators who work directly with these individuals. This information may offer them unique insights that they can use to help them support the needs of their specialized itinerant staff. As each of these itinerants is part of a school-based mental health team, finding ways to support the longevity of these highly skilled professionals is critical. This dissertation adds to the current literature on workplace longevity and limited literature on noninstructional itinerant K–12 staff.

Research Question

In order to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant staff in the public school system, the following question guided this study:

1. Why do the noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 public school system stay?

Significance of the Research

This study significantly contributes to the literature in this area, as there is limited information available related to itinerant staff in the school setting (Barrett, 2020) and even less about noninstructional staff in the school setting. This study has potential impacts on the educational community, as developing a deeper understanding of the career experiences of people who have remained in these roles for at least 10 years may directly impact longevity for other members of this subgroup. This knowledge is critical in the public school system, where the turnover of any staff member can be problematic, affecting the time and financial investment of the organization and the quality of support provided to students (Calvecchio, 2018). The impact of turnover is significant, as new staff may not have school-specific knowledge and come with potential training costs (Gibbons et al., 2021), and employee morale can be negatively impacted (Phuong et al., 2018). Frequent turnover also impacts the quality of support to students, negatively impacting their health, mental health, and academic performance (Wang et al., 2021).

This research adds to the current research on mental health, especially for the segment of the population that has limited access to mental health services.

Universally, there is a gap in mental health care of individuals in the low-middle income range (Jack et al., 2013). In the United States, approximately 22% of children live in poverty, increasing the likelihood of developing a mental health disorder yet limiting their access to the necessary care and services (Best et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2016). In addition to the needs of students, vicarious trauma is a professional hazard for mental health providers, so providing appropriate support to this population is critical (Ross, 2022; Wagaman et al., 2015). This support is critical in maintaining noninstructional itinerant staff in the public school setting, who significantly impact

the mental health needs of school-aged children (Hernandez, 2016). Students spend up to 5 days a week in the school setting, and mental health team members can help improve students' mental health through curriculum and individualized intervention (Hernandez, 2016).

The issues that U.S. employers are experiencing with high turnover of staff who provide mental health support have also been noted in other countries. In Ireland, the high levels of emotional and physical exhaustion experienced in the mental health arena have resulted in one in five psychologists reporting that they would select another profession if given the opportunity (Roncalli & Byrne, 2015). In Mainland China, the challenges with social worker turnover started in 2008 and have continued to increase (Mo & Lai, 2018). In 2020, the findings of a qualitative study in the United Kingdom showed that 39% of social workers would leave the profession within the next 5 years, and only 26% of respondents shared that they would encourage others to join the profession. (YouGov, 2020). Social workers working directly with children reported the highest levels of intent to leave and cited heavy workloads as the primary reason (YouGov, 2020). In the United Kingdom, the 2018 Health and Safety Executive noted that social work had a higher prevalence of job-related stress when compared to all industries, public administration, and education (HSE, 2018). The high-stress level in social work was also noted in Spain, where Gómez-García et al. (2021) found that emotional exhaustion contributed to lower levels of job satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

There was no one conceptual framework or theory that had a strong alignment with workplace longevity. Instead, there were many frameworks that could potentially have a significant influence on longevity. When looking at appropriate frameworks, factors such as employee characteristics, job characteristics, empowerment, job satisfaction, and commitment were explored. For this study, several frameworks were reviewed. Once the participant data were analyzed, the researcher determined which theories were more aligned with the longevity of noninstructional itinerants in the K–12 public school system.

Employee Characteristics

When considering employee characteristics, there are a plethora of theories that can be applied such as the human capital theory, SDT, P-E fit, SET, work as a calling, and job embeddedness theory. Although different in certain aspects, many of these theories have several components in common. For example, the work as a calling includes a person-environment fit component (Duffy et al., 2018). Similarly, the social-exchange theory examines the bond between individuals, which is also a component of the job embeddedness theory (Rahimnia et al., 2022).

Human Capital Theory. Human capital is a combination of an individual's experience, education, and skills (Myers et al., 2004). Myers et al. (2004) determined that skill development should occur in four areas: "social, decision-making, problem-solving, and time-management" (p. 215). Myers et al. (2004) asserted that employers could "buy skills or build skills" (p. 225) through hiring practices or through skill development of the existing employees in the organization. When employers only focus on increasing firm-specific capital, they do not provide employees with an opportunity to increase skills they can use outside of the organization (Kräkel, 2016). Although employers can offer training opportunities, they cannot make employees learn new skills (Kräkel, 2016) and should anticipate costs related to employee education and training (Pravdiuk et al., 2019).

Self-Determination Theory. Organizations can increase internal motivation by utilizing Deci and Ryan's (2014) self-determination theory (SDT) and meeting the three essential needs of employees: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. All three needs must be met for an individual to be intrinsically motivated (Martela & Riekkilä, 2018). When employees are intrinsically motivated, they complete a task of their own volition because they find it enjoyable (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2014). Di Domenico and Ryan (2017) asserted that with intrinsic motivation, the task is completed purely out of curiosity and the innate need for exploration without the expectation of reward (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017). SDT views motivation as a continuum where people can be highly motivated to amotivated (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2014).

Autonomy. Individuals with a strong autonomy orientation value choice and challenges. Conversely, individuals with a controlled orientation engage in forced

actions or believe that they must complete specific tasks (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2014). Deci and Ryan (1995) posited that autonomy does not mean that individuals have to do something alone, but instead of their own free will.

Competence. When employees are assigned tasks, they have the skills to complete, motivation is more likely to increase (Gagné & Deci, 2014) because there is a stronger job fit (Greguras et al., 2014). When people do not have the skills to complete a particular task, they may move toward a more impersonal orientation and become amotivated (Gagné & Deci, 2014). Individuals operating within this amotivated, impersonal orientation do not feel worthy and become detached from the task (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2014).

Relatedness. The social connection and sense of belonging employees get from each other are strong motivators (Martela & Riekk, 2018). Humans are social beings by nature and often depend on, and seek to align with, other people (Deci & Ryan, 1995). Deci and Ryan (1995) noted that relatedness and autonomy are not mutually exclusive and being “autonomously dependent” (p. 90) is a healthy and desirable state, even though the term dependency has developed a negative connotation.

Person-Environment Fit. The stronger the fit between the person and their environment, the higher the level of JS and OC (Giauque et al., 2014). Edwards and Cooper (1990) identified two domains within P-E fit: supplies and values (S-V) and demands and abilities (D-A). With S-V, an individual’s motives and skills need to be aligned with a job and with D-A the alignment is related to skills (Edwards & Cooper, 1990). Ahmad and Khairuddin (2003) found that a stronger S-V fit was highly correlated with JS. To have a strong S-V fit, an employee must have a substantial amount of varied work, power, responsibility, and concentration. Too much or too little of any of these factors decreases satisfaction (Ahmad & Khairuddin, 2003).

Furnham and Schaeffer (1984) posited that personality impacted P-E fit and provided six personality characteristics: “realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional” (p. 296). The top three personality characteristics make up an individual’s profile and when aligned with the environment, positively

impact JS and mental health (Furnham & Schaeffer, 1984). P-E fit can also be influenced by other factors such as leadership, the organization, and the job (Uysal-Irak, 2014). In the overarching theory of P-E fit, four areas of the environment can be considered in relation to the person: job, group, vocation, and organization (Kristof, 1996). Each area involves a different aspect of the employee's fit. Person-environment fit is the broader area of research, while person-organization fit and person-job fit are two subsets of P-E fit (Merecz & Andysz, 2012).

Person-Job Fit. Person-job fit is the “perceived degree of match between an individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, needs, values, and the requirements of specific jobs or job tasks” (Shin, 2004, p. 726). Employees with a robust P-J fit have higher JS, more self-efficacy (Peng & Mao, 2015), longer job tenure, and increased organizational tenure (Kim et al., 2018). Chhabra (2015) noted two components associated with P-J fit: demand-ability (D-A) and need-supply (N-S). With D-A, the employee determines whether they have the skills to competently complete the work and with N-S, whether the work meets their personal needs (Chhabra, 2015; Ju et al., 2021). Kim et al. (2018) found that the N-S is more impactful to an individual because that is what determines whether an employee is getting what they need from the job. When employees demonstrate self-efficacy in the D-A component they are more likely to have lower stress, increased confidence, and increased recognition (Peng & Mao, 2015). Likewise, an employee who can demonstrate self-efficacy in the N-S domain will find ways to complete the work in the way that works best for them (Peng & Mao, 2015).

P-J fit can be considered a supplement where an employee fills organizational needs similar to other employees. P-J fit can also supplement, when the employee's work is different but still fills a need in the organization (Sekiguchi, 2004). P-J fit can be measured subjectively by how well the employee perceives the job is aligned with their needs and objectively through their reported preferences when compared to the actual job characteristics (Chhabra, 2015). With a strong P-J fit, the employees believe they can do their job effectively and that their needs are met by the job or the rewards offered (Choi et al., 2017). Although a strong P-J fit is typically positive, it is possible that the P-J fit can be too strong to the point where an individual is not

motivated to improve their skills (Ju et al., 2021). P-J fit should not be static, as people can continually improve their skills and abilities, impacting their fit with various positions (Sylva et al. (2019).

Person-Organization Fit. Person-organization fit has been defined as the level of “compatibility between the employee and the organization” (Santos & De Domenico, 2015, p. 573). P-O fit has been studied extensively (Merecz & Andysz, 2012) and this framework has been used to look at factors such as citizenship behavior (Wei, 2013), supervisor support (Fan, 2018), and career behavior (Sylva et al., 2019). With P-O fit, employees whose values align closely with the organization are more likely to be innovative and have increased job involvement (Huang et al., 2019). With a strong P-O fit, the employee feels emotionally connected to the organization, making it less likely that the employee will leave the organization. These findings are supported by Rayton et al. (2019), who found that P-O fit increased JS but had a stronger relationship with AC.

P-O fit can also be analyzed through a perceived, objective, or subjective fit (Youngs et al., 2015). The perceived fit considers the employee’s beliefs about the organization, while the subjective fit considers the employee’s beliefs about themselves and the organization (Youngs et al., 2015). The objective fit is highly reflective, as it only considers the employee’s report of their own workplace characteristics (Youngs et al., 2015). Another way to consider P-O fit is through a complementary or supplementary perspective (Merecz & Andysz, 2012). With a complementary fit, the organization and the employees have a relationship that meets both of their needs, while a supplementary fit is related to the employee’s alignment with the organizational goals and values (Merecz & Andysz, 2012).

Finally, P-O fit can be strengthened by providing potential employees with an accurate picture of the position before they start working so the employee’s expectations about the job are closely aligned with the actual job (Wei, 2015). Moreland (2013) asserted that poor person-job fit is the primary reason employees leave an organization, and this outcome can be mitigated by using specifics when talking to applicants about a job (Moreland, 2013). Moreland suggested that instead of using terms like “team player,” employers look for individuals who can work on “a

five-person team and maintain a customer satisfaction of 80% or higher” (p. 59). When potential employees were given a realistic job description before working, they were less likely to leave the position as they may perceive the organization to be honest (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Phillips, 1998).

Social-Exchange Theory (SET). Social exchange theory has been defined as “the reciprocal flow of valued information between the participants” (Emerson, 1976, p. 347). With SET, an action by one individual leads to a reciprocal response from another (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, Rahimnia et al. (2022) noted that “the expanding exchange of benefits of different sorts between individuals makes them increasingly interdependent, establishes mutual trust, and fortifies their social bond” (p. 456). SET is an evolving dynamic; robust exchanges result in higher levels of trust, loyalty, and commitment between interacting individuals (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

An extension of the SET is the psychological contract, which is the unwritten agreement of mutual obligations between the organization and the employee (Pattnawk, 2018). Pattnawk (2018) noted that human capital is what one knows, social exchange is whom one knows, and psychological capital is the person knowing who they are. Employees with a higher level of connectedness in the organization generally have more positive feelings about the organization as a whole and are more likely to stay (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). Likewise, employees who believe they are good at their job and perceive that they have strong support within the organization are more likely to believe the job and organization are a good fit for them (Rahimnia et al., 2022).

Work as a Calling Theory. Although there are different definitions of one’s calling, Duffy et al. (2018) described it as the meaning that one finds in their career when it provides purpose and contribution. The work as a calling theory components are perceived calling, person-environment fit, meaning, and the ability to engage in the work (Duffy et al., 2018). Andel et al. (2021) asserted that a calling could be an internal personal drive to accomplish meaningful work or an external calling and a need to help others. Callings can be broad or specific (Reed et al., 2022). Reed et al. (2022) identified four antecedents of calling: how much effort the calling will use,

self-reflection, feedback from the environment, and fusion with self-perception. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2015) identified four motivations for calling: guiding force (e.g., duty), meaning and purpose (e.g., fulfillment), altruism (e.g., benefit to others), and active tendency (e.g., actively pursuing).

Job Embeddedness Theory. Job embeddedness theory considers an employee's attachment to an organization and the community to determine employee retention (Halvorsen et al., 2015). The theory reviews on-the-job factors that make it less likely that someone will leave their job and off-the-job factors that make it less likely that someone will leave their community (Halvorsen et al., 2015). Halvorsen et al. (2015) noted that the job embeddedness theory accounts for three employment and community components: fit, links, and sacrifice. This translates to the following questions: (a) Are the job and community values aligned with the employees? (b) Does the employee have connections in the workplace and the community? (c) Would the employee have to sacrifice things such as health insurance, accrued vacation, or easy access to medical facilities by leaving the community? (Halvorsen et al., 2015).

Job embeddedness looks at employment from a retention lens and considers why employees stay with an organization (Agrawal & Singh, 2018). Organizational leaders can consider whether employees stay because they are “stuck, connected, attached, or embedded” (Agrawal & Singh, 2018, p.11). Yang et al. (2011) noted that even when individuals work in an unsatisfactory environment, they will stay if they are deeply embedded in the organization and the community. Highly embedded employees will even accept a demotion if it means they can remain with their organization (Reitz, 2014). To mitigate adverse outcomes that may result when an employee feels stuck in a job, employers should ensure opportunities to develop their professional skills so that employees have the competencies to accept other jobs if they want to leave the organization (Marasi et al., 2016).

Job-Related Characteristics

In addition to individual characteristics, there may be job-related characteristics that impact longevity. If individuals are working on jobs that have high demands but low resources, the limited access to resources could negatively

impact longevity. Conversely, longevity could be positively impacted when individuals have strategies to increase personal or organizational resources. Two conceptual frameworks that can be used to consider these factors are the job demands-resource (JD-R) model and conservation of resources (COR).

Job Demands-Resource Model. The JD-R model conceptualized by Demerouti et al. (2001) examines the relationship between demands and resources on job satisfaction. When the demands are high and the resources are low, the result will be higher levels of employee stress (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). The resources that an individual can use also include personal resources such as “optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience” (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 3; Huang et al., 2016), while demands can be “physical, psychological, social, or organizational” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016, p. 274). Individuals who can employ a variety of solid coping strategies and can demonstrate coping flexibility by employing the most appropriate strategy will have lower stress as they can handle more demands (Cheng et al., 2014).

Conservation of Resources. The conservation of resources theory is based on the premise that employees want to collect and preserve resources (Kiazad et al., 2015). Resources can be found in several areas including organizational culture, human capital, economic resources, and situational resources (Alvaro et al., 2010), and an excess of resources in one area may mitigate the loss of resources in another area (Alvaro et al., 2010). The more resources an employee has, the more likely they are to stay with the organization, as accumulated resources help employees meet increasing demands (Kiazad et al., 2015). Employees with more resources in the social support category may perceive higher levels of organizational support, have more exchanges with team members, and may be able to work more autonomously (Hobfoll, 2001). The resources being conserved may be tangible items or intangible things such as feelings, conditions, energy, or personal resources (Hobfoll, 2001).

Empowerment

Empowered employees complete work in a more autonomous manner. Empowered employees can take on leadership roles and be directly involved with the decision-making processes in the organization. Two theories that can be used to explore this construct are Kanter’s theory of structural empowerment, which occurs

within an organization, and psychological empowerment theory, which focuses more on the individual's confidence and ability to shape their role in the organization. Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment. In Kanter's theory, employees need information, resources, and support in order to be empowered (Davies et al., 2006) and "power is defined as efficacy (the ability to mobilize resources) rather than domination" (Kanter, 1993, p. 25). Empowered employees participate in organizational decision-making, increasing employee trust and motivation (Baruch, 1998). Power can be formal (e.g., autonomy, visibility) or informal (e.g., collaboration with peers; Kanter, 1993). Empowerment requires that leaders genuinely believe empowerment can strengthen an organization and that leaders treat employees fairly (Baruch, 1998). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) identified four essential components to empowerment and intrinsic task motivation: "impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice" (p. 672). Employees must believe they are engaged in tasks with an actual impact, must be competent, must find the work meaningful, and must believe that they can engage in the task of their own free will (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Psychological Empowerment Theory. The PE theory conceptualized by Zimmerman (1995) takes the empowerment theory to the next level by incorporating three components: interpersonal, interactional, and behavioral. This theory includes perceived control, competence, and goal attainment (Krishna, 2007; Shah et al., 2019). These components are the "beliefs that goals can be achieved, awareness about resources and factors that hinder or enhance one's efforts to achieve those goals, and efforts to fulfill the goals" (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 582). Psychological empowerment differs from person to person and in different contexts (Zimmerman, 1995). Additionally, PE can fluctuate for a person at various points in their life (Zimmerman, 1995) as psychological resources can be enhanced (Shah et al., 2019).

Job Satisfaction (JS)

Several frameworks built around JS are Locke's range of effect theory, equity theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Within these frameworks, factors such as motivation and hygiene, employee characteristics, employees' perceptions of their

job, and fairness demonstrated by organizational leaders are reviewed to determine their impact on JS.

Locke's Range of Affect Theory. Locke (1969) posited that satisfaction is the cumulative impact of all of a job's facets (e.g., pay, connections, leadership). Locke asserted that individuals assign different levels of meaning to each facet. For example, though one person might find pay to be a more critical facet, another might feel that connections and collaboration are more satisfying. The higher the value of any facet, the higher JS is when that facet is present in the work environment (Rice et al., 1991). This JS results from an alignment between values and the actual work environment (Locke, 1969).

Equity Theory (ET). The equity theory is based on the concept that fairness between groups and individuals within the organization impacts JS (Kumar, 2017). Adams (1965) asserted that employees would get out what they put into a job. Inputs include things such as "effort on the job, time, loyalty to the organization, and compliance with organizational policies" (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990, p. 98). Hatfield et al. (2011) posited that "people feel most comfortable when their relationships are maximally profitable and they are getting and giving exactly what they deserve from the relationship" (p. 2). With ET, the outcomes can be related to economics (e.g., money, benefits) or related to organizational justice (Gashgari, 2016) and include things such as pay, opportunities for advancement, and recognition (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990).

Employees can be overrewarded, resulting in guilt, equitably rewarded, or under-rewarded, resulting in resentment (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). Employees who are under-rewarded may engage in deviant behaviors such as calling in and taking extended breaks (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). Employees who perceive inequities may engage in behavior to create equity such as decreasing output, altering product outcomes, or changing the person/group they are using for a comparison (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012). Employees may also try to negotiate with their employer (Gashgari, 2016), and those who cannot get equitable outputs may eventually quit (Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). It is important to note that equity can also be impacted by the outside environment and the opportunities an individual

believes they have for a job change (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012). When job opportunities are higher, employees may be more impacted by perceived inequities, as they have options for employment in other organizations (Al-Zawahreh & Al-Madi, 2012)

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The two-factor theory was conceptualized by Herzberg (1974), who posited that JS is created through motivation and hygiene factors (Kumar, 2017). Hygiene factors are things such as pay, job security, interpersonal connections, and adequate supervision, while motivation factors include “challenging/stimulating work, gaining recognition, an opportunity for advancement, responsibility status, a sense of personal achievement, and personal growth on the job” (Chu & Kuo, 2015, p. 55). Motivation factors include things such as achievement, growth, and career advancement (Sanjeev & Surya, 2016).

When motivation factors are present, JS is positively impacted but the absence of motivation factors does not mean an employee will be dissatisfied (Sanjeev & Surya, 2016). Interestingly, Herzberg (1974) asserted that people are satisfied by motivation factors related to day-to-day work but become dissatisfied by the hygiene factors and how they perceive they are being treated. Herzberg (1987) called hygiene factors a kick in the ass (KITA), asserting that KITAs could leave to movement but not motivation. An employee can use a negative KITA (e.g., punishments) or a positive KITA (e.g., rewards), but neither will result in the long-term change that is found with motivation factors (Herzberg, 1987).

Organizational Commitment (OC)

The level of affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) demonstrated by employees is often based on experiences within the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). For commitment, the most widely accepted theory for the last 30 years has been Meyer and Allen's three-component model (TCM) of commitment (Somers et al., 2019). Meyer and Allen (1991) described commitment as the “desire, need, obligation to remain” (p. 63). AC is an individual's strong emotional attachment to an organization, and NC is an individual's belief that they are obligated to remain loyal (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Rahman, 2020). CC is an employee's commitment because they do not have

alternatives, or the cost to leave outweighs the cost of staying (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Rahman, 2020).

An employee with positive workplace experiences is likelier to report higher levels of AC, while an employee who was influenced in their formative years to believe that loyalty is an essential work trait is more likely to report NC (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The employee's age should also be noted, as older employees are more likely to report higher levels of AC and NC (Allen & Meyer, 1993). CC is developed through the employee's investment in the organization and is influenced by an employee's tenure in the organization and their position (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Employees with higher CC have likely been with the organization longer or hold higher positions, and the cost to leave the organization would be too great (Allen & Meyer, 1993).

Individuals can experience all three types of commitment simultaneously (Allen & Meyer, 1990), and each component can elicit different workplace behaviors (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Understanding workplace behaviors that might be demonstrated through AC, NC, and CC can help an organization better identify employees' commitment and predict their intent to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Although AC is the most desirable type of commitment, Haque et al. (2021) showed that NC produced a higher level of employee wellbeing, demonstrating the importance of other commitment types. Meyer and Allen (1991) posited that employees with organizational longevity may have more substantial levels of commitment due to having better positions. Another plausible reason for longevity is that the employees must like the job if they have stayed in the position for that long (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Methodology

The research design for this study was qualitative to enable an exploration of the experiences of school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers who have stayed in their roles for a minimum of 10 years. All research "seeks to tell a story to the audience" (Camic, 2021, p. 10), but using a qualitative approach ensured

that the researcher incorporated a range of voices and deep experiences while still ensuring research integrity (Camic, 2021).

The participants in this study were 14 itinerant staff (five school nurses, five psychologists, and four school social workers) from a K–12 school district in the southeast United States. The sampling method used in this study was purposeful, convenience sampling. These 14 participants were recruited based on their experience in the school setting and longevity in these positions. Individuals were also chosen based on their ability and willingness to participate in this research. Data were collected through individual face-to-face interviews with the participants. These interviews were recorded using an audio recorder. The researcher used a notebook to document observations such as body language and affect during the interviews (Cleary et al., 2014). The researcher also collected data during observations of staff meetings and data related to supervisor emails sent to staff with longevity.

Scope and Limitations

Several potential limitations should be considered when reviewing this proposed research. This study involved one public K–12 school district, so the findings may not generalize to private, parochial, or charter schools. As this study was conducted in the southeastern United States, the findings may not be generalizable to other parts of the country or internationally. Likewise, much of the literature used as the basis for this study was conducted in other countries such as Ireland, Spain, China, and the United Kingdom, meaning that the results can not necessarily be generalized to the United States (Gómez-García et al., 2021; Mo & Lai, 2018; Roncalli & Byrne, 2015; YouGov, 2020). The findings in this study could potentially apply to school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers but may not apply to professionals in other settings such as private practice, hospitals, and other professional agencies. Itinerants in this school district include school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers. These positions may not be itinerant in other school districts, and the same study with full-time noninstructional staff may yield different results.

Other factors related to the data collection and the conceptual frameworks selected for this study should be considered. Data were collected following the pandemic; thus, the results may differ from results collected at another point. The sample size of this study is appropriate for qualitative research but may not reflect the beliefs of many other noninstructional itinerant K–12 personnel. Additionally, the researcher assumed that the participants provide truthful information about their experiences and perceptions rather than what they believe the researcher wants to hear. Additionally, the conceptual frameworks used to guide this study have had limited or no use in other studies related to itinerant staff, so there is little research available for comparison.

Definition of Terms

Affective Commitment

AC is one of the three components of Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM. AC is an individual's emotion and devotion toward their organization. This commitment component is considered the best type of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), correlated with stronger OC and lower TI (Oh, 2019).

Continuance Commitment

CC is one of the three commitment components of Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM. Employees demonstrate CC when they stay with the organization because the cost of leaving the organization is more than the cost of staying (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Interprofessional Collaboration

Interprofessional collaboration is defined as the work that is completed between team members. Interprofessional collaborations may include school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers, teachers, and administrators.

Itinerant

An itinerant is someone who moves from one job location to another.

Intent to Leave

Intent to leave (ITL), or turnover intention, is the desire to stop working for an organization before an individual submits their resignation (Treglown et al., 2018).

Longevity

Longevity is when an individual stays in an occupational role for an extended period. For this study, longevity was defined as 10 or more years.

Job Satisfaction

This term refers to how happy an individual is with their job or what they do and do not like about various parts of their job (Kumar, 2017).

Mental Health

Mental health relates to one's emotional and psychological well-being, impacting their behavior (CDC, n.d.-a).

Mental Health Disorders

A mental disorder is a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in critical areas of functioning (WHO, 2022). *In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th Edition; DSM-V), the APA (2013) identified seven features of a mental health disorder, which include the following: (a) A behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual, (b) the consequences of which are clinically significant distress (e.g., a painful symptom) or disability (i.e., impairment in one or more important areas of functioning), that (c) must not be merely an expectable response to common stressors and losses (e.g., the loss of a loved one) or a culturally sanctioned response to a particular event (for example, trance states in religious rituals), that (d) reflects an underlying psychobiological dysfunction, that (e) is not solely a result of social deviance or conflicts with society, that (f) has diagnostic validity using one or more sets of diagnostic validators (e.g., prognostic significance, psychobiological disruption, response to treatment), and that (g) has clinical utility (e.g., contributes to better conceptualization of diagnoses, or to better assessment and treatment).

Noninstructional Itinerant Staff

Individuals who work in a noninstructional capacity do not instruct in a classroom and professionals working in an itinerant capacity have multiple schools on their caseloads. Noninstructional itinerants may include staff members such as licensed mental health counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school

social workers. It is possible that these professionals can be assigned to one school full-time but based on the availability of skilled personnel and the limited funding allocated to support many needs across a school district, it is common for these professionals to work in an itinerant capacity.

Normative Commitment

NC is one of the three commitment components of Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM. Employees who demonstrate NC feel obligated to stay with the organization, as they may have been raised to believe that loyalty is an essential work trait (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Organizational Commitment

Commitment is demonstrated when individuals display loyalty and increase their organizational involvement (Maiti & Sanyal, 2018).

Person-Organization Fit

P-O fit is the "compatibility between the employee and the organization" (Santos & De Domenico, 2015, p. 573).

Psychologists

Psychologists work independently and in teams to assess an individual's cognitive, emotional, and social behavior (BLS, n.d.).

School Nurses

School nursing is a specialty area of nursing for those who work directly with students in the school setting. School nurses protect student health, serve as a conduit between the school and community health agencies, and promote student success (NASN, 2011).

School Psychologists

School psychologists collaborate with teachers, families, and other mental health team members to support students in areas such as behavior, mental health, special education evaluations, and academic intervention (NASP, n.d.-b). Unlike traditional psychologists, they must have advanced studies in both psychology and education (NASP, n.d.-b).

School Social Workers

School social workers are a specialized subgroup of social workers who work with students in school systems. Certified School Social Work Specialists (C-SSWSs) must be supervised in a school setting for 2 academic years and pass a state licensure exam to continue working within the school system (NASW, 2003). Additionally, C-SSWSs must pass a skills assessment through their supervisor, receive a reference from a social worker colleague, and agree to practice within the guidelines of the National Association of School Social Workers *Code of Ethics and Standards for Continuing Professional Education* (NASW, 2003, p. 63). They coordinate services and support to address students' mental health needs, improve attendance, decrease truancy, and improve behavior (NASW, n.d.).

Social Workers

Social workers connect individuals with resources and services in their community. They support individuals holistically and often support individuals one-on-one in a clinical setting or in the community where support is needed. (National Association of Social Workers, n.d.).

Turnover

Turnover describes any situation where the result is that an employee is no longer part of an organization (Ngo-Henha, 2017).

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher demonstrated the need for additional research on the longevity of noninstructional itinerant staff in public schools. Currently, the scope of the research related to the longevity of noninstructional itinerant personnel in the school setting is limited. With the median length of employment for all wage and salary earners at only 4.1 years, understanding why these professionals stay in their roles has critical implications for public schools in the United States and internationally (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020a). This turnover has long-term negative results, such as increased costs to the district and reduced quality of services for students (Wang et al., 2021). Noninstructional itinerants have opportunities to work in their fields outside of the educational setting, sometimes with reduced

caseloads and with a higher salary (Chegini et al., 2019; Young et al., 2021). The opportunities create the need for school administrators to understand why people stay and to provide support to newer employees who may be more likely to leave.

Unfortunately, research shows that many noninstructional itinerant employees in public schools do not believe that people understand their role (Houlahan & Deveneau, 2019; Panteri et al., 2021). They feel undervalued (Dawe & Sealey, 2019; Finigan-Carr & Shaia) and disconnected from school-based administration (Anttila et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerants with longevity to identify how they may have overcome these challenges.

In Chapter 2, the researcher reviews the current literature on school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers. As the research specific to these subgroups is limited, studies using the broader fields of nursing, social work, and psychology was explored. Additionally, literature on longevity, P-O fit, and frameworks that potentially support longevity was reviewed for a deeper understanding of the concepts from the information shared in previous studies.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The researcher of the current study aimed to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant K–12 staff with demonstrated longevity. A review of the current research can help provide a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Gardner (2010) asserted that rather than trying to improve new hires, it might be beneficial for organizations to determine why employees leave. In contrast, this study seeks to understand why noninstructional itinerant staff stay, as retaining talent should be an organizational priority (Kraemer et al., 2017).

The central phenomenon of this study was longevity. This literature review also contains information about employee behaviors and organizational structures that support longevity. Information from current research can help organizations that want to implement proven strategies and create an environment that encourages people to stay with an organization. Organizations that support longevity invest in and develop knowledgeable and productive employees (Bersin, 2013). Retaining talented employees may also give organizations an advantage over competitors (Tlaiss et al., 2017). Although external factors impact longevity, the organization may only have control over internal factors. These internal factors include things such as providing consistent supervisory support, opportunities for professional development, and autonomy (Engeda et al., 2014). Opportunities for advancement (Chu & Kuo, 2015) and an emphasis on ensuring work/life balance (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017) should be regularly assessed by organizational leaders (Deepa et al., 2014).

Conversely, employees who do not demonstrate longevity might negatively impact an organization. Turnover is not necessarily an adverse event, as new employees can bring new skills and innovation into an organization (Carey, 2022); however, high turnover disrupts organizational momentum and productivity. Even high levels of turnover intentions (TI) can be problematic as they negatively impact employee motivation and productivity (Christian & Ellis, 2014). At its worst, TI can result in deviant behavior such as unprofessional interpersonal exchanges or property destruction (Christian & Ellis, 2014). This deviant behavior can impact others in the workplace as incivility and feeling unsafe in the work environment increases turnover

(Yanchus et al., 2017). Organizations with high turnover contend with undesirable direct consequences such as the increased costs of recruitment, hiring, and onboarding (Bersin, 2013; Nguyen & Tran, 2018; Ott et al., 2018; Tnay et al., 2013). Other potential consequences are loss of skills and organizational knowledge (Ott et al., 2018) and decreased employee productivity and morale, which can debilitate organizational progress (Bersin, 2013; Tnay et al., 2013).

This literature review was conducted in four major sections. The first section examines the phenomenon of workplace longevity and reviews research related to longevity in various occupations. The second section reviews organizational factors with a significant impact on longevity: organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and workplace engagement. Section 3 considers several theoretical frameworks that might be related to employee longevity. Finally, Section 4 looks at the longevity of itinerants and noninstructional itinerants in the public school setting.

Section 1: Longevity

Understanding the concept of longevity and the factors that increase the likelihood of an individual staying in a position is of immense value to an organization (Kokka, 2016; Tolliver, 2018; Willis et al., 2018; Zotova et al., 2019). The longer employees stay in a position, the less likely they are to leave the organization (Pugh, 2016). Datu and Mateo (2017) defined longevity as “the actual number of years worked” (p. 205). According to Tolliver (2018), one of the most significant predictors of longevity is an employee’s connection with others in the organization.

Likewise, Alexander et al. (2020) identified interpersonal connections as a critical factor but determined that a strong interest in one’s career choice and being intrinsically motivated also impacted longevity. Ott et al. (2018) noted that employee connectedness could be developed through opportunities for on-the-job development, while Tlaiss et al. (2017) asserted that good relationships between supervisors and employees were critical for talent retention. These strong relationships help organizations guard against turnover and high levels of TI. With TI, the employee ceases to engage in the psychological contract that has been established with the

organization (Christian & Ellis, 2014). Conversely, relationships that strengthen the psychological contract decrease TI while increasing OC and JS, supporting workplace longevity (Behery et al., 2016). Fan (2018) posited that OC, JS, and TI are highly researched as they are the most significant workplace behaviors.

Another critical behavior that organizations can focus on related to longevity is increased employee motivation. One way to increase motivation is through compensation, although the findings related to motivators have varied. Novitasari et al. (2020) showed that intrinsic rewards increased employee JS. Although employees want to be fairly compensated, there are better ways to encourage talent longevity than by offering employees more money (Ott et al., 2018), such as fostering a positive work climate (Al-Madi et al., 2017). In a study with 97 participants in Jordan, Al-Madi et al. showed that wages and appreciation impacted motivation, but the development of collegial relationships was a more powerful motivator. Mustafa et al. (2019) determined that compensation can be a weak motivator. When coupled with competency development, however, compensation significantly increased autonomous motivation while decreasing TI (Mustafa et al., 2019). Autonomous motivation is intrinsic, meaning that employees engage in the work without coercion or promise of a reward because they enjoy the work (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the study of Al-Madi et al. (2017), employee motivation impacted AC, NC, and CC. In a study of 333 individuals in the healthcare field in Delhi, Kumar (2017) also found that intrinsic motivation was positively correlated with stronger OC.

In addition to being influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, employees value the concept of longevity and believe it is an essential component of successful organizations. When Stanton (2017) asked 107 employees whether they believed people should stay in a job for several years, 70% agreed or strongly agreed, and no respondents disagreed. Despite these findings, the average longevity of an employee between the ages of 25-38 is less than 3 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020b), and the average turnover in 2021 was 24% (Payscale, 2022). Most respondents in Stanton's (2017) study indicated that employees should not stay in a position just for the sake of staying, and there should be some identified value in their intent to stay (ITS). Even when there is no apparent value to staying, retaining

employees for an extended period is possible, as longevity can be achieved in difficult environments (Tolliver, 2018). Although difficult environments can negatively impact an employee's physical and emotional health, longevity can still be demonstrated by employees who strongly desire to stay, have a solid work ethic, and believe in themselves (Tolliver, 2018).

Human Capital

Regardless of the environment that produces longevity, human capital is one of the most vital outcomes of this phenomenon. Organizational longevity often results in employees who have developed "firm-specific human capital," which is the skills and knowledge that are specific to an organization (Wei, 2015, p. 740). Human capital can increase because skilled individuals have more opportunities to work in other organizations (Wei, 2015). Organizations must invest in veteran employees through ongoing support and opportunities (Wei, 2013). It is critical that organizations continually assess employee perceptions. Unfortunately, many employers only seek feedback through an exit survey after an employee quits, which offers no opportunity to mitigate the departure of staff members and promote longevity (Self, 2022).

In addition to human capital, employee longevity can be influenced by personal and environmental factors (Capper et al., 2020). Capper et al. identified personal characteristics as things such as coping and resilience and environmental characteristics as things such as workload and leadership. Employees may develop unique ways to cope through developed strategies that help reduce the stress caused by demands that exceed their resources (APA, n.d.). Likewise, everyone has different ways of developing resilience which the APA (n.d.) defined as "the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands (p. 1). Organizations can increase longevity by providing employees with opportunities for ongoing feedback and ensuring that supervisors have the social skills to support employees emotionally and with skill development (Yanchus et al., 2017). Supervisors can also support collaborative teams by recognizing individual strengths while ensuring "shared accountability and mutual

consideration and support” (Roncalli & Byrne, 2015, p. 33). Keeping staff engaged, providing opportunities for leadership and mentorship, and making communication a priority are all essential priorities for organizations looking to identify and improve workplace issues (Sheather & Slattery, 2021).

Work-Life Balance and Empowerment

Two more ways that organizations can improve workplace issues are by focusing on WLB and empowering employees. Leaving an organization can be difficult for an employee. Employees who leave may lose relationships and face uncertainty by taking a new job (Wei, 2015). Employers can provide employees reasons to stay by looking at them holistically and understanding that their social, work, and family needs must be met (Hite & McDonald, 2020). Supporting a work-life balance and providing employees with options through individualized work schedules, part-time work, or options for daycare are strong motivators for individuals to stay with an organization (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017).

Empowering employees may also motivate them to stay (Ott et al., 2018). Supervisors can empower employees through meetings with productive feedback, career planning, coaching, and appropriate professional development opportunities (Hu et al., 2019; Ott et al., 2018). Empowering employees can result in positive feelings and a stable psychosocial environment. When employees have positive feelings toward the organization, they are willing to overlook things that might otherwise cause some level of dissatisfaction (Wei, 2015). Additionally, a stable psychosocial work environment, created through supervisor support and skill development, promotes better health, decreases illness and early retirement, and increases longevity (Schmitz et al., 2019).

Intent to Stay

The impact of WLB, empowerment, and a stable psychosocial environment can be difficult to assess through the current research specifically related to longevity. Although there is a plethora of studies that analyze employee turnover, turnover intentions (TI), and intent to leave (ITL) to determine why employees leave various occupations (Stewart et al., 2020; Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017; Wei, 2015), considerably fewer consider longevity; however, research is available related to

employees' ITS. A person's ITS with an organization does not necessarily equate to longevity, but employees cannot demonstrate longevity without the ITS. Longevity is evidenced through the continued ITS. In some studies, employee tenure that constitutes longevity is 5 years (D'Arcangelo, 2022); in the present study, it was defined as 10 years. ITS is an employee indicator that can rapidly change, while longevity is a static, established condition as an employee has either demonstrated longevity or not. Though the ITS does not necessarily indicate longevity, it can be viewed as a potential predictor of longevity. Steffens et al. (2014) noted that in addition to individual organizational tenure, team leaders who have organizational tenure could positively impact an organization. Teams whose members have diverse tenures are more successful than teams composed of homogenous members (Steffens et al., 2014). Homogeneous teams, whether they are composed of members with all longer tenure or all shorter tenure, may not be as innovative (Steffens et al., 2014).

Longevity and ITS in Nonitinerant Occupations

When reviewing ITS in various occupations, the longevity of nurses, social workers, and psychologists was explored as potentially having the most substantial similarities with noninstructional itinerants such as school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists. The OC, JS, and WE of professionals in these occupations will also be analyzed as they relate to and support employee longevity. Due to dissimilarities in the work environment, generalization cannot be assumed but can be considered.

Nurses. Research has been conducted specifically focusing on the ITS of nurses in the hospital setting (Alexander et al., 2020; Yoon & Cho, 2022). One theoretical model to determine nurses' ITS was created by Cowden and Cummings, which identified four characteristics that impact the cognitive and affective responses of employees: manager, organization, work, and employee characteristics (Cowden & Cummings, 2012). In another study of eight psychiatric mental health nurses, Alexander et al. (2015) identified three items associated with longevity: pride, strong teams, and hope. In contrast, an identified barrier to longevity had nurses overcome stereotypes about their role to feel a sense of pride in their chosen career (Alexander et al., 2015). The importance of pride was evidenced in Yoon and Cho's (2022) study

with 53 trauma nurses in Korea, which showed that a heavy workload did not increase employees' intent to leave due to pride in their work. The ITS of the trauma nurses in this study was also impacted by workplace support, reduced stress, and high levels of self-efficacy (Yoon & Cho, 2022).

Engeda et al. (2014) found that factors such as education, age, and marital status increased ITS. Compared to nurses in the 20–29 age range, nurses in their 40s were four times more likely to report an ITS, while married nurses and nurses with a bachelor's degree were two times more likely to report an ITS (Engeda et al., 2014). These findings may indicate that nurses who value stability and career commitment are more likely to report an ITS. Another study that analyzed work-family enrichment (WFE) showed that nurses with strong WFE had high levels of career commitment and JS (Russo & Buonocore, 2012). The nurses with WFE reported decreased TI and that workplace success and satisfaction translated into improvements in other areas of their lives (Russo & Buonocore, 2012). Finally, individuals in leadership positions are less likely to leave their position as they have meaningful input, strong skills, and strong interpersonal connections (De Oliveira et al., 2017). Nurses in leadership positions who have demonstrated longevity are likely to exhibit behavior such as “mission-drives, generativity (caring for the next generation), passion, identification, boundary clarity, self-regulation, attunement (taking other points of view), reflection, change agility, and a positive, affirmative framework” (Mackoff & Triolo, 2008, pp. 121–122).

Conversely, Walker and Clendon (2018) reported that workplace issues, such as a lack of supervisory support, were the primary reason nurses left their roles. After workplace issues, nurses reported leaving for personal reasons such as burnout, career factors such as limited opportunities for personal development, or leaving for family obligations (Walker & Clendon, 2018). Some factors that negatively increase ITL in nurses are working beyond their trained abilities, below their trained abilities, or not having the confidence to utilize skills despite training (Stewart et al., 2020). Other factors are being on call or traveling (Stewart et al., 2020), which can impact a nurse's work/life balance. Additional factors that may impact longevity are experience and gender, as new nurses and males are more likely to leave the

profession (De Oliveira et al., 2017). Newer nurses may lack the opportunity to provide meaningful input, have limited skills, and have fewer connections, while males may face more resistance from colleagues and supervisors (De Oliveira et al., 2017).

Social Workers. As with nurses, the ITS of social workers has received considerable attention. In 2015, it was estimated that there were 672,000 social workers in the United States (Salsberg et al., 2017) working in a variety of domains such as child welfare, family services, mental health, addiction, higher education, homeless support, criminal justice, and community development and private practice (Wermeling et al., 2013). Social work is a challenging profession that can emotionally affect the employee. High turnover levels negatively impact organizations and the stability of client services (Wang et al., 2021). In a study of 280 new social workers in England, only one quarter anticipated being in their positions in 5 years (Hussein et al., 2014). In this study, team support was the best predictor of an ITS, and work in the private sector was the best predictor of an ITL (Hussein et al., 2014). Wermeling et al. (2013) found that a quality education that prepared social workers for services was the best predictor of an ITS. In a study that included 346 social workers, Kim and Stoner (2008) determined that job autonomy and strong organizational support reduce burnout, thereby decreasing TI. Cho and Song (2017) also identified the importance of autonomy in their study of 242 social workers in South Korea. Greater levels of autonomy increased organizational trust, which resulted in lower turnover. Solid relationships and fairness demonstrated by supervisors between employees are highly valued among social workers, even more so than tangible workplace factors such as pay (Wang et al., 2021).

Conversely, poor work/life balance and large workloads were contraindicated with workplace longevity (YouGov, 2020). Low pay and a high emotional toll may compound poor work/life balance and larger workloads (Barrett, 2016). This emotional toll is especially challenging for social workers who work with children and families (YouGov, 2020). One study that noted this link was conducted by Leake et al. (2017), who identified a relationship between the burnout level of staff involved in child welfare and longevity. Wermeling et al. (2013) found in their study of 785

social workers that 44% had left or had an ITL. These findings are aligned with a study conducted with 3,706 social workers in the Mid-South United States that showed 44% of the study participants had left or intended to leave the profession due to salary and poor work-life balance. A qualitative study by YouGov (2020) also showed that 39% of social workers would leave the profession between 2020 and 2025.

The influence of opportunities for advancement, gender, and culture on social workers has also been studied. In addition to WLB, other factors such as age and work stress influence their ITS. In a study of 785 social workers, Wermeling et al. (2013) found that age had no impact on those that stayed in the profession and those who reported an ITL. Other study results indicated that more experienced employees with 3 to 10 years of experience are more likely to experience burnout resulting in turnover (Leake et al., 2017). In conflicting findings, Wermeling (2013) showed a significant difference in the years of experience between social workers who stayed and left, as more experienced professionals were likely to stay in the position. Additionally, Kim and Stoner (2008) found that a high level of work stress leads to burnout, which is associated with TI. The burnout and emotional exhaustion noted in this population can be mitigated by specialized training (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015).

Mo and Lai's (2018) study, which included 27 social workers, indicated that a lack of opportunities for advancement and a disconnect with organizational leaders increased their desire to leave. The researchers also found that gender impacts employee ITL as more men leave for financial reasons while more women stay with the organization for stability (Mo & Lai, 2018). When considering longevity, it is important to note that cultural factors can play a role. In a comparative study of 889 social workers from Australia and India, Indian social workers had higher levels of job satisfaction even though they spent more hours working than their Australian counterparts (Kalliath et al., 2017). In more collectivist cultures, family demands may cause more stress (Kalliath et al., 2017). In both countries, it was determined that opportunities for training, setting clear job expectations, creating a positive culture through team building, and focusing on social workers' mental health all supported retention (Mo & Lai, 2018).

Teachers. Teachers are also more likely to demonstrate longevity when they have opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and support from mentors (Self, 2022). Conversely, poor building conditions, inadequate funding, lack of cultural competency, and a negative school climate are reasons that many teachers leave a position or the profession (Self, 2022). In a study of female teachers in Title I schools, Self (2022) found that teachers were more likely to remain in their positions if they had positive relationships with administrators, staff, and students and had opportunities to advance into leadership positions. This finding was supported by the Guo et al. (2021) study of 1,693 preschool teachers where work support increased the teachers' ITS. Similarly, a qualitative study that involved teachers in the juvenile justice setting noted that collegial and supervisory support, job expectations, and growth opportunities increased ITS (Murphy, 2018). Agricultural education teachers reported that job security is the most critical factor related to longevity (Clemons & Lindner, 2019).

In addition to supervisory support and job security, resiliency and connectedness are employee characteristics that support longevity. Bobek (2002) asserted that teachers must be resilient to achieve longevity. This characteristic can be cultivated through creating connections, increasing self-efficacy, and planning for career advancement. Kokka (2016) posited that hiring teachers from the community can help increase the longevity of teachers in urban areas. Kokka used competency, autonomy, and relatedness, the three components of SDT, to explain teacher longevity in urban schools. Teachers believe they are the content area experts and do not want the same level of support for curriculum and instruction as they do for discipline. Urban teachers find their work meaningful and have high levels of connectedness with their students. Kokka (2016) recommended "reducing class size, creating advisory programs, funding teachers to tutor after school or supervise student club" as a way to increase interpersonal connection (p. 177). Eldor and Shoshani (2016) also found that compassion from a principal increased teacher resiliency resulting in higher OC, JS, and WE and reduced burnout.

Another important aspect of teacher longevity is its effect on student outcomes. A study of all 16-year-old public school students in England showed that

teacher turnover negatively impacted student success and increased workloads for teachers who remained in the organization. Longevity did not necessarily translate into better student outcomes, except for first-year teachers who should not be assigned to at-risk students due to their limited organizational knowledge (Gibbons et al., 2021). Organizational knowledge continues to increase each year that teachers stay in a school. Although an individual's mental and physical health declines with age, some teachers are centenarians (Zotova et al., 2019). The reasons to stay after retirement may be vastly different as there is a shift in values and preretirement motivators (Zotova et al., 2019). In older individuals' personalities, self-determination and high satisfaction influenced their decision to stay (Zotova et al., 2019). Staying in the organization provides meaning to their lives and helps them realize different goals (Zotova et al., 2019).

Longevity and ITS in Noninstructional Itinerants

Like their instructional counterparts, instructional itinerants reported that administrative support is the most critical factor related to their ITS (Barrett, 2020). Factors such as salary and benefits, level of administrative support, connections with other staff, and school climate also impact workplace longevity (Barrett, 2020). Barrett (2020) found that instructional itinerants were more likely to demonstrate an ITS were employed in suburban districts and were more experienced employees. Specific research related to school nurses and school social workers was not identified, so it will be necessary to rely on generalized information from nurses and social workers in other settings.

School Psychologists. With school-based itinerants, such as school psychologists, administrators play an essential role in their longevity. School principals drive the involvement of school psychologists at the systems level, but this level of involvement may be negatively impacted by itinerancy. Serving more than one location is more likely to result in a mismatch between the school psychologist and school-based administration (Lisbon-Peoples, 2015). Additionally, school psychologists who are only at a school for limited time periods are not seen as accessible and are less likely to be included in decision-making (Nellis & Wood, 2021). Itinerancy may also impact school psychologists' opportunities for leadership

in the school setting, and they may seek alternative leadership opportunities, such as mentoring new school psychologists. School psychologists who supervise interns have an average longevity of 11 years (Desai, 2016), indicating that leadership positions may support professional longevity.

School administrators also directly impact the professional development opportunities offered to staff, including itinerants. Although there are positives associated with longevity, there are potential negatives. In a study of 3,769 school psychologists, Thompson et al. (2018) found that some professionals who had been in the field for over 10 years needed more professional development to learn current assessment techniques. It can be challenging for school psychologists to obtain this professional development in the public school setting. School leaders must ensure that school psychologists can attend virtual opportunities or conferences.

In addition to professional development opportunities, the setting is also a strong determinant of how well a school psychologist manages workplace tension (Lisbon-Peoples, 2015), and frequent changes between work sites could result in challenges with tension regulation. This challenge is compounded by a limited understanding of the school psychologist's role, which results in administrative requests that are not within the school psychologist's skill set or scope of practice, are unethical, or illegal. Administrators who attempt to get school psychologists to engage in unethical behavior are more likely to drive talent from their schools, as unethical requests can result in burnout, dissatisfaction, or an ITL (Boccio et al., 2016b). Boccio et al. (2016a) reported from their study of 291 school psychologists that a third had been pressured to engage in unethical behavior, almost 9% had left a job, and 10% had requested a transfer (Boccio et al., 2016a). Examples of the unethical behaviors they were asked to participate in were not putting the necessary service on an individual education plan (IEP) or not reporting the scoring errors of another psychologist (Boccio et al., 2016b).

Societal and Generational Impacts on Longevity

When considering various occupations and factors that impact longevity, there are circumstances outside an organization's immediate control that they must adapt to and respond to maintain talent. There are cultural and societal changes that

are very fluid and can impact longevity in different ways. These changes include recessions, war, and public health concerns such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Another potential impact an organization may have limited control over is generational differences in the workplace.

Global Pandemic Impacts

Worker longevity has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in what has been coined “The Great Reevaluation,” “The Great Reshuffle,” or “The Great Resignation” (Payscale, 2022, p. 2). Approximately 4.4 million employees left their jobs in February 2022 (Serenko, 2022). Meister (2022) asserted that the Great Resignation has turned into the Great Reshuffle as more than half of the employees who resigned have taken positions in other fields. Most recently, the term “The Great Rethink” was used, as more than 40% of people are considering leaving their jobs in 2022 for work with greater flexibility (Gulati, 2022). The pandemic exacerbated a global issue in the workforce, and people have fundamentally changed how they think about their work (Gulati, 2022). Due to the recency of these events, limited research has been conducted in this area.

Changes in workplace mindset, coupled with the many new job opportunities that emerged after COVID-19 lockdowns, resulted in some employees electing to work from home (Serenko, 2022). Being quarantined also gave employees time to reflect on their lives and careers, prompting some to make significant changes (Akkermans et al., 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020). This reflection prompted some employees to prioritize things other than work, while others moved closer to families creating openings in the job market (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021; Serenko, 2022). Rather than go back to their prepandemic ways, it is vital that companies find ways to improve by increasing virtual opportunities, offering training on technology, and conducting workspace reviews (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021). Transitioning to a flexible work schedule is challenging in occupations like education as many students benefit from the structured, face-to-face interaction provided by classroom teachers and noninstructional itinerant personnel.

As a result of the pandemic, organizations needed to support individual needs to reduce the stress and anxiety experienced by employees (Hite & McDonald, 2020).

The pandemic created career shocks for some employees, which are unexpected events that impact one's career positively or negatively (Akkermans et al., 2018). The level of career shock can be influenced by the event's frequency, predictability, controllability, and personal experience (Akkermans et al., 2018). For many employees, the pandemic touched each of these areas in an overwhelmingly negative way. The shock was not as impactful for those who were resilient, enjoyed working from home, or did not get ill. Younger employees may not be as resilient, and older employees may have concerns about their health based on the higher mortality rates for the older population (Akkermans et al., 2020). Employees with children may have been negatively impacted by a lack of daycare or the need to homeschool during traditional work hours (Shillington et al., 2020).

Generational Impacts

In addition to societal factors that can affect longevity, generational factors can also impact how long an employee stays with an organization. The current workforce includes five generations, each demonstrating unique workplace behaviors (Jenkins, 2020). The multigenerational workforce is divided into several categories: Generation Z (between three and 23 years old), Millennials (24 to 37 years old), GenXers (37 to 57 years old), Boomers (57 to 76 years old), and traditionalists (over 77 years old; Matre, 2017). The Kasasa Exchange (2019) noted that employers should be cognizant of significant differences within generational cohorts, as there could be up to a 20-year age difference between members. GenXers and Millennials are the two generations who make up a majority of the current workforce (Glazer et al., 2018). Members of Gen Z are just entering the workforce, and traditionalists have generally left the workforce.

Each generational cohort is associated with various workplace stereotypes and behaviors. For example, Generation Z values creative scheduling, feedback, and supportive managers (Kronos, 2019). They are tech-savvy but also anxious and need a strong work-life balance (Kronos, 2019; Schroth, 2019). Millennials are often viewed as entitled and will leave jobs they do not like and are willing to leave for jobs where they can grow and flourish (Keene & Handrich, 2015). Millennials are also seen as being money-driven, flexible, and entrepreneurial (Red Brick Report,

2014). GenXers lack patience and are known for being very direct, while Boomers like to be the authority and will stay in jobs to try and create change (Keene & Handrich, 2015). Traditionalists are considered the most loyal generation, are highly engaged, and are most likely to follow the rules (Matre, 2017). Ultimately, employers must identify and build on the strength of each generation in the workplace (Jenkins, 2020) and employ differentiated retention strategies that will meet the needs of each generation (Tlaiss et al., 2017).

Millennials. Millennials, also known as Gen Y or Generation Me (Krahn & Galambos, 2014), believe that longevity is established after being in a position for 7 months. In a 2014 survey of 16,000 Millennials, 58% reported that they do not expect to be in the same job within 3 years (INSEAD, 2014), and 79% reported wanting to work for themselves. Additionally, 60% of Millennials reported stress resulting in reduced productivity (Kašpárková et al., 2018) which could impact longevity.

There are many negative stereotypes about Millennials which is not unexpected considering how older workers might view younger employees. In one study, managers felt that 75% of Millennials were narcissists and only 12% cared about people. The data showed that only 44% of the Millennials in the study were reported as narcissistic and 39% as caring about the people at work (Red Brick Report, 2014). In contrast to many stereotypes, Krahn and Galambos (2014) found that Millennials and GenXers had similar intrinsic work values, even though Millennials tend to be more entitled based on their work experiences. Millennials who are parents may need the flexibility to meet various home/work demands (Keene & Handrich, 2015).

To support the hiring and retention of Millennials, employers should provide realistic job descriptions as Millennials are looking for the strongest P-O fit. Approximately 53% of managers reported having difficulty hiring Millennials. Recruitment opportunities should be marketed in several ways, including on corporate websites and social media (Chowdhury et al., 2021).

GenXers. Generation X had to deal with a changing society where the cost of tuition, housing, and taxpayer contributions rapidly increased. In a study of 56 GenXers compared to 100 Millennials, both cohorts expressed AC and NC, but

GenXers had higher levels of CC, indicating that GenXers may have more tenure and investment in their roles and, therefore, more significant costs associated with leaving (Glazer et al., 2018). A study comparing 40 principals, comprised of GenXers and Boomers, showed that both groups desired longevity but were not opposed to leaving for better opportunities (Seipert & Baghurst, 2014). GenX principals were more collaborative, comfortable with technology (Seipert & Baghurst, 2014), confident, and optimistic (Red Brick Report, 2014). GenXers emphasized employee development (Krahn & Galambos, 2014) and preferred interactive trainings as opposed to stand-and-deliver lectures (Seipert & Baghurst, 2014).

Boomers. Boomers believe that longevity is achieved after staying in a role for 5 years (Keene & Handrich, 2015). Many Boomers are taking advantage of the “longevity economy,” where the expertise of more senior employees is valued (Garland, 2017, p. 14), and 65% of Boomers plan to work past age 65 (Hellmich, 2014). Many older people enjoy working with older employees when planning travel, obtaining medical care, or securing housing because they believe older employees better understand the older consumer perspective (Garland, 2017).

Historically, older workers would reach a plateau where they became devalued in the workplace (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013). It should not be assumed that older workers cannot be motivated and that employers cannot help to create a path for further career progression (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013). Boomers are also motivated by tangible incentives such as steady income and benefits (Hellmich, 2014). Additionally, Harter and Agrawal (2015) noted differences within the generation: Boomers in their 60s are more engaged than those in their 50s, and women are more engaged than men. They also noted that Boomers feel their opinions matter in the organization and are offered positive, fulfilling opportunities. To increase workplace longevity in employees with institutional knowledge, employers can motivate them with meaningful work, work/life balance, and greater control over their work (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013).

There are many generational stereotypes, but the research is conflicting on whether those stereotypes are accurate. For example, Stanton (2017) found that younger generations are not necessarily more collaborative and may prefer to work

within their established social groups even though they have been stereotyped as more collaborative. Stanton also determined that employees want to be looked at as individuals outside their generational cohorts. Employers can get to know their employees by talking to them, conducting surveys, and finding ways they are appreciated (Stanton, 2017).

Section 2: Organizational Factors with a Significant Impact on Longevity

Beyond the potential generational or societal impacts on worker longevity, employees' intent to stay or leave is primarily based on their perception of the organization (Carey, 2022). These perceptions are related to three intangible factors influencing workplace longevity: OC, JS, and WE. These three factors are related but different, as OC is an employee's loyalty to an organization, JS is how the employee feels about the job, and WE is the emotional connection to the job and organization (Abu-Shamaa et al., 2015). In a study that reviewed all three domains, Biswas and Bhatnagar (2013) found that engaged employees are more likely to have higher levels of trust and psychological safety, which relates directly to higher OC. The result of employee WE and OC is increased JS (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013).

When employees are more satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to demonstrate higher WE levels (Abraham, 2012). Engaged and satisfied employees are likelier to remain with an organization (Abraham, 2012). OC, JS, and WE can be impacted by supervisory support and feedback. Deepa et al. (2014) identified that organizations could positively impact OC, JS, and employee WE through the performance appraisal processes.

Organizational Commitment

In the absence of specific information related to longevity, information about OC was reviewed. Maiti and Sanyal (2018) defined OC as "an individual's psychological bond to the organization, which includes a sense of job involvement, loyalty, and belief in the values of the organization" (p. 683). OC gives employees a sense of belonging that translates into a desire to stay (Chang, 2015; Nguyen & Tran, 2018), which results in improved attendance and performance (Chang, 2015).

Although OC has a positive relationship with ITS, it can also mitigate less desirable

workplace conditions such as emotional exhaustion (Nguyen & Tran, 2018). OC can also be influenced by the work environment itself, as determined by Hu et al. (2019), who showed that employees who work in high-performance systems have higher levels of AC. Afshari et al. (2019) also asserted that OC could be influenced by how closely employees identify with their organizational roles. A study in Australia with over 250 manufacturing employees identified five areas where role identity was secured, increasing OC (Afshari et al., 2019). The areas were “passion for my profession, passion for the core activities of the organization, challenging work, and advanced product, and maintaining manufacturing operation” (Afshari et al., 2019, p. 785).

Employees with more OC desire to be an integral part of an organization, and employee longevity increases these commitment levels (Hu et al., 2019). OC has also increased P-O fit and innovation (Akhtar et al., 2019). Similarly, Kheirkhah et al. (2014) asserted that OC involves AC and CC but also posited that moral and enduring commitment played a critical role. With moral commitment, an employee is emotionally invested and believes it would be unethical to move to another organization, while enduring commitment is the belief that one should be the “company man” (Kheirkhah et al., 2014, p. 822).

Another factor impacting OC is perceived organizational support (POS). POS is defined as the “organizational support theory that supposes that employees personify the organization, infer the intent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing, and reciprocates such perceived support with increased commitment, loyalty, and performance” (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, p.712). In a review of over 70 articles, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) identified three antecedents to POS: “fair treatment, supervisor support, and rewards and favorable working conditions” (p. 703). Ok and Vandenberghe (2016) found that OC was closely related to POS, resulting in increased WE. Other studies have shown that POS increased both AC and OC, showing the positive effects POS can have across an organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

OC in Nonitinerant Occupations

A significant amount of research has been conducted on organizational commitment due to its impact on organizations. With individuals in nonitinerant occupations, employee OC can be reviewed based on the work site where they are assigned. The OC of nurses, social workers, and teachers has been reviewed to determine the significance of things such as performance assessments (Sepahvand et al., 2020), positive work environments (Brown et al., 2019), and innovation (Firuzjaeyan et al., 2015).

Nurses. Research specific to the nursing occupation shows that strong OC not only results in a desire to stay with the organization but also improves the quality of patient care (Sepahvand et al., 2020). Conversely, low levels of OC were associated with higher levels of ITL (Stewart et al., 2020). Mon et al. (2022) conducted a study with 689 nurses in Myanmar and found moderate levels of AC, NC, and CC, which showed that more work could be done to increase OC. They found that education did not impact OC, but work/life balance and supervisory support were positively correlated with OC. Likewise, a study conducted with 333 nurses and 150 medical secretaries found no relationship between OC and gender, monthly income, or educational level (Top & Gider, 2013); however, a relationship was noted between OC and job status, marital status, the type of hospital, and JS (Top & Gider, 2013).

Newman et al. (2014) also noted that organizational structure in healthcare organizations was directly related to turnover. Nurses in the hospital setting who have high levels of trust and perceive that they work in an ethical environment report higher levels of OC (Osei et al., 2017). Additionally, self-efficacy in nurses allows them to perform their tasks and increases OC (Osei et al., 2017). In addition to workplace ethics and self-efficacy, a study involving 39 critical care nurses in Iran showed that performance assessment was directly related to OC (Sepahvand et al., 2020). OC is improved when nurses are involved in the performance assessment process as they may have concerns with how assessments are conducted, the instruments used, and the assessor's skills (Sepahvand et al., 2020). Improvements in the performance appraisal system resulted in a change in the nurses' commitment

from continuous to more normative, where they felt obligated to stay with the organization rather than having to stay (Sepahvand et al., 2020).

Social Workers. Like nurses, social workers can be hired in a wide variety of settings, such as hospitals, private agencies, and community welfare agencies, which could influence their levels of OC. Many studies do not account for the wide variances in occupational settings. In one study, Brown et al. (2019) used the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, the Social Work Satisfaction Scale, and a four-item OC scale adapted from a previous study on social workers to analyze the relationship between JS, burnout, and OC. They found that social workers who were more satisfied with their jobs were more likely to have higher levels of OC.

Conversely, social workers with more negative experiences had higher levels of burnout and lower OC (Brown et al., 2019). Social workers who worked with Child Protective Services reported higher levels of OC when they felt valued by their employers and there were high levels of morale within the organization (Scales & Quincy Brown, 2020). Giffords (2009) reviewed nine environmental, six demographic, and 16 organizational variables related to the OC of 214 social workers. Giffords found that opportunities for advancement, fair treatment from supervisors, and autonomy were three influential variables. Regarding tenure, Giffords did not find that it had any impact on OC.

In addition to ensuring opportunities for advancement and autonomy, organizations must also ensure that social workers receive adequate resources, clear directions, and similar expectations when working with multiple groups. In a study involving 226 social workers, Scales and Quincy Brown (2020) found that social workers with more than 15 years of experience reported higher levels of OC. A positive work environment can result in greater levels of OC for social workers. A positive work environment can be established through work-related recognition, providing employees with timely feedback, supporting WLB, and offering time for professional development (Brown et al., 2019). OC can also be increased by providing specific support to new social workers and validating the skills and innovation they bring to the system (Jaskyte & Lee, 2009).

Teachers. Finally, the OC of teachers was analyzed to consider influential factors such as administrators, school climate, and job satisfaction. OC increases when teachers' values align with the organization's values (Youngs et al., 2015) and when they perceive they have supportive administrators (Maiti & Sanyal, 2018). Domineering leaders may negatively impact teachers' commitment to the organization. Price (2021) determined that the OC of teachers is lowest at the end of winter and highest before standardized testing in April and is directly related to JS. The OC of teachers is critical as it impacts the school climate, innovation, and student outcomes (Price, 2021).

Conversely, Masry-Herzallah and Da'as (2021) found that innovation, which can be enhanced through a positive school climate, predicts OC. A survey of 150 teachers in Iran showed that professional development helps teachers do their jobs more effectively and increase innovation, leading to higher OC (Firuzjaeyan et al., 2015). Additionally, JS and emotional intelligence (EI) have been identified as predictors of OC, although EI was determined to be the better predictor.

OC in Noninstructional Itinerants

The area of OC related to noninstructional itinerants is one of the most significant gaps in the literature. In this area, there is current research on professionals who worked in a related field but not in the school setting. As there was no identified research specific to school nurses and school psychologists and OC, it would be necessary to generalize notable implications from research on nurses, psychologists, and broad research from other occupations.

School Social Workers. Based on research in other areas, it is possible that having a leadership position and being integrated into the organization could increase POS and OC. Teasley (2018) recommended that school social workers aspire to leadership positions in organizations. Rather than working in silos, school social workers should continue working collaboratively with various groups to ensure they can secure necessary resources and advocate for both students and their roles (Teasley, 2018). Jaskyte and Lee (2009) noted that social workers demonstrated lower levels of OC when they work with different groups of people in the school and each group has different expectations and provides different directives. With

conflicting expectations and directives, the school psychologist may not know where the focus their time and energy. This potential miscommunication could be a more significant issue for school social workers who support multiple schools and work with even more groups of people.

Workplace Engagement

Another factor potentially impacting longevity is WE, which Khan (1990) defined as the “harnessing of organization member’s selves to their work roles; in WE, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance” and asserted that it involves meaningfulness, safety, and availability (p. 3). Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined WE as the “positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74) that has benefits for both the employee and the organization (Bakker et al., 2008). Employees with vigor are persistent and demonstrate high energy levels, while dedicated employees display pride and enthusiasm in their work. Employees who are absorbed in their work concentrate deeply and are not easily distracted (Bakker, 2011). Unlike workaholics who are obsessed with their work, engaged employees keep working because they enjoy their work (Bakker et al., 2008).

Along with workplace behaviors, WE has been linked to the psychological constructs of OC and JS (Chang, 2015). Although related, WE differs from JS; WE is an active process, while JS is a more passive outcome (Bakker, 2011). The primary factors for WE include relationships with colleagues and opportunities to use professional skills, while the primary factors for JS include compensation and job security (Cohen, 2014). Tladinyane and Van der Merwe (2016) found that organizations that want to retain talented employees must prioritize employee WE. Likewise, in a study involving 133 Filipino school counselors, Datu and Mateo (2017) posited that WE directly impacted work longevity.

Other factors that can have a direct impact on WE are career commitment and career adaptability. With career commitment, individuals find joy and interest in their work (Son & Kim, 2021). Career commitment is the level to which individuals experience growth in the current organization (Weng et al., 2010). Weng et al. identified four factors that impact career commitment: progress toward personal

goals, efficacy, promotions, and salary. Ott et al. (2018) noted that a strong correspondence between an employee's goals and the organization's goals increases WE. Hu et al. (2019) posited that other individual characteristics, such as internal motivation and the ability to work autonomously, may be associated with WE. In addition to the positive relationship between WE and autonomy, teamwork is positively influenced by WE, as high levels of vigor and dedication in some team members can evoke similar behaviors in others (Bakker, 2011).

High levels of vigor and dedication are essential because when people like what they do, they are more likely to believe their position is a good fit for them. Moreland (2013) posited that when organizations do not get individuals into the correct positions, they are more likely to be disengaged. Khan (1990) defined disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performance" (p. 694). Disengagement results in adverse outcomes for the employee, including depression, lower performance, and higher turnover; furthermore, disengagement can spread among employees (Moreland, 2013). Conversely, when people are engaged in meaningful work, they are more likely to have higher levels of AC (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Jiang et al., 2020; Tnay et al., 2013). This AC, which is impacted by perceived levels of organizational support, has been correlated with decreased TI.

Organizational support can take place in several ways, one of which is employee recognition (Hu et al., 2019). Successful organizations not only talk about their talent being the most critical part of the organization, but they also demonstrate a strong commitment to employee WE (Cooperrider, 2017). Hu et al. (2019) noted that employee commitment to increasing WE is demonstrated by ensuring that employees receive recognition and rewards for their work. In turn, recognition creates a psychological identity where employees see themselves as an integral part of the organization (Wei, 2015).

This psychological identity is essential, and Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) asserted that "people prefer work roles that give psychological satisfaction more than monetary incentives" (p. 95). These authors identified strategies such as involving

employees in decision-making, developing their competencies, empowerment, organizational justice, and leadership opportunities that organizations can implement to increase work engagement. These strategies meet the employees' psychological need for autonomy and competence while providing a sense of purpose (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). Delaney and Royal (2017) also posited that motivation is vital to engagement and recommended that organizations provide employees with opportunities for interesting work, remove unnecessary organizational barriers, empower employees to engage in innovative practice, and celebrate staff accomplishments. Xu et al. (2022) confirmed these findings related to the importance of important work that meets an employee's extrinsic and intrinsic needs. Xu et al. also identified a positive relationship between decent work, intrinsic motivation, and WE.

Although the organization can implement strategies to increase WE, the employee also plays an important role. Engaged employees are adept at utilizing the job resources that are available to them, such as personal skills, colleague support, and autonomy (Bakker et al., 2011). Highly engaged employees also reflect and develop personal feedback, create success, and generate positivity through their passion for their work (Bakker et al., 2011). They will often go over and above and support other employees in the organization (Deepa et al., 2014). Phillippe et al. (2010) found that employees who demonstrate a harmonious passion for their work are more likely to be engaged and create stronger workplace relationships.

Additionally, more engaged employees are more adaptable and likely to stay in their roles (Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2016). This adaptability has been associated with increased career satisfaction (Zacher, 2014). With career adaptability, employees are resilient, can exert control over their careers, and can successfully adjust when necessary (Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2016). This real or perceived control and forward career momentum increase WE levels (Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2016).

WE in Nonitinerant Occupations

WE in different occupations can vary based on the work performed, organizational differences, and individual employee differences. What interests and

excites one employee may not be the same for another employee completing the same work in an organization, so employers must connect with individual employees. Current studies consider the impact of factors such as teamwork (Brunetto et al., 2013), psychosocial wellbeing (Tesi et al., 2019), and supervisory support (Geisler et al., 2019) on WE in various occupations.

Nurses. WE is an essential component of nursing as nurses enter this field because they can directly improve the wellbeing of the individuals they support (Santos et al., 2016). In a study of 335 nurses in Portugal, Santos et al. found that high levels of WE increased AC. Similarly, Brunetto et al. (2013) found that employee WE could be used to predict the OC of nurses in the hospital setting. This study, which included 718 hospital-based nurses, resulted in findings that teamwork supported high levels of employee WE. These findings were supported by Matziari et al. (2017), who found that a supportive, goal-oriented environment resulted in nurses who had more vigor and dedication. In this study, the average tenure of the nursing staff was 13.7 years, showing that this supportive environment also supported longevity (Matziari et al., 2017).

Social Workers. Unlike nursing, there is more limited research on WE and social workers. Tesi et al. (2019) noted that not much research had been conducted regarding social work and WE, although WE is a critically important area. This study conducted with 140 social workers in Italy showed that social workers with positive psychological wellbeing are more likely to be more engaged. This higher level of WE may be because individuals with a strong sense of wellbeing have greater levels of resilience (Tesi et al., 2019). Other individuals under the social services umbrella with particularly challenging roles can demonstrate a high level of WE with the proper organizational support. Mental health professionals working with sex offenders find interest and enjoyment in this challenging work, which is often associated with vicarious trauma and burnout (Petersen, 2022). Geisler et al. (2019) also noted the importance of support and determined that supervisory support and work conditions resulted in high-quality social work services improved WE, JS, and OC.

Teachers. The WE of teachers has been researched related to self-efficacy (Granziera & Perera, 2019), growth mindset (Zeng et al., 2019), and personality (Li et al., 2017; Perera et al., 2017). Xiao et al. (2022) identified that when teachers used their professional skills to reach desired outcomes, their work engagement and enjoyment increased. In a study involving 500 teachers in Australia, Granziera and Perera (2019) also determined that WE not only increased JS but also resulted in positive changes in self-efficacy. Similar findings were shared by Minghui et al. (2018) in their study of 1,027 special education teachers in China, where WE mediated the relationship between teacher efficacy and social support. One way to continue to increase self-efficacy is to provide opportunities for teachers to observe other successful teachers and continue to develop their skills (Xiao et al., 2022). Guo et al. (2021) evidenced the importance of these social supports. Social supports are also predictors of WE, which is associated with higher ITS levels. Additionally, a study of 472 high school teachers in China showed that growth mindset, perseverance, and wellbeing were correlated with WE (Zeng et al., 2019).

A study of higher education support staff in South Africa showed that WE predicted affective OC (Field & Buitendach, 2011), which is the most desirable form of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In addition to predicting OC, WE can be analyzed based on employee personality. Li et al. (2017) surveyed 352 middle school teachers in Mainland China and found a significant relationship between work engagement and a proactive personality. In another study involving teacher personalities, Perera et al. (2017) identified four personality types: rigid, ordinary, well-adjusted, and excitable. They found that personality factors directly impacted WE, and well-adjusted teachers had the highest levels of WE (Perera et al., 2017).

WE in Noninstructional Itinerant Occupations

The literature on the WE of noninstructional itinerant occupations is scant. The available findings indicate similar predictors between nonitinerant and itinerant occupations on increased WE, which include leadership/supervision opportunities (Desai, 2016), supervisory support, and full utilization of their professional skill set (Nellis & Wood, 2021). Although previous scholars have correlated OC, JS, and WE,

some assumptions can be made regarding the impact of WE on noninstructional itinerant longevity.

School Nurses. The studies of WE and school nurses consider the impact of collaboration (Hilli & Pedersen, 2021) and motherhood (Mochizuki & Wakimizu, 2022). Hilli and Pedersen (2021) asserted that collaboration with school teams, parents, and community agencies could impact a school nurse's WE level and improve the quality of care provided to adolescents. A study involving preschool nurses in Japan showed that nurses who were mothers had higher levels of WE (Mochizuki & Wakimizu, 2022). They may have higher WE because mothers may find the work more meaningful and use their work time effectively because they have more to balance (Mochizuki & Wakimizu, 2022). Although this preschool study involved private schools rather than a public school setting, it is one of the few studies that included the WE of nurses in a school setting.

School Psychologists. Limited literature is available on the WE of school psychologists. Engaged school psychologists may demonstrate their commitment to the organization and students by providing professional learning to help develop teachers (Bolling, 2014). Nellis and Wood (2021) collected data from 646 school principals, and 80% reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with their school psychologists. Despite this satisfaction level, only 11% of school psychologists ask to be involved in systems-level consultation, indicating a low level of WE incongruent with a school psychologist's ability (Nellis & Wood, 2021). Panteri et al. (2021) reported that systems-level support is an area where school psychologists would like to be more regularly involved. Similarly, Wood and Hampton (2022) surveyed 166 principals in Indiana who reported they wanted their school psychologists to spend a third of their time in systems-level consultation.

Allocating time for systems-level consultation can be a challenge. Currently, opportunities for school psychologists to expand their scope of practice are hindered by time spent completing assessments and a lack of training (Wood & Hampton, 2022). Hussar (2015) asserted that 50% of a school psychologist's time is spent on assessments, while Lisbon-Peoples (2015) also posited that too much time is spent on assessments which could be spent on other critical professional responsibilities,

thereby increasing engagement. Galanaugh (2018) also noted that school psychologists desired to decrease the time spent completing assessments. In a study of 238 school psychologists, Bolling (2014) found that over 72% of respondents supported teacher development by providing over 700 hours of training. Engaged school psychologists may also participate in peer supervision. Desai (2016) found that school psychologists who supervise interns spend approximately 2 hours per week completing this task. School psychologists become more engaged in their work through their involvement in developing policies and practices in schools. They also educate administrators on the ethical and legal requirements related to their role (Boccio et al., 2016a).

School Social Workers. Research regarding the WE of school social workers is scant, indicating a need for further review in this area. School social workers reported spending a majority of their time working on attendance and truancy (Arthur, 2009); however, they reported wanting to spend more time working to build “relationships with students, families and community organizations, advocacy, consultation, and professional development” (Arthur, 2009, p. 122). Arthur recommended that an extended contract would provide the additional time school social workers need to focus on training staff and engaging in consultation and advocacy.

Job Satisfaction

An important psychological construct that can influence longevity is JS. Rahman (2020) noted that JS is one of the most studied workplace behaviors due to its significance to organizations. Locke (1969) defined JS as the “pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating one’s job value” (p. 317). Liu et al. categorized factors that impact JS into two categories: internal (individual characteristics and emotions) and external factors (workplace and environmental characteristics). An essential component of OC is JS (Chang, 2015; Chegini et al., 2019), and Leite et al. (2014) posited that an employee must first have JS for OC to be developed. Unlike OC, Chegini et al. (2019) determined that self-efficacy is unrelated to JS.

Abu-Shamaa et al. (2015) categorized JS into four areas: “environmental factors, strategic employee recognition factors, individual factors, and psychological wellbeing factor” (p. 12). Environmental factors include job characteristics such as communication, while strategic recognition involves workplace culture. Individual factors are the employee’s personality and ability to collaborate, while psychological wellbeing includes the ability of an employee to maintain WLB (Abu-Shamaa et al., 2015). In Bangwal and Tiwari’s (2019) study, the researchers identified that individual and departmental workspace increase JS as they impact: “innovation, creative thinking, connections to nature, where the workplace enhances the opportunity to take fresh air, natural daylight, sufficient workspace, privacy and external view” (p. 277). Although organizations may not be able to make many of these modifications, ensuring employees have the necessary equipment and access to amenities can increase JS (Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019). Changes to improve the work environment show employees that they are valued.

Employers must identify which factors have the most profound impact on JS, as higher levels of JS directly impact the organization. Employees who report JS have better attendance, work performance (Kumar, 2017), productivity, and a desirable work climate (Abou Hashish, 2017). Improving JS in an organization can also positively influence employee motivation, attitude, and willingness to adapt to organizational change (Dung & Hai, 2020). Employees’ positive outcomes are reported as retention, ITS, quality of life, improved mental health, and improved job performance (Liu et al., 2016). Employees with high levels of JS are more likely to remain in their current position (Halcomb & Bird, 2020).

It is important to note with studies on JS that the data collected could look different at various points in time. Murphy (2018) noted that the way people feel is not static and an employee who experiences low levels of JS can become highly engaged with the appropriate interventions. Additionally, organizational change can impact JS, so transformational leaders who develop adaptability can be an organizational asset (Dung & Hai, 2020). Employees who are confident in their roles and demonstrate higher levels of adaptability are more likely to be satisfied in their positions (Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2016; Zacher, 2014).

Abraham (2012) asserted that satisfied employees are not necessarily engaged employees, but JS must be present for WE to develop. Tnay et al. (2013) determined that when employees were satisfied with their pay and supervisor support, TI decreased significantly. This finding is contrary to Leite et al. (2014), who posited that rewards do not promote JS while interpersonal relationships strongly influence JS. Interpersonal relationships can also impact how supervisors support the WLB of employees. These relationships can directly impact the JS levels of mothers, who are more likely to have lower JS due to a poor work-family balance (Wiens et al., 2022). A study of 89 psychologists in Canada, who were also mothers, showed that flexibility, access to childcare, and opportunities to work in private practice increased JS (Wiens et al., 2022).

JS in Nonitinerant Occupations

JS has been analyzed related to nonitinerant occupations, and, in some cases, studies analyzed responses from participants employed in several occupations. For example, Fleury et al. (2017) used the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) with 315 mental health professionals (94 nurses, 68 psychologists, and 68 social workers) to look at seven variables which included team's "personality disorders, team conflict, knowledge sharing, decision-making process, affective commitment, and goodness-of-fit" (p. 9). Robust team processes were associated with higher satisfaction levels for all three groups while being involved in the decision-making process and feeling empowered increased JS for social workers and nurses (Fleury et al., 2017; Ott et al., 2018). Yanchus et al. (2017) analyzed the responses of 2,432 nurses, 3,769 social workers, 2,520 psychologists, and 1,276 psychiatrists and showed that JS increased when professionals perceived strong supervisory support (Yanchus et al., 2017). Yanchus et al. also noted that JS predicts turnover behavior. Additionally, a study conducted by Kašpárková et al. (2018) of 360 workers in helping professions (e.g., nurses, teachers, physical therapists) showed that more resilient individuals had higher levels of JS.

Nurses. Research conducted with employees in the nursing field has shown that higher levels of JS can be influenced by organizational processes. Engeda et al. (2014) determined from data collected from 389 nurses in Ethiopia that the nurses

who reported higher levels of JS were eight times more likely to report an ITS. Higher levels of JS in nurses have been linked to factors such as “pride, personal accomplishment, enjoyment in the job, and high-quality care” (Halcomb & Bird, 2020, p. 277). Other factors that positively impact JS are autonomy and professional development opportunities (Engeda et al., 2014). Factors that negatively impact JS are pay, barriers to providing high-quality care, high workloads, time constraints (Halcomb & Bird, 2020), underutilization, and role limitations (Steinke et al., 2018).

Although there are factors that negatively impact satisfaction levels, JS can be a moderator for the more negative aspects of nursing. Data collected from 100 nurses using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and the Areas Worklife Survey (AWS), Jameson and Bowen (2020) found that personal accomplishment was a moderator for exhaustion. Therefore, when nurses find their jobs rewarding, they are less likely to be overwhelmed by large caseloads and increasing demands. (Jameson & Bowen, 2020). Even nurses who find their jobs rewarding have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as increased demands and decreased resources have led to higher levels of burnout. In addition to the pandemic, higher demands may also be a consequence of poor organizational structure and practices. In the hospital setting, low JS can often be associated with unpopular management practices (Top & Gider, 2013).

Conversely, nurses working in public hospitals who report higher levels of JS are also more likely to have higher levels of OC (Chegini et al., 2019). In the study of Steinke et al. (2018), collegial collaboration was reported as the most significant extrinsic factor, while autonomy was the most significant intrinsic factor. Chang’s (2015) study, conducted with 386 nurses in the hospital setting, identified that perceptions of strong support within the organization were also correlated with higher levels of JS (Chang, 2015). Similarly, the results of a study involving 500 hospital nurses in Egypt, Abou Hashish (2017) showed that nurses who reported higher levels of perceived caring had stronger OC. Additionally, an ethical work climate was critical to improving OC and JS.

Social Workers. Similar to the research on nurses, a number of organizational factors can impact JS. Social workers report that making a difference

in the life of others was the reason they opted to go into this profession (Ravalier et al., 2021). The opportunity to provide high-quality services in a positive work climate is another factor that positively impacts social worker satisfaction (Geisler et al., 2019). Providing high services can be challenging for social workers with high job demands, heavy caseloads, and limited resources (Peinado & Anderson, 2022). Increasing work demands without an increase in resources can negatively impair the psychological wellbeing of social workers (Tesi et al., 2019), resulting in lower levels of JS. Hussein et al. (2014) found that caseloads did not impact JS when social workers had high WE and reported feeling prepared.

Other factors that impacted social worker JS were salary (Marmo & Berkman, 2018), the department structure, and how ethical dilemmas are handled in the workplace (Peinado & Anderson, 2022). Pamperin (1987) also noted that salary positively impacted JS but also reported that social workers with more tenure have higher levels of JS. For many, pay is not the primary motivation for entering the field of social work. Smith and Shields (2013) found that variety and creativity in the job is the strongest predictor of career motivation when compared to demographics or other personal characteristics.

An employee's personal characteristics could also impact JS. This impact is noted in Collins's (2017) study which identified that JS levels could differ for social workers in the same role depending on an individual's resiliency. Tang and Li (2021) determined that less experienced social workers are also likely to report decreased levels of JS. Marmo and Berkman (2018) found that social workers with more tenure had higher levels of compassion satisfaction, which mitigated burnout and increased retention. Ironically, higher levels of specialized training in mental health staff may lead to lower levels of JS (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015). This decrease in JS may be due to the fact that individuals with specialized training may desire a leadership role in an organization rather than provide direct services (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2015).

Like nurses in the hospital setting, social workers in the hospital setting report how the department is structured, and their primary responsibilities are associated with a higher level of JS (Pugh, 2016). Conversely, high work demands and caseloads adversely impact JS (Pugh, 2016). This finding was supported by Gómez-

García et al. (2021), who conducted a study with 947 social workers in Spain and determined that personal achievements were associated with higher levels of JS and emotional exhaustion with lower levels.

Additionally, the level of support social workers receive in the workplace is critical to JS. When social workers perceive their supervisors as being competent (Smith & Shields, 2013) and supportive, JS increases. It also increases when social workers receive mentoring (Mo & Lai, 2018; Ravalier et al., 2021) and have the opportunity to work in interdisciplinary teams (Marmo & Berkman, 2018). These findings are aligned with the Willis et al. (2018) study of 189 mental health care and social workers who reported that colleague and supervisor support were essential factors in therapist longevity. Administrator support can be demonstrated by providing necessary career and professional development (Mo & Lai, 2018). This support is crucial for new social workers who are more likely to experience lower levels of JS (Tang & Li, 2021). McCarthy (2021) noted that interprofessional collaboration has positive outcomes and helps to reduce burnout, but it is not as significant as experience in the role or being empowered.

Although organizational leaders have control over many factors that influence JS, there are some societal issues that they have limited control over such as a public health crisis. Public social workers reported having longer work hours and a heavier workload while private social workers reported a loss of clients (Ashcroft et al., 2022). Students who were in school to become social workers did not have access to the clinical training opportunities they needed to prepare them for work in the field (Ashcroft et al., 2022). Although some social workers reported liking the flexible work hours, lack of commute, and the ability to save money during the pandemic, others report higher stress and burnout due to the inability to set home/work boundaries while working on zoom (Ashcroft et al., 2022). Additionally, it was reported that remote support did not work well for very young clients or for clients with more involved needs related to things such as poor mental health or addiction (Ashcroft et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for mental health support as increased job demands and work stress related to this public health crisis have

negatively impacted social workers (Martínez-López et al., 2021; Peinado & Anderson, 2022). In their study of 1,818 social workers in the United States, Brown et al. (2019) found that higher levels of burnout resulted in lower levels of JS. After surveying 273 social workers, Martínez-López et al. (2021) found that over 70% had experienced burnout, and approximately 50% reported depersonalization. Of that participant sample, the stress and emotional exhaustion caused by their work related to the COVID-19 pandemic, 29% had already sought mental health treatment, and over 70% reported potentially seeking treatment in the future (Martínez-López et al., 2021). Miller and Grise-Owens (2022) determined that female social workers experienced higher levels of distress potentially due to their need to find more of a work-life balance. Additionally, social workers who had any physical or mental health issues prior to the pandemic found that those challenges were exacerbated (Miller & Grise-Owens, 2022).

Teachers. The positive effects of increased JS are also noted in the current research involving teachers. When teachers have higher levels of JS, they are also likely to have higher levels of job involvement (Chu & Kuo, 2015). Bobek (2002) stated that JS is “contingent upon levels of autonomy, perceived and recognized accomplishments, and supportive, collegial relationships” (p. 204). In their study on four teacher personality types (rigid, ordinary, well-adjusted, and excitable), Perera et al. (2017) determined that well-adjusted teachers had the highest JS. Excitable teachers had the lowest JS, possibly because they are very emotional and may overcommit to many activities.

The findings from Lee and Quek’s (2018) study of 100 preschool teachers in Singapore also showed that relationships with colleagues and administrators were the most significant predictor of JS. Other factors that increased JS were autonomy and lower levels of perceived work stress (Lee & Quek, 2018) and teachers who exhibited proactive personalities (Li et al., 2017). The preschool teachers asserted that more training, resources, and shared goals would result in even higher levels of JS (Lee & Quek, 2018). Similarly, Chu and Kuo (2015) determined that this job involvement was not impacted by salary but was significantly impacted by administrative support.

Interestingly, participants in Chu and Kuo's (2015) study did not report that parent involvement, hours, paperwork, or students' socioeconomic status impacted JS levels.

The findings of Calvecchio's (2018) survey of 102 teachers showed that those newer to the profession had higher levels of JS, and special educators had higher levels than general education teachers. New teachers who are confident and can demonstrate self-efficacy are likelier to stay in their roles (Keese et al., 2022). These attributes can be developed through their training programs for preservice teachers and support at their schools with training and mentoring (Keese et al., 2022). Although Granziera and Perera (2019) found that self-efficacy did not impact the JS of teachers, the findings of Keese et al. (2022) were confirmed by the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) was conducted by three governmental agencies: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES), and the U.S. Department of Education (Raue & Gray, 2015). The investigators in this study collected data from 1,990 teachers who had completed their first year in a public school; 80% stayed in their role if they had a mentor, while only 64% without a mentor stayed (Raue & Gray, 2015). Of the 1,440 teachers who stayed for 5 years, 53% reported not being satisfied with their jobs (Raue & Gray, 2015).

JS in Noninstructional Itinerants

Although JS has been correlated with higher employee retention in various occupations (Peshlakai, 2016), itinerants face different challenges than their instructional itinerant, which can impact JS. Additionally, Barrett (2020) found that salary was correlated with higher levels of JS for instructional itinerants. It is important to note that itinerants have job opportunities in other settings where the compensation may be much higher.

School Nurses. For school nurses, Jameson and Bowen (2020) also found that a positive work environment was positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with burnout. Even though school nurses work in a challenging environment which could result in emotional exhaustion, this adverse consequence is mitigated by high levels of personal accomplishment (Jameson & Bowen, 2020). Additionally, personal empowerment was identified as a predictor of increased JS in 330 school nurses in Taiwan (Chang et al., 2010).

Conversely, JS can be negatively impacted when nurses are faced with moral dilemmas. Powell et al. (2018) found that school nurses with more moral dilemmas at work experience lower levels of job satisfaction. Of the 307 school nurses surveyed, issues such as sacrificing the quality of care due to time constraints or experiencing issues with maintaining privacy due to inadequate workspace caused moral distress (Powell et al., 2018). Ensuring confidentiality is part of the expected standards in the nursing profession (Kaskoun & McCabe, 2021). Powell et al. (2018) noted that obtaining this information for itinerant school nurses can be misleading because their moral levels of distress and job satisfaction could change based on the worksite.

School Psychologists. Unlike instructional occupations in the school setting, finding current information related to school psychologists has been inhibited by the fact that the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) with the National Center for Educational Statistics does not collect information related to this professional group (Alvarez et al., 2013). The available research shows that school psychologists report high levels of JS when their actual job more closely resembles their desired job (Brown & Sobel, 2021; DeLuzio, 2014). School psychologists with longevity may have a closer alignment between their actual and desired jobs. Veteran school psychologists report higher levels of JS (Brown & Sobel, 2021; DeLuzio, 2014), along with school psychologists who perceive they work in positive school climates (DeLuzio, 2014). From these results, DeLuzio asserted that JS is a learned behavior.

Additionally, JS for school psychologists can be impacted by the geographical location where services are provided. School psychologists working in rural settings also reported higher levels of JS (Hussar, 2015), while almost 44% of school psychologists work in suburban settings (Donahue, 2019). Goforth et al. (2017) collected data from 221 school psychologists, 97 of whom worked in rural areas. School psychologists in rural areas reported traveling great distances and are often isolated (Goforth et al., 2017). They often work with students who live in poverty and have mental health needs but limited access to resources (Goforth et al., 2017). In a previous study, Ehly and Reimers (1986) found little difference between the JS of rural and urban school psychologists, although rural professionals reported higher levels of administrative support.

Regardless of their geographical assignments, school psychologists as a whole are satisfied in their roles (Rhodes, 1993). In a 10-year comparison study between 1983 and 1993, more than 80% of school psychologists were satisfied with their roles, and these findings were stable over this period. Findings from 2004 show that 90% of school psychologists were satisfied or highly satisfied in their roles, indicating an increase from Rhodes's (1993) 10-year analysis. Although many school psychologists report high levels of JS, they are not impervious to burnout. Additionally, professionals can experience high levels of JS and still experience periods of burnout (Schilling et al., 2018). In a literature review on school psychologists and burnout, McCormack et al. (2018) identified that burnout for this professional group is most likely to be emotional exhaustion due to high workloads and workplace stressors. Self-care is one way to mitigate burnout (Rainsford, 2020) caused by prolonged exposure to professional shortages, organizational stress, and the emotional tolls of the position (Dennison, 2017). A study of 186 school psychologists showed that professionals who engaged in self-care had lower burnout and higher levels of personal accomplishment (Rainsford, 2020). Schilling et al. (2018) reported that other ways to reduce burnout include "talking with coworkers, engaging in solution-focused problem-solving methods, and stress reduction techniques" (p. 329).

Although most school psychologists reported being satisfied in their roles (Castillo et al., 2014), there are areas for improvement. In Rhodes's (1993) findings, the minority of dissatisfied school psychologists reported concerns with pay, practice, and opportunities for advancement (Rhodes, 1993). School psychologists are not teachers, and most administrative positions require teaching certification, limiting the advancement of these professionals in the school setting (Anderson et al., 1984). Levinson (1991) concluded that advancement was associated with tasks such as consultation and research. Higher compensation levels were also associated with the concept of advancement, which supports the JS and longevity of people who want to remain in their professional roles (Levinson, 1991). Despite this desire for advancement, no variance in JS levels was noted for school psychologists with a doctoral degree compared to those with an education specialist degree. Hussar (2015)

noted there were lower levels of JS in larger districts, which might be associated with decreased opportunities for advancement. Anderson et al. (1984) postulated that providing career ladder opportunities may decrease high mobility levels. Some professionals mitigate advancement limitations by moving to different jobs within the field that they perceive to be an advancement (Anderson et al., 1984) or into leadership-type activities such as mentoring. With mentoring, Desai (2016) found that the personalities of the supervisors and interns did not affect JS.

One of the essential roles of a school psychologist is to assess students for special education. Wright and Gutkin (1981) asserted that when school psychologists spend most of their time assessing students, JS goes down because they are not engaged in other parts of their job where they can be directly involved with more significant change. In contrary findings, Galanaugh (2018) determined through data collected from 366 school psychologists that JS was the same for individuals who assessed various numbers of students. A study conducted by Cottrell and Barrett (2016) with 460 school psychologists showed that while more school psychologists were satisfied with assessment procedures, 40% were dissatisfied. As assessment procedures differ from district to district, school psychologists have higher JS levels when working in locations where assessment practices are aligned with their professional preferences (Cottrell & Barrett, 2016).

Similarly, in their study with 391 school psychologists, Unruh and McKellar (2013) determined that school psychologists reported higher levels of JS when a structured response to intervention (RtI) model was fully implemented (Unruh & McKellar, 2013). This increased satisfaction may be partially due to the fact that a structured process decreases the amount of time spent on assessment (Galanaugh, 2018). Even though full implementation is most closely associated with JS, due to time constraints, school psychologists' beliefs about the importance of treatment integrity may not translate into practice (Cochrane et al., 2019). For example, in a study of 132 school psychologists, only 21% reported conducting direct observations of the students they were assessing and instead used data collected from another professional or reviewed student product (Cochrane et al., 2019).

In findings similar to those of school nurses (Powell et al., 2018), JS decreases when school psychologists are asked to engage in unethical behavior or ignore legal requirements (Boccio et al., 2016a). These requests may result from the limited understanding that school administrators have regarding the role of the school psychologist (Lisbon-Peoples, 2015; Panteri et al., 2021). This limited understanding can have a detrimental impact on the position as school administrators are the ones who complete their budgets and may not allocate the necessary funds to cover the comprehensive services that school psychologists provide (Young et al., 2021).

School Social Workers. Although itinerancy comes with challenges, being assigned to multiple sites does not necessarily impact JC. In Pamperin's (1987) study, school social workers assigned to an average of 4.6 buildings did not report that work assignments at multiple schools impacted their JS; however, more schools means working with more staff for limited periods, resulting in greater role confusion (Tang & Li, 2021) and lower levels of JS. Many people in the school believe that school social workers oversee attendance, and this misconception means that these professionals are often not used to their potential. In Sutlief's (2013) study, one school social worker noted, "Administrators that don't see social workers as a very integral or important part of what's going on...it takes away from what you are doing" (p. 44). Richard and Sosa (2014) noted that another potential concern related to this role confusion is who is completing their performance assessment. In their study of 378 school social workers in Louisiana, only 71 were supervised and evaluated by a school social worker. Depending on the assessor, they may have a limited understanding of the school social work role or the expectations for any noninstructional itinerant staff member. Sutlief (2013) recommended several ways to mitigate role confusion, isolation, and lack of support, including creating a supportive culture, having open communication, and identifying a clear role for the school social worker. As with school psychologists, staffing issues are compounded by the fact that IES with the National Center for Educational Statistics does not keep current data related to school social workers (Alvarez et al., 2013).

Section 3: Theories Used to Analyze Longevity

Due to the nature of this study and the exploration of the phenomenology of longevity, no one theory was selected for this study. Instead, several theories that may potentially impact longevity were considered. Although many studies have utilized the frameworks referenced below, a brief review of the literature is provided for each theory due to the number of theories identified for review in this study.

Human Capital Theory

From the organizational perspective, Pedrini (2007) determined that “employment, labor management, health and safety, training and education, diversity and opportunities” (pp. 358-360) are critical factors. Although human capital (HC) is important to organizational productivity and efficiency (Almendarez, 2013), Burns (2018) noted that individuals must also consider HC as they make decisions about what type of professional development is important to them and will increase their opportunities. Individuals may not want to develop firm-specific knowledge if they perceive that the training is too narrow and will not provide them with skills that would be useful in other organizations (Coff & Raffiee, 2015).

Eriksson et al. (2022) noted that investments in HC were correlated with innovation and can be impacted by factors such as regional density where HC is increased (Florida et al., 2016). De Lange and Olivier (2008) posited that organizations should nurture human capital and prioritize employee wellbeing. In a study with 14 participants in higher education, it was noted that nurturing HC should include increased communication, problem-solving, employee support, and increased employee input and ownership (de Lange & Olivier, 2008). Additionally, organizations should provide on-the-job training, opportunities for employees to engage in new opportunities (Strober, 1990), and provide current and appropriate training. Bottrill (2022) asserted that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that many employees need to develop their digital skills.

Self-Determination Theory

There are many studies that include SDT across various domains. A study conducted by Di Domenico and Ryan (2017) found increases in dopamine, a chemical that increases feelings of pleasure, in the neurological system when people

were engaged in intrinsically motivated tasks. Sheldon and Goffredi (2021) asserted that using SDT resulted in increased positive mental health as it focused on “personhood” (p. 119) and the needs of the individual. These findings are aligned with those of Gagné and Deci (2005), who noted that an individual’s “identified regulation” was when an individual’s values were aligned with their goals, and their “integrated regulation” was when they integrated the work with their sense of self (p. 334). Sheldon et al. (2020) determined in their study with 426 psychology students that self-talk led to greater autonomy and was even more important than supportive feedback from others.

Messineo et al. (2019) surveyed 133 first-year nursing students and found that most were motivated to come to the field by relatedness and their desire to help others, followed by autonomy and the opportunity for many job opportunities. In a study conducted by Fernet et al. (2020), 660 nurses were surveyed over 2 years at 0, 6, 13, and 24 months. The researchers noted three trajectories of SDT: increasing, slightly decreasing, and decreasing (Fernet et al., 2020). The results showed that transformational leadership was associated with increasing SDT (Fernet et al., 2020). Additionally, when looking at socialization at the task-level, the organizational level, or the team-level, only task-level socialization was associated with an increasing trajectory (Fernet et al., 2020). In the Bernard et al. (2014) study concerning the impact of exercise on the wellbeing of 121 nurses and pharmacists, only competence was identified as a predictor of two domains of wellbeing: mindfulness and vitality.

In the area of education, Rahayu et al. (2022) found that SDT could be used with students who could provide input into plans, and choice of writing topics which resulted in increased engagement. Muir (2021) collected data from 26 twelfth-grade students who reported that a flipped classroom, where instruction takes place at home and problem-solving in the classroom, increased their autonomy and competence. Additionally, even though the lectures were taped, these lectures strengthened the connection between the students and the teacher because the students could see the time investment of the teacher in the students’ learning (Muir, 2021). In the educational setting, SDT can also be used with school leaders. When 51 school leaders took a 9-week training in SDT, they reported higher levels of communication,

consultation, mentoring, and individual teacher development (Forner et al., 2020). Forner et al. (2020) found that SDT used by school leaders resulted in increased self-esteem and confidence in both teachers and leaders.

Person-Environment Fit

Pithers and Soden (1999) conducted a study with 300 Scottish and Australian teachers in which 100 were categorized as practical and 200 as social. Teachers who were social were considered more likely to have P-E fit, while practical teachers were less likely to report a P-E fit (Pithers & Soden, 1999). The results showed a moderate relationship between P-E fit and teacher stress, with the incongruent teacher group showing higher levels of psychological and physical strain (Pithers & Soden, 1999).

Uysal-Irak (2014) found a positive relationship between P-E fit and P-O fit and an indirect relationship between P-E fit, life satisfaction, and decreased turnover intentions (TI). Similarly, Redelinghuys and Botha (2016) found an indirect relationship between P-E fit and intent to leave (ITL). This relationship can be enhanced by opportunities for growth through training, coaching, and mentoring (Redelinghuys & Botha, 2016). In a study with 310 respondents, P-E fit was also correlated with grit, which positively impacted employee performance (van Zyl et al., 2022). The results showed the overall positive impact of a strong P-E fit.

Person-Job Fit. Employees who demonstrate a higher P-J fit are more likely to be able to use a broader skill set within the organization (Hinami et al., 2013). Additionally, Sylva et al. (2019) noted that employees with high levels of career initiative are more likely to report stronger P-J fit. A strong P-J fit has been more closely aligned with psychological ownership (Han et al., 2015), reduced turnover (Sylva et al., 2019), increased retention, and improved work performance (Hinami et al., 2013; Rajper et al., 2020). Interestingly, individuals who did leave their employment had increased career initiative and perceived P-J fit after leaving their jobs (Sylva et al., 2019).

Compared to P-J fit, P-O fit is ultimately a better predictor of an individual job choice, but the perceived P-J fit initially makes an individual consider a particular job (Rodgers, 2000). Yu (1995) noted that providing a realistic job description when an individual first expresses interest helps decrease turnover. When there is a change

in P-J fit, the result can be an increase in JS and affective commitment (AC), although employees may need time to learn new skills (Kim et al., 2018).

Person-Organization Fit. When analyzing the compatibility between an employee and an organization, the theory of P-O fit can be used as a solid theoretical foundation based on its use in previous research (Fan, 2018; Merez & Andysz, 2012; Sylva et al., 2019; Wei, 2013; Youngs et al., 2015). In a study of 600 employees in Poland, Merez and Andysz (2012) found that identifying too closely with the organization negatively impacted women's mental health, as women may struggle to find a WLB (Merez & Andysz, 2012). P-O fit may also be influenced by organizational practices that impact WLB, such as childcare and flexible scheduling (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017). Fan (2018) asserted that P-O fit must be in place for employees to have a work-family balance. Similarly, Seong (2016) determined that P-O fit is related to WLB, but this relationship is strengthened by self-efficacy and family-supportive organizational perceptions. These practices show that an organization values family, which is extremely important to many individuals.

When looking at P-O fit and perceived organizational support (POS) compared to factors that promote longevity, such as OC, JS, and employee WE, Biswas and Bhatnagar (2013) postulated that a strong P-O fit and POS had to be in place prior to the development of OC. Their results showed that P-O fit and POS increased JS, which was indirectly affected by employee WE (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013). High levels of POS were also associated with an employee's willingness to take on more responsibility resulting in higher levels of WE (Jiang et al., 2020). Additionally, the relationship between P-O fit and innovation is strengthened by POS (Akhtar et al., 2019). The feelings associated with POS, such as gratitude and trust, are contraindicated with TI (Treglown et al., 2018) and help employees find deeper meaning in their work (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The P-O fit model has been used as the theoretical framework in various studies. One example is a qualitative study of teachers in the juvenile justice setting that found teachers with the most substantial alignment between their job expectations and the actual job expressed the most positive feelings and an intent to stay in the position because they had found their calling (Murphy, 2018). In another

study using the P-O fit framework, Wei (2015) determined that increasing human capital increased TI because employment opportunities increased; however, Wei also identified that P-O fit decreased TI and weakened the relationship between human capital and TI. These findings were confirmed by Abdalla et al. (2018), who noted that inconsistencies in values between individuals and organizations resulted in higher TI levels. P-O fit has been used in research analyzing the prosocial identities of nurses in the hospital setting (Cha et al., 2014). This framework has also been used to review employee commitment in the K–12 sector (Youngs et al., 2015) but has not been applied to noninstructional itinerant staff in the K–12 setting. Anderson et al. (2018) determined that team incentive structures also increase the perceptions of P-O fit in an organization.

Social-Exchange Theory

Ancarani et al. (2017), who used SET as a theoretical framework in the hospital setting in Italy found that when a relational approach to safety was applied, people were more likely to engage in safe practices. It was also noted that creating a clan culture can result in links between peers that are stronger than hierarchical links (Ancarani et al., 2017). Additionally, staff members are more likely to voice safety concerns (Ancarani et al., 2017). In the educational setting, Zeinabadi (2013) found that female principals are more likely to be transformational leaders than their male counterparts and engage in more social exchanges. Elstad et al. (2012) asserted that social exchange is a strong motivator for educators. High levels of trust between school leaders and teachers positively impact social exchanges—which, in turn, positively impact organizational citizenship behaviors.

Work as a Calling Theory

An employee's calling, which is the perception that the work being completed is meaningful, has been associated with increased WE, AC, and NC (Sawhney et al., 2020). A study conducted with delivery nurses in China found a positive correlation between work calling and job performance (Jung & Kim, 2020). Additionally, Jung and Kim (2020) found increased job satisfaction when calling was reported by the participants. Hirschi et al. (2019) considered both positive and negative outcomes of work as a calling in their study of 500 German employees. The study findings

showed that having a calling was directly correlated with positive nonwork activities (Hirschi et al., 2019). Although Hirschi et al. did not find a direct correlation with adverse outcomes such as workaholism, it was noted as a possibility.

In a study conducted by Andel et al. (2021), the researchers analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on one's work calling. The results showed that when people have a calling that is focused on themselves and their purpose for the work, they can continue to work at high levels even when provided COVID-19 information (Andel et al., 2021). When the calling is focused on their need to help others, those with the calling will experience more stress and anxiety after COVID-19 information is consumed (Andel et al., 2021). Andel et al. posited that those who want to help others have a more prosocial personality and are more reactive to potential threats.

Job Embeddedness Theory

Coetzer et al. (2017) determined that JE could be used to predict turnover in larger organizations with 50 or more employees. Employees in organizations with fewer than 50 employees are more likely to feel higher levels of job embeddedness related to sacrifice (Coetzer et al., 2017). This may be due to the fact that exiting the organization would result in leaving people with whom they have developed close relationships (Coetzer et al., 2017). On-the-job and off-the-job links were identified in embedded employees in small (i.e., less than 50 employees) and large (i.e., more than 50 employees) organizations (Coetzer et al., 2017).

There were several studies that analyzed the impact of job embeddedness and nurses. A study conducted with 14 nurses in public hospitals in Iran showed that perceived organizational support (POS) and team member exchange (TMX) increased the nurses' job embeddedness. In a similar study, Zhou et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between job embeddedness and employee voice behavior after analyzing data collected from 598 nurses in three public hospitals. Embeddedness also influenced the relationship between humble leadership and effective commitment (Zhou et al., 2021). A study that included 490 nurses in China confirmed that nurses with higher levels of job embeddedness did not come to work when they were sick (presenteeism) because they did not want to harm the

organization (Liu et al., 2022). The study results also indicated that participants who had been with the organization for 6 or more years might still come to work sick (Liu et al., 2022). Liu et al. posited that these nurses might engage in this behavior because they believe they are modeling good attendance for newer nurses or may not want to interrupt patient care. In a study that included 353 participants, low levels of trust and high embeddedness could result in deviant behaviors to increase their autonomy in some way (Marasi et al., 2016). When individuals have low levels of trust and are not very embedded, they will leave the organization for another opportunity (Marasi et al., 2016).

When looking at embeddedness and teachers, a study with 115 middle and high school teachers in Israel showed that job embeddedness affected the relationship between conscientiousness and job performance. Teachers used the environment to determine expected behaviors, and those who wanted to be embedded had strong indicators in three areas: environmental fit, interpersonal links, and understanding the sacrifice associated with leaving the organization (Lev & Koslowsky, 2012). Another study with 278 teachers in South Africa showed that when teachers were satisfied with their pay, they reported higher levels of embeddedness through the elements of organizational fit and sacrifice. When the teachers were satisfied with the professional development offered through their organization, they reported higher levels of embeddedness related to the element of sacrifice (Shibiti, 2019). In their study with 298 private and public school teachers, Amoah et al. (2021) found that teachers had fewer resources when the psychological contract was broken, resulting in decreased fit, fewer links, and less sacrifice. This decrease in the components of job embeddedness ultimately resulted in lower levels of commitment and a negative view of the organization (Amoah et al., 2021).

Job Demands-Resources Model

Although personal resources are a critical part of the job-demands resource theory, Huang et al. (2016) found that self-efficacy did not have a negative impact on emotional exhaustion. D'Emiljo and du Preez (2017) surveyed 453 nurses in South Africa and determined that satisfaction decreased when nurses' emotional and physical workload exceeded their resources or when they were asked to complete

tasks and did not have the necessary competencies. With nurses who work in a nursing home setting, the ability to practice with a higher level of autonomy can be considered a resource, and employers should focus on skill development to help ensure employee retention (Hara et al., 2021). In a study that included 537 social workers in China, Tu et al. (2022) noted that participants had high job demands and high job resources. In this study, the high job demands positively impacted on employee performance which was considered an atypical outcome. Tu et al. posited that this outcome might be due to the fact that social workers are helping people in need.

Conservation of Resources

Montani et al. (2018) found that even negative experiences can result in a conservation of resources, as some individuals will generate new resources to manage emotional distress. One example is employees who work with aversive leaders and must draw from their personal resources as a coping strategy. Fatima et al. (2018) found that employees with solid psychological capital have more resources to draw from and can replenish depleted resources to successfully mitigate feelings of helplessness and low self-esteem (Fatima et al., 2018). Even with positive experiences, such as positive resource use at work, the overall impact can be adverse as an individual may have fewer resources at home, resulting in a work-family conflict (Chen & Huang, 2016). Personal and community resilience can also impact one's resources as noted during the COVID-19 pandemic (Farkash et al., 2022). Job loss during the pandemic significantly impacted some individuals during the pandemic as did existing vulnerabilities such as low socio-economic status and disabilities (Farkash et al., 2022).

Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment

Turner and Shera (2005) identified several ways to empower social workers by ensuring they take part in advocacy, lobbying, fundraising, and involvement and community and professional associations. When considering the impact of empowerment and nursing, Davies et al. (2006) analyzed data from 209 nurses in Canada and determined that empowerment decreased job tension and increased JS. This study's strongest relationship was between empowerment and the control and

responsibility variable (Davies et al., 2006). Similarly, Ng et al. (2022) found that psychological empowerment was directly related to the relationship between SE and JS. Another study in the medical field examines the perceptions of 92 nurses in a teaching hospital using Kanter's theory (Wilson & Spence Laschinger, 1994). Wilson and Spence Laschinger noted that the nurses in their study reported they had access to opportunity but limited access to information. Empowerment was directly related to OC, with access to information rated as the most significant factor (Wilson & Spence Laschinger, 1994). Based on this result, it was determined that employees who may be on a lower hierarchical level should have a way to get current organizational information (Wilson & Spence Laschinger, 1994). Structural empowerment has also been correlated with increased task performance and work engagement (Amor et al., 2021). Employees who work in empowering worksites are more likely to have higher levels of psychological empowerment (Amor et al., 2021) and higher levels of wellbeing (Ng et al., 2022).

Psychological Empowerment Theory

In a review of 50 articles on psychological empowerment (PE) and JS, Mathew and Nair (2021) determined that PE was positively correlated to JS. Pradhan and Mishra (2021) found that PE increased positive organizational citizenship behaviors. Additionally, increased levels of psychological empowerment are directly related to lower turnover (Mathew & Nair, 2021) and increased work-life enrichment due to increased personal resources (Choi et al., 2018). A study of 289 teachers in Singapore showed that teachers noted three behaviors that similarly impacted their empowerment: "providing intellectual stimulation, giving acknowledgment and recognition, and providing role modeling" (Lee & Nie, 2017, p. 274).

Siegall and Gardner (2000) noted four areas that impacted psychological empowerment: "communication with supervisors, general relations with the company, teams, and concern for performance" (p. 7). An analysis of the responses from 203 employees showed that communication with supervisors and general relations with the company were the most important factors when considering psychological empowerment (Siegall & Gardner, 2000). Muduli and Pandya (2018) also found that two factors associated with psychological empowerment, self-

determination and meaningfulness, resulted in agility and the ability to adapt to organizational change. In a study that included 267 nurses, 338 physicians, and 177 other specialists, the respondents reported that job meaningfulness and the ability to perform their job competently resulted in the highest levels of empowerment (Salles et al., 2020).

Locke's Range of Affect Theory

Rice et al. (1991) conducted a study with 97 working college students in Buffalo, NY. The researchers had the participants rank 12 facets of employment to determine the impact of facet amount and facet satisfaction (Rice et al., 1991). The results indicated that when the participants ranked facets higher, the resulting facet satisfaction was also higher (Rice et al., 1991). McFarlin and Rice (1991) identified four outcomes after using a three-step hierarchical regression for 10 job facets in order of importance: "high importance/high want, high importance/low want, low importance/low want, and low importance/high want" (p. 33). Wu and Yao (2007) used four scenarios to determine the relationship between the facets. One example they used was a couple looking for a large house in a convenient location, with each factor (large and convenient location) being more important to one person (Wu & Yao, 2007). Aligned with Locke's range of affect theory, the results showed that the relationship between what a person wants is significant when the individual perceives a particular facet as more important (Wu & Yao, 2007).

Janićijević et al. (2018) used Locke's range of affect in a study with 324 employees who reviewed and rated 15 job characteristics. The results indicated that safety, belonging, and growth were the highest-rated facets (Janićijević et al., 2018). When Locke's theory was used to look at job satisfaction between generations, Enkhbaatar et al. (2021) found that Generation X did not get to develop new skills leading to lower satisfaction. Employees should have equal opportunities for training and skill development (Enkhbaatar et al., 2021). When looking at the difference between males and females using Locke's theory, females were more likely to report lower satisfaction due to challenges with work-life balance (WLB; Al-kassem & Marwaha, 2022). When considering age, older participants reported higher JS

potentially due to higher self-efficacy, noted to have the strongest correlation with JS (Al-kassem & Marwaha, 2022).

Equity Theory

Kollmann et al. (2020) noted that equity is based on inputs, or what one puts into a job, and outputs, or what one gets from a job. Inputs are more important to older employees, whereas younger employees are reinforced by what they receive (Kollmann et al., 2020). Therefore, a lower salary will lead to lower satisfaction levels for younger employees. Wang (2016) posited that when it came to salary, employees compared their current salary to past compensation and to the compensation of others to determine equity. Employers can mitigate perceptions of unfairness by using a scientific salary system and encouraging employees to report unfair practices (Wang, 2016).

Cappelen et al. (2014) conducted a study that included neurological scanning. They found that the 47 participants included in the study showed a neurological response when presented with workplace inequities (Cappelen et al., 2014). In another study, Arvanitis and Hantzi (2016) surveyed 54 undergraduate students to determine if interactions were considered exchanges. They found that when individuals were in similar positions there was a give and take relationship (Arvanitis & Hantzi, 2016). Therefore, inputs and outputs were considered exchanges influenced by organizational norms and values (Arvanitis & Hantzi, 2016). Davlembayeva et al. (2021) identified that individuals were impacted by the value of the exchange, which was measured by social influence or the response received. The 398 study participants reported that exchanges were measured by the impact on an individual's social identity, organizational justice, and their comparison with their outcome with the outcome of other members (Davlembayeva et al., 2021).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

There is considerable research based on Herzberg's two-factor theory. Chu and Kuo (2015) found that hygiene factors such as pay, interpersonal connections, and adequate supervision do not create JS, but not having them can lead to dissatisfaction. Kaitz and Ray (2021) substantiated this finding by showing that interactions between 30 psychologists and 30 primary care providers resulted in only

49% satisfaction by the physicians and 40% JS of psychologists. Despite working in the same building, the psychologists and physicians did not create strong interpersonal connections due to time constraints (Kaitz & Ray, 2021). This lack of connection negatively impacted the relationship and the quality of client services (Kaitz & Ray, 2021).

Conversely, Chu and Kuo (2015) determined that motivation factors such as recognition and opportunities for advancement are directly correlated to JS. For example, letters of appreciation may lead to higher JS (Chaudhury, 2015). Ngo-Henha (2017) posited that improving hygiene factors, like a poor work environment, will not necessarily result in satisfied employees, and motivation factors must be considered. These findings are not entirely aligned with those of Nguyen and Tran (2018), who asserted that tangible motivators such as salary and benefits, in addition to factors such as teamwork and opportunities for promotion, have an apparent effect on an employee's ITS. These findings were supported by Rahman (2020), who identified that the JS factors of job security, promotion, and pay were most likely to impact TI. Sanjeev and Surya (2016) found that hygiene factors do not impact JC, but they do impact motivation factors, so they must be considered by an employer. Ultimately, employees with JS impacted by the motivation factors are more likely to stay with an organization (Sanjeev & Surya, 2016).

Allen and Meyer's Three Component Model (TCM)

Limited studies have been conducted using Allen and Meyer's (1993) framework in the educational setting (Maiti & Sanyal, 2018), and no studies related to noninstructional itinerant staff in public schools using this model have been identified. Nandan et al. (2018) conducted a study using the three-component model to study higher education faculty commitment across ten countries. This model was also employed by Haque et al. (2021) to analyze the impact of responsible leadership on Australian employees and by Campbell (2013) with individuals in an industrial union.

Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM has been used successfully in various studies to analyze OC (Campbell, 2013; Gellatly et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2013). Although AC is one of the most desirable forms of commitment and is likely to result in longevity,

the benefit of developing the CC can quickly decrease TI (Gellatly et al., 2014). Another study that demonstrated the impact of AC was conducted with Canadian LPNs, who were more likely to become union members with high AC (Campbell, 2013). Although AC is often correlated with higher levels of support, it is vital to consider the impact of all commitment levels. In a study conducted by Gellatly et al. (2014) of 336 nurses, 24 were CC dominant and 29 were high in all commitment areas. If the data were analyzed by only looking at CC rather than the relationship between all three areas, one would incorrectly assume the nurses were staying only due to a sense of obligation.

Allen and Meyer's (1990) TCM has also been used to analyze commitment in various countries and cultures. When used to look at the commitment differences that might exist between cultures, Nandan et al. (2018) found slight variance between the 10 countries in their study. Commitment was generally impacted by factors such as compensation, supervisory support, and autonomy, and cultural influences did not affect participants' AC, NC, or CC (Nandan et al., 2018). TCM was used in a study regarding the financial services sector in Canada to understand the different types of commitment consumers display (Fullerton, 2020). These study findings show that banking consumers display AC and CC, while NC was not noted (Fullerton, 2020). In addition to studies showing AC's positive effects, Chegini et al. (2019) found that NC was associated with higher levels of JS in nurses. Additionally, using the TCM framework, Bonds (2017) found that when NC was higher, turnover decreased because employees felt compelled to stay, not necessarily because they wanted to remain with the organization.

An individual's attachment style can also impact their OC (Scrima et al., 2015). Individuals with a more secure attachment are more likely to have positive experiences in the workplace resulting in an affective attachment (Scrima et al., 2015). Conversely, an individual with a preoccupied attachment is more likely to be fearful, resulting in a continuance attachment where they only are attached because it would be difficult to leave (Scrima et al., 2015). This finding is similar to those of Lin et al. (2013) related to education; as education provides more career opportunities, it should increase OC, but it only increased continuance commitment.

Leaders can have a direct impact on employee commitment. Lin et al. (2013) asserted that perceived organizational support is the best predictor of AC, NC, and CC. This assertion was confirmed by Haque et al. (2021), who showed that leaders influenced OC, and responsible leadership positively impacted all three levels of commitment. Responsible leadership increases organizational longevity and productivity (Haque et al., 2021). Rodrigues et al. (2022) argued that CC should not be a part of the OC model as CC is more closely related to entrenchment in which an employee stays with an organization or of necessity. Somers et al. (2019) posited that NC and CC are correlated with turnover, so the TCM should be used to assess employee turnover rather than OC. Meyer and Allen (1991) asserted that only using TCM to consider turnover is “shortsighted” (p. 73). Despite these assertions, TCM is one of the most commonly used models when analyzing OC.

Section 4: Itinerants

The review of the current literature has provided information about the OC, WE, and JS of itinerants. Although instructional and noninstructional itinerant staff working in public schools have very different roles, they face some of the same challenges. Itinerant teachers may have limited breaks, no designated space for their materials or instruction, and may feel very isolated from their colleagues (Klibansky, 2021). Itinerants reported spending more time traveling and preparing than working directly with students (Schultz, 2021). These challenges faced by all itinerant staff can be mitigated by increasing communication, administrative support, and networking opportunities with other itinerants across the school district or in neighboring districts (Klibansky, 2021).

Instructional Itinerants

Instructional itinerants are employees who work at multiple schools in an academic capacity. There are a variety of instructors in this instructional group, including those who teach music, art, and special education. Instructional itinerants, also called visiting teachers, started in the schools in more of a social work role to reduce truancy in the early 1900s (Florida Department of Education, 1954; Schultz, 2021) but started being used in a more instructional capacity after the passing of the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975 (Schultz, 2021). Instructional itinerants teach at multiple schools, but still have a more typical teaching role than their noninstructional counterparts. Educators such as art and music teachers may be hired on an itinerant basis due to limited funding and resources and the need for a few professionals to support many students (Klibansky, 2021). Some itinerant teachers are used to support social and emotional learning and trauma support (Ripper, 2019). Others are used to support students who are acquiring a second language (Mourão, 2021). Regardless of their specific role, new itinerants must work to develop both a teacher identity and an itinerant teacher identity (Schultz, 2021). Doing so will help guard against itinerant teachers' attrition related to job-related factors such as isolation, inconsistent environments, and a lack of resources (Peshlakai, 2016).

Another group of instructional itinerants is special education teachers with specialized skills to serve small populations of students who need support (Zhu et al., 2021). One example is an instructional itinerant for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (Norman & Jamieson, 2015; Peshlakai, 2016; Rabinsky, 2013). Special education itinerants must know both special and general education curricula and be able to coordinate responsibilities in multiple roles (Zhu et al., 2021). Special education instructional itinerants provide opportunities for the inclusion and immersion of students with special needs with their general education peers (Rabinsky, 2013). These instructional itinerants are likely to serve in a co-teaching role or work collaboratively with other teachers in the school (Mourão, 2021). Opportunities for co-teaching, ensuring role clarity, and providing time for co-planning increase successful collaboration between instructional itinerants and traditional classroom teachers (Mourão, 2021).

Noninstructional Itinerants in Public Schools

Unlike instructional itinerants, noninstructional itinerants are often hired out of the central office and support multiple schools. Individuals go into school nurse, school psychologist, and school social worker roles because they enjoy helping people. This itinerant commitment to their role helps to mitigate some of the challenges associated with these positions. With noninstructional itinerants, they are

typically the only person in the school setting who can complete the responsibilities assigned to their job. Although teachers in various areas may be able to cover each other's classes, they cannot perform nursing duties, provide therapeutic counseling, or complete IQ tests.

School Nurses. School nurses play an essential role in the school setting. School nurses have been an integral part of the public school system since 1902 when Lina Rogers was hired as a school nurse in New York City (Kaskoun & McCabe, 2021). Rogers started as an itinerant serving four schools, and one of her offices was located in a small stair closet (Houlahan, 2018). By the end of the first semester of school, Rogers had served 829 students and conducted 137 home visits (Houlahan, 2018). In the early 1900s, the school nurse's primary role was to decrease truancy and provide essential health services (Kaskoun & McCabe, 2021). The current role of the school nurse is more comprehensive as they support student health in many ways, such as vision, oral health, mental health, obesity prevention, weight and height screenings, and vaccination oversight (Levinson et al., 2019). Today, school nurses serve 49 million public school students (Kaskoun & McCabe, 2021; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.), and 74.6% of public schools have either part-time or full-time nurses (Yonkaitis, 2018). Of that 74.6%, approximately 40% are part-time, and 25% of schools have no nurses (CBS Morning, 2019). Most school nurses support at least two schools (Willgerodt et al., 2018); however, Houlahan and Deveneau (2019) recommended employing one school nurse at every school and asserted that the lack of federal or state mandates has resulted in wide variables in support available for students.

One challenge for school nurses is that they are often the only healthcare provider in the school setting, leading to significant role confusion (Campbell, 2017; Helleve et al., 2022; Powell et al., 2018). The school nurse's role is often misunderstood, as colleagues believe that nurses provide basic first aid and administer medication (Anderson et al., 2018). Although these activities are part of their job, their role is much broader. This role confusion can be problematic because school principals with little understanding of school nurses are the ones

who are making decisions and allocating funds for student health, often based on numbers rather than student needs (Willgerodt et al., 2018).

The issue of role confusion is sometimes compounded by the relationships that school nurses have with administrators, which can vary significantly between school sites. A study of 46 school nurses in Norway showed that many school nurses met with school administrators in the hallway to talk (Helleve et al., 2022). School nurses who had formal meetings had much more collaborative relationships with essential decision-makers (Helleve et al., 2022). Results from the National Association for School Nurse survey indicated that these professionals only spend 37% of their time in the community and systems-level activities (Anderson et al., 2018). Inconsistencies between states, districts, and schools mean that school nurses are likely not utilizing all of their professional skills (Davis et al., 2019). The NASN has developed a *Framework for the 20th Century School Nursing Practice*, which can be helpful to school and district administrators as it helps outline their scope of practice.

The *Framework for 20th Century School Nursing Practice*, which consists of five guiding principles, can help school nurses clarify their role in the school setting (NASN, 2016). Clarifying their role will increase the understanding of individuals in the school setting and empower nurses by changing how they see themselves (Dawe & Sealey, 2019). The framework's overarching principle is standards of practice, and the other four guiding principles are care coordination, leadership, community/public health, and quality improvement (NASN, 2016). Reising and Cygan (2022) noted that school nurses spent 86% of their time in care coordination and community/public health and only 14% in leadership and quality improvement. School nurses have been provided minimal opportunities to hold leadership positions in the school (Reising & Cygan, 2022).

Additionally, they have limited training in the school system that applies to their role and ensures they are using current healthcare strategies. This lack of availability makes it more challenging for school nurses than nurses in other settings to stay aligned with the framework as their work is to be evidence-based, multisource research (Maughan et al., 2020). Yonkaitis (2018) recommended that

experts from “professional organizations, university programs, or large health departments must help to foster an environment that supports school nurses in using evidence-based practices” (p. 66). Wallin and Rothman (2020) posited that the *Framework for 20th Century School Nursing Practice* should be a foundation for professional development and school nurse evaluations.

School nurses report a strong sense of personal accomplishment that mitigates the high levels of exhaustion that comes with supporting large caseloads of students (Jameson & Bowen, 2020). When looking at outcomes of school nurse caseloads, one would have to look beyond numbers, as students can have a variety of complex needs (Jameson et al., 2018). Although there is no current way to assess school nurse caseloads (Jameson et al., 2018), the NASN recommends that the ratio between school nurses and students be 1:750 for students with typical needs, 1:225 for students who have daily needs, and 1:125 for very involved student populations (NASN, 2011). Kaskoun and McCabe (2021) recommended that in order to ensure quality health services in the school setting, schools employ a full-time nurse rather than provide services through an itinerant model.

Although organizational decisions such as caseloads impact itinerant nurses, societal issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic also have an impact. There has been limited research to show how the pandemic has impacted the school nurse position (Anttila et al., 2020; Vejzovic et al., 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, school nurses played a critical role in keeping students healthy and safe. As the only healthcare provider in the school, they became content experts and were expected to educate school professionals and the community. Though school nurse efforts were appreciated at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, they later received abuse from many stakeholders for trying to implement public health safety measures (Bergren, 2021). This shift resulted in moral distress for many school nurses and negatively impacted some relationships (Bergren, 2021). Many school nurses did not have access to current research and relied on information from the CDC and their peers (Reising & Cygan, 2022). In 64% of states in the United States, a state-wide nursing coordinator supports school nurses (Maughan et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of having

school nurses involved in planning at the systems level to prepare for unanticipated crises (Hoke et al., 2021).

School Psychologists. Another group of vital employees in the school setting who often work in an itinerant capacity are school psychologists. In the early 1900s, Lightner Witmer was the first psychologist who set up a practice to help students with their academics (Donahue, 2019). By 1915, the first school psychologist was working in a school in Connecticut (Dennison, 2017). In 1962, the National Center for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) listed the University of Oregon as the first site to offer a school psychology program (Fagan & Wells, 2000). By 1996, the NCATE had 123 programs listed (Fagan & Wells, 2000), and Castillo et al. (2014) reported that there were 42,593 school psychologists across the United States; however, not all were working in public schools, and they could be found in other places such as hospitals, parochial schools, higher education, private practice, and other community agencies (Castillo et al., 2014). Although most school-based school psychologists support more than one school, some schools have full-time staff members. Proctor and Steadman (2003) found, in a sample of 63 professionals, that both full-time and itinerant school psychologists reported JS, but full-time employees reported higher satisfaction levels. The full-time employees reported receiving more administrative support, inclusion in more activities within the school, lower caseloads, reduced burnout, and increased desired work outcomes (Proctor & Steadman, 2003).

School psychologists have several significant responsibilities in the school setting. According to the NASP (n.d.-b), some of the roles of the school psychologist include assessment, progress monitoring, special education services, mental health support, and crisis response. Their scope of knowledge also includes ways to prevent and support victims of “violence, substance abuse, bullying, and child abuse” (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014, p. 1). Though school psychologists in some settings cannot use their full skill set due to a lack of administrative support, Splett et al. (2013) identified that solid and collaborative relationships in schools resulted in a greater breadth of services provided in the school. The development of this relationship and the reduction of misperceptions required a culture shift driven by the school-based

administration (Splett et al., 2013). School psychologists can also help reduce role confusion by using clear terms that others will understand instead of professional jargon (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

The level of administrative support can also impact decisions related to school psychologist caseloads. Hussar (2015) noted that the school psychologist-to-student ratio is 1:1,344 and 78% percent of these professionals work in an itinerant capacity. Donahue asserted that psychologists often serve well over the ratio recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists, which is 1:500 (NASP, n.d.-a.). For school psychologists who are naturally empathetic and compassionate, some of the demands are mitigated by these personal traits, while others find the job emotionally exhausting (Weaver & Allen, 2017). One way that school districts could increase longevity is to decrease the staff-to-student ratios (Hughes, 2018).

In relation to the concerns related to high caseloads, there has never been a time when there was not a shortage of school psychologists (Young et al., 2021). Part of the shortage is because there are not enough training programs to meet the current needs, and the available programs may not be accessible to students who want to access them unless they can attend a program full-time (Young et al., 2021). Recommendations from staff in the field are to increase opportunities through distance learning and flexible training programs (Hughes, 2018). School psychologists need a specialist degree and are certified by the Department of Education (DOE) to work in a school (Eklund et al., 2017). School psychologists with a doctoral degree can also be licensed through their state board, allowing those professionals to work in private practice (Eklund et al., 2017). Approximately 34% of school psychologists have obtained this terminal degree (Castillo et al., 2014).

One way to increase longevity is through mentoring and supporting new school psychologists. Silva et al. (2016) surveyed 700 school psychologists within their first 5 years in the profession who reported that their training programs did not fully prepare them for fieldwork. Although there are barriers to supervision and mentoring, such as time and proximity, this resource was identified as essential for ensuring the success of newer school psychologists. In a study of 38 school psychologists who graduated within the last 10 years, the suggestions related to

training programs were to include the development of self-advocacy skills, teaching best practices, and preparing students for real-world applications (Schilling & Randolph, 2017).

In an analysis of the longevity of school psychologists, Young et al. (2021) found that of 134 professionals, 70% predicted that they would be in their roles through retirement, even though 47% of this group reported having TI at some point in their careers. The turnover of school psychologists has stayed stable at around 5% per year (Schilling et al., 2018). This fulfillment with the work has created longevity in the field, but there is still more work to do to retain this talent. School psychologists have the skills to work closely with administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, but the need for a collaborative approach is often overlooked (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014; Panteri et al., 2021). They want to be team players, but do not want to be the gatekeepers to special education (Lisbon-Peoples, 2015).

School Social Workers. Finally, the last noninstructional group identified for this literature review is the school social worker. School social workers started working in an itinerant capacity in schools to support attendance and truancy (Florida Department of Education, 1954), but their roles have expanded to support a wide variety of student needs. School social workers serve students, school staff, and families. They connect families with valuable community resources to ensure wraparound services for students with the most significant needs related to poverty, mental health, illness, and disabilities (Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018). From a systems level, school social workers can help increase the organizational climate and engage families more collaboratively (Alvarez et al., 2013). In 2017, only 14% of all social workers worked in the school setting, 9% had a master's degree, and 5% had a bachelor's degree.

Richard and Sosa (2014) identified many roles the school social worker can have in the school setting: parent education, abuse and neglect monitoring, individual or group counseling, crisis intervention, and prevention services (p.214). They also support students and families in various areas, especially those experiencing cyberbullying, poverty, homelessness, and delinquency (Cuellar et al., 2017; Kopels,

2016). School social workers must also understand how societal issues impact students and families (Kopels, 2016) and how mental health issues can present themselves in children and adolescents (Cuellar et al., 2017).

The need for social workers to provide mental health services has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic as these professionals were often the point person between schools and families. During the nationwide shutdown, social workers helped to ensure that families' basic needs were met while providing socioemotional services to students and their families (Daftary et al., 2021). They also had to devote time to coaching parents without experience helping their children with virtual instruction (Daftary et al., 2021). Kelly et al. (2021) shared that school social workers often received mixed messages and limited guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic which was a challenge when serving vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Mental Health Support and Noninstructional Itinerants

Noninstructional itinerants play a critical role in supporting students who exhibit a variety of mental health needs. It is critical that these staff members be retained in order to provide high-quality services (Fukui et al., 2019). Up to 80% of students needing mental health services are not accessing support and depend on their schools to provide what is needed (Hernandez, 2016). The high levels of turnover of mental health professionals are reaching crisis levels (Yanchus et al., 2017). When considering the impact of noninstructional personnel such as school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists, it is important to note their role in providing mental health services in the public school system. Mental health issues can negatively impact student grades, attendance, and retention (Nail et al., 2015). The mitigating effects related to providing mental health support in the school setting are improved attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and increased student resiliency (Best et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2016). Between 2016–2019, 5.8 million children between 3 and 17 years old presented with anxiety, and one in seven students between 10 and 19 years old presented with some mental health disorder (World Health Organization, 2021). Combined with the fact that 22% of students living in poverty have an increased chance of developing a mental health disorder

(Best et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2016), promoting the longevity of noninstructional itinerant staff must be a top priority.

Providing ongoing mental health services can take a toll on employees resulting in vicarious trauma, emotional exhaustion, high turnover, and TI (Fukui et al., 2019). This secondary trauma is more likely to be reported by females and employees who work with victims of severe trauma and impacts providers more than the frequency of contact with victims (Ivicic & Motta, 2017). Ivicic and Motta (2017) determined that support did not significantly impact secondary trauma. Fukui et al. (2019) determined that strong supervisory support is the best way to decrease TI and emotional exhaustion while increasing the JS of mental health providers. Ross (2022) asserted that paid time off and self-care are critical to prevent burnout and exhaustion. Contradicting these findings, Coates and Howe (2015) found that issues with supervisors and workplace bureaucracies negatively impacted mental health providers more than their involvement with highly emotional situations concerning children and young adults.

Additionally, while mental health providers are often motivated by helping others as opposed to the pay, they are not immune to the stress of financial strain (Adams et al., 2019). Adams et al. cited that 66% of their study sample experienced significant financial hardship and had a 39% turnover rate. Even with the financial hardships, providing some financial incentives such as professional development for recertification or the tools to help ensure better outcomes for individuals receiving mental health services may increase workplace longevity (Adams et al., 2019). Additionally, allowing for teamwork, providing timely feedback, professional development, and focusing on improving the organizational climate may also help to support longevity (Dishop et al., 2019).

Often, noninstructional itinerants collaborate and combine their skills to provide holistic support to students. Some school districts utilize intercollaborative (consultation, assessment, referral, and education (CARE) teams, which consist of various members, such as school psychologists, school social workers, mental health professionals, instructional personnel, and school leaders (Bates et al., 2019). Professional roles on mental health teams must be clearly defined, as many

professionals have similar yet distinct roles (Bohnekamp & Stephan, 2015). Staff working in an intercollaborative manner are more likely to share expertise and identify new support strategies, resulting in improved student behavioral and mental health outcomes (Bates et al., 2019). In Hernandez's (2016) study, which involved 15 student and parent teams, the author noted that parents want to work collaboratively with schools and indicated a need for support in accessing services and becoming more educated. Students also want more significant input and a voice when receiving mental health services (Hernandez, 2016).

The need for additional mental health staff in communities has been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Golberstein et al., 2020; Martínez-López et al., 2021; Peinado & Anderson, 2022). Adjemian et al. (2021) noted an increase in pediatric emergency room visits for mental health issues between December 2020 and January 2021 compared to the same period 1 year prior. Weisbrot and Ryst (2020) also noted that many people did not have access to quality mental health services prepandemic, and for some students and families, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on an already stressed system have been debilitating. For many, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and deepened these more notable disparities (Weisbrot & Ryst, 2020). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who lack access to the necessary resources were especially susceptible to the negative consequences of COVID-19 (Golberstein et al., 2020). Jones et al. (2016) noted growing disparities between services provided to students who are from low-income families due to a lack of insurance, limited insurance, or low-quality services. During the nationwide school shutdown, 223 out of 349 nurses in Pennsylvania indicated that students should return to school, even if a vaccine were unavailable, because the only access some students have to essential services is in the school setting (Hoke et al., 2021).

School Nurses. School nurses are actively involved in supporting the mental health needs of students as they are often the first professionals that students come to with recurring complaints (Morse et al., 2022; Muggeo & Ginsburg, 2019; Tanner et al., 2020). Although connecting families with mental health resources is an essential role of the school nurse (Bohnekamp & Stephan, 2015), many of these professionals

go beyond identifying and connecting students with resources and often initiate and provide interventions (Tanner et al., 2020). Students who may not have access to support outside of the school may be able to access services more easily in the school setting, and the stigma associated with going to the school clinic may be less than accessing a community health clinic (Gibbons et al., 2021). Additionally, many students have a trusting relationship established with the school nurse as, unlike other itinerants, they are a typical part of a student's school day (Bohnekamp & Stephan, 2015; Kaskoun & McCabe, 2021; Pryjmachuk et al., 2012). At least 10% of a school nurse's caseload consists of treating various forms of anxiety students experience during the school day (Muggeo & Ginsburg, 2019). In the Pryjmachuk et al. (2012) study of 307 school nurses, many of these professionals reported working with students who exhibited behaviors such as "self-harm, depression, substance misuse, and eating disorders" (p. 853).

One of the most significant barriers to providing mental health services reported by school nurses is their lack of confidence in this area (Pryjmachuk et al., 2012). This assertion was confirmed by Ravenna and Cleaver (2016), who noted that confidence and readiness needed to be increased due to the complexity of mental health issues and increasing needs. Bartlett (2015) reported that many school nurses do not have the skills or resources to meet students' health needs. School nurses reported a need for more training as many preparation programs only offer a limited overview (Bennett, 2021; Pryjmachuk et al., 2012), and practicums or internships are limited or nonexistent (Bennett, 2021). This training is critical, as some nurses have reported spending exhaustive amounts of time supporting students with mental health needs (Ravenna & Cleaver, 2016; Vejzovic et al., 2022). One study with 750 school nurses reported that the most requested areas of professional development were student mental health and trauma (Morse et al., 2022). In the Anttila et al. (2020) study with 21 school nurses in Finland, the findings showed that these professionals had some solid foundational skills for supporting students, such as good communication, confidentiality, ability to encourage students to attend outside appointments, but lacked many essential resources and the time to provide adequate services.

School Psychologists. Although school psychologists are trained to provide mental health services, they may not be utilized to the fullest extent of their abilities. Eklund et al. (2017) found that of 192 school psychologists, 43% were not providing direct mental health services. Of this 43%, 69% indicated those services were provided by another professional in the school, and 51% reported having no time to fulfill this responsibility (Eklund et al., 2017). One of the roles of the school psychologist is to work with students who threaten to commit suicide or have a history of suicidal behavior (Erps et al., 2020). This work is essential as suicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents and school psychologists are one of the few individuals in a school qualified to support students in crisis due to this particular mental health issue. Despite this expectation, a study of 94 school psychologists showed that 46% did not receive training, and almost 48% reported not feeling competent in this area (Erps et al., 2020). Lisbon-Peoples (2015) asserted that school psychologists could not spend the amount of time they want on mental health support for students because they are completing evaluations for special education.

School Social Workers. School social workers are essential in connecting students with school and community mental health resources (Cuellar et al., 2017). The pandemic caused an increase in the challenges faced by school social workers. A study of 450 school social workers identified four primary areas of focus during this time, which included trauma from societal inequities, additional training for school teams to support students with trauma, meeting a variety of needs with limited resources, and maintaining relationships when students were quarantined (Watson et al., 2022). McManama O'Brien et al. (2011) found in their study with 1,639 school social workers across 47 states that working directly with teachers was the least utilized mental health intervention. They also found that almost 10% of the students that school social workers worked with also received outside services (McManama O'Brien et al., 2011). When students also received outside services, the social workers reported working more closely with classroom teachers, resulting in better student outcomes (McManama O'Brien et al., 2011).

Summary

Organizational leaders must think deliberately about workplace longevity and ways to retain institutional knowledge and talent. As there is scant research on workplace longevity, it was also necessary to look at employees' ITS. Additionally, organizational leaders should understand how high levels of OC, WE, and JS can have a direct, positive impact on workplace longevity. Implementing strategies to increase each of these components can have a positive impact across an organization which is critical to retaining the best talent.

Although organizations have less control over generational and societal factors or societal factors that organizations have less control over, leaders must still increase their understanding of the impact of these factors. In some cases, they can put procedures in place to support the individual needs of employees. For example, providing flexible work opportunities may be one way to support employees whose priorities have changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers may want to ensure that older employees have a pathway for further career progression (Bown-Wilson & Parry, 2013).

Organizations can exercise a greater control over factors such as supervisory support, opportunities for professional development, and ongoing feedback to increase longevity. Organizations that emphasize autonomy, greater WLB, and opportunities for advancement are also more likely to retain talent. Retaining talent can increase productivity, maintain essential institutional knowledge, and increase an organization's competitive advantage. It also ensures that the organization does not have to spend unnecessarily on advertising, hiring, and training new employees. Longevity can also mitigate some of TI's negative consequences, such as low morale and increased demands on the remaining employees.

Organizational leaders that want to consider longevity from a theoretical perspective can potentially use several theories depending on their organizational focus or area of strength. Leaders can look at theories that examine employee characteristics, job characteristics, empowering employees, job satisfaction, and commitment. For example, when considering employee characteristics, a strong P-E fit—where the individual's values are closely aligned with the environment—will

result in decreased turnover. With job-related theories such as job-demands resource theory, employers can assess the relationship between the job demands and the internal and external resources of staff to reduce stress and increase intrinsic motivation. Organizational longevity may also be impacted by empowerment theories which note the need for employees to have autonomy and some role in the decision-making process. Theoretical perspectives such as Herzberg's-two factor theory consider the influence of motivation and hygiene factors on employee job satisfaction. Finally, understanding employee commitment using Allen and Meyer's TCM, organizations can analyze if their employees are demonstrating AC, NC, or CC. By understanding theories that encompass components that may impact longevity, organizations may be able to identify factors that lead to turnover or TIs. Organizations must consistently enhance and evaluate their practices and interventions while monitoring employee response.

Finally, this literature review was conducted to review the current research analyzing the longevity of noninstructional itinerants. These individuals play a vital role in a school, but many are leaving their positions for more lucrative positions which offer more flexibility. As these noninstructional itinerants are often the only employees in the school who can complete the requirements of their position, school administrators must work to retain their talent. Additionally, these noninstructional itinerants are all school mental health team members. The mental health needs of students are increasing, and students will benefit from having access to school-based comprehensive support, so retention of noninstructional itinerant staff is critical. Although personal characteristics such as resiliency and experience play a role in longevity, school administrators can provide support by meeting regularly with noninstructional itinerants to understand their role, allocate the appropriate funds, and include them in systems-level decision-making.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In order to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant staff in the public school system, the following question guided this study:

1. Why do the noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 public school system stay?

This chapter contains the context of the study, research orientations, research design, and rationale. It also reviews the sampling strategies driving participation selection, data collection, and the process for data analysis.

Context of the Study

This study was conducted in a large public school district in the southeast United States. This district, which serves over 95,000 students, employs 47 school nurses, 60 school social workers, and 38 school psychologists, many of whom work in a noninstructional capacity. Professionals working in a noninstructional itinerant capacity do not instruct in a classroom and have multiple schools on their caseloads. All 38 school psychologists are currently working in a noninstructional itinerant capacity. Of the 44 school nurses, 43 are currently itinerants. One school nurse works full-time at a school with a large population of students with significant medical needs. All 44 have worked in an itinerant capacity. Of the 60 school social workers, 27 serve primarily one school because the principals at those schools have opted to have a full-time school social worker using funds from other allocated sources. Many who are primarily supporting one school cover multiple schools due to vacancies or have duties that require them to support schools and students across the district. All of the school social workers with tenure have worked in an itinerant capacity within the district.

Of these employees, 20% of the nurses, 12% of the school social workers, and 32% of the school psychologists have remained in their positions for at least 10 years. These staff members are all hired out of the central office, but their daily work assignments are at school sites. These noninstructional itinerants serve students in 46 elementary schools (prekindergarten through fifth grade), four kindergarten through eighth-grade schools, 16 middle schools (sixth through eighth grade), 14 high schools

(ninth through twelfth grade), and four special centers. This group does not support students in the 23 district charter schools, except for school psychologists, who are responsible for the initial eligibility of students receiving special education services.

On March 27, 2020, Congress set aside \$13.2 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I) to mitigate some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (OESE, n.d.). In December 2020, Congress allotted another \$54.3 billion for public and charter schools across the United States (OESE, n.d.). Due to this increased funding, ESSER relief funds were used to hire 10 school nurses and 25 school social workers. ESSER funds will be used through the 2023–2024 school year. Table 1 below shows the current longevity of all noninstructional itinerant staff in this public school district regardless of funding source.

Table 1

Tenure of Noninstructional Itinerant Staff for the 2022–2023 School Year

Staff	1 to 4 Years	5 to 9 Years	10+ Years
Staff Nurses	25	10	9
School Social Workers	46	7	7
School Psychologists	20	6	12

This school district emphasizes student support related to mental health. School nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists are all members of school-based mental health teams, who provide direct mental health support to students. School mental health teams meet weekly to discuss student needs, create support plans, and review current plans of students who require mental health support. District noninstructional itinerant personnel serve as the point of contact between the school and the family and as liaisons between outside medical, community, and counseling agencies.

The school nurses in this district are responsible for basic first aid, medication management, and vision, hearing, and dental screenings. They support diabetes management, conduct complex medical procedures (e.g., tube feeds, catheterizations), and serve as a liaison between the school, the family, and community health organizations for students with health care plans that must be

followed during school hours. The school nurses also support disease prevention and chronic disease management. With the onset of the pandemic, they were heavily involved in training and district-wide policy and procedure creation.

The school social workers support students with chronic attendance issues, connect families with community resources and provide direct services to students in foster care or who are homeless. They also consult with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and help locate missing students. As part of their role, they conduct home visits to locate missing or truant students or to bring resources to families with transportation barriers that prevent them from accessing community resources. During the state-wide shutdown at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social workers consistently reached out to families to ensure their access to necessities such as food, electricity, and computers for online education.

This district's school psychologists are responsible for evaluating students for special education services and participate in Child Study Team (CST) meetings to create plans with academic and behavioral interventions. They are available for ongoing consultation and problem-solving with both staff and families. They support students through therapeutic counseling or social skill development (e.g., coping skills, anger management). During the COVID-19 pandemic, school psychologists continued with much of their work through virtual meetings to ensure a continuation of services for students.

Research Orientation

This study on noninstructional itinerants in K–12 public schools employed an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). With IPA, the study participants describe their individual experiences, and the researcher attempts to make sense of the phenomenon from these descriptions (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Additionally, the IPA method incorporates three components: consideration of a specific phenomenology, hermeneutics (i.e., the interpretation of the data), and ideography, which is the focus on an individual's interpretation of the phenomenon on a case-by-case basis (Miller et al., 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

For this study, this phenomenon was the longevity of noninstructional itinerant staff in the K–12 setting. Longevity is a critical area of study, as shortages in school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists are a national issue that is quickly becoming a crisis. Although considerable research is available on nurses, social workers, and psychologists, considerably less is available related to their counterparts in the school setting, and almost no information on longevity. This analysis considered the phenomenon of longevity from the perspective of individuals with lived experience and then examines similarities and differences in those experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miller et al., 2018). The interactions with participants were rich and deep, so the researcher could elicit enough information to make sense of each noninstructional itinerant’s experience (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

The interpretive framework used in this study was social constructivism, as the researcher’s goal was to “understand the world in which we live and work” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 34). In this framework, the researcher recognized that the philosophical assumptions and personal beliefs that the researcher brings to the study had to be addressed prior to data analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher used the information provided by the participants to construct an understanding of the experiences of noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 setting, rather than her own personal beliefs (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and was cognizant not to misrepresent the participants or to be swayed by dominant voices (Camic, 2021).

The researcher’s background in this area of noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 system has grown over the last 3 years through direct work with these employee subgroups. The researcher was an outsider and not a member of any of the participant groups and relied on the information provided by each of these experts for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher was an insider with respect to the organizational membership, having worked in an itinerant capacity as a special education teacher within the district. Therefore, the researcher was aware of potential bias in how organizational processes are interpreted or variance regarding the impact of itinerancy on an individual. The researcher conducted this study with

the intent of reaching unbiased, reasonable, and appropriate conclusions to enhance this field (Camic, 2021).

Research Design and Rationale

The qualitative research design for this study was selected to explore the experiences of school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers who have stayed in their roles for a minimum of 10 years. The central phenomenon was the longevity of these employees. Noninstructional itinerants working in public schools have multiple opportunities for employment in other settings with better working conditions and higher salaries. It would be easy to assume that these individuals just like working with students. By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher gathered data directly from the participants to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of longevity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An understanding of longevity will help to address the social issue related to the turnover of noninstructional itinerant staff (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Cleary et al. (2014) noted that qualitative research “aims to elicit in-depth insights and real-life meanings” from the participants (p. 713). Using a qualitative approach also empowers the participants who are actively involved in the research process and allows them to use their participant voices to share their individual experiences and opinions (Pathak et al., 2013). Unlike quantitative research, which only provides a two-dimensional view (Yates & Leggett, 2016), qualitative research adds an additional dimension to the study (Pathak et al., 2013). Through a qualitative design, the researcher creates order and makes sense of the multiple data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snyder, 2012).

Sampling Strategies: Participant Selection

The purposeful sampling method used in this study included strategies such as criterion, intensity, and convenience sampling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). With purposeful criterion sampling, the researcher selected participants who meet specific criteria and could provide information related to longevity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). For this study, the participants who met the desired criteria are 14 itinerant staff (five school nurses, five psychologists, and four school social

workers) from a K–12 school district in the Southeast United States. These 14 participants were recruited as they have 10 or more years of experience in these positions. The researcher also used purposeful, intensity sampling as the participants identified with longevity were “information-rich cases” who can speak about the phenomenon through their own lived experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 385). Using these three subgroups, the researcher analyzed the responses between the subgroups to see if similar themes emerge.

Purposeful, convenience sampling was used, as the researcher is employed in this district and participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in this research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Bloomberg and Volpe noted that convenience sampling saves time but can also lack credibility. This concern is mitigated by the sample size of at least 14 itinerants and the use of specific criteria to ensure information was gathered from information-rich participants. Additionally, the researcher’s familiarity with the work and personal engagement supported clear communication and helped establish a positive rapport with participants (Cleary et al., 2014). The solicitation of participants was facilitated through the school district’s Office of Accountability, Assessment, and Research (OAAR). Staff from the OAAR obtained the seniority lists from the district’s human resources (HR) department. Employees that met the longevity criteria received a Google form in order to voluntarily express their interest in participating in the study. A list of eligible and interested noninstructional itinerants was generated and provided to the researcher for review from the OAAR. The researcher was not advised of participants who asked not to be involved to remove any concern an eligible employee may have about their nonparticipation. This process eliminated potential researcher coercion. The study commenced with a minimum of three participants in each subgroup. The goal was to have five participants from each subgroup, but it may be determined that more are needed as the study progresses.

Once at least three participants from each subgroup agreed to participate in the study, OAAR staff disseminated a research invitation letter detailing the purpose of the research, letting participants know how the information would be

used and ensuring that their responses would remain confidential (Appendix A). All tenured employees in each subgroup who have expressed an interest were contacted until up to five participants had been contacted within each subgroup. The researcher contacted these potential participants directly to schedule an interview. In order to obtain authentic responses, pseudonyms were used for all participants. No specific information was used related to worksites, and the school district was broadly identified as a large school district in the southeast United States. All data were saved on a password-protected computer and moved to a secure hard drive at the completion of the study. After the invitation letter, each participant received a consent form that must be signed to proceed with the study (Appendix B). Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Email communication took place through the study participants' work email.

Data Collection Strategies

Gathering qualitative data helps explore the pressing issue of retaining noninstructional itinerant staff by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the unique experience of each individual participating in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To create this comprehensive understanding, the primary method of data collection was through personal interviews, but the researcher also performed observations and a review of documentation. For this study, the researcher ensured triangulation by collecting data in multiple ways (Carter et al., 2014) and by interviewing multiple people who have experienced the same phenomenon to find patterns in the data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). A more detailed description of each data collection method is described below.

Interviews

Interviews are the most common data collection tool in qualitative research because they allow the researcher to capture detailed information from the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Unlike quantitative research, the researchers can ask for additional information and clarification to ensure a deep understanding of the phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In this study, the

researcher kept the interviewees engaged to ensure that deep and meaningful responses are elicited (Cleary et al., 2014). The researcher also employed a variety of interview skills and did not just ask questions. Cleary et al. (2014) noted that a proficient interviewer is skilled at “listening, rephrasing, managing silence, prompting, keeping on track, ethically responding, coping with surprises” in order to establish a rapport with the respondent (p. 712).

Data were collected through 45- to 60-minute, face-to-face, semistructured interviews with each participant. The interviews were conducted in locations where there were likely to be no interruptions to ensure the participant was comfortable and the researcher could stay focused on each interviewee’s responses. Before conducting interviews with each participant, a pilot interview was conducted with one participant to evaluate the depth and richness of the participant’s responses to determine if any adjustments are needed (Camic, 2021). No questions were modified as a result of the pilot interview.

Through a semistructured interviewing process, the researcher asked participants 12 questions: three demographic questions, one icebreaker, and eight open-ended questions related to longevity (Appendix C). The eight questions specific to participant longevity were subquestions to the main research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The questions were open-ended, and the researcher expanded or asked for additional information when it was determined that this adjustment would lead to deeper and richer responses from the participant (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Participants were expected to answer all questions but could pass on any question that they did not feel comfortable answering. Saturation occurred when the same patterns began to emerge throughout the interviews and no new information was shared by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Beyond the information shared by the participant, the researcher also gained valuable information from the participant’s unstated emotions and attitudes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). During the interviews, the researcher used a notebook to write down any observations about body language and any “hunches, intuitions or emotional responses” (Cleary et al., 2014, p. 712). After asking

interview questions, the researcher employed member-checking, also called member validation, by summarizing the information provided by the participant (Harper & Cole, 2012). Member-checking helped ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the responses by each participant (Harper & Cole, 2012). All participants were able to review their data for 1 week after each interview. Providing an opportunity for review was used as an additional way to ensure data validity (Yates & Leggett, 2016). This review opportunity was provided in addition to the previously noted triangulation by collecting data in multiple ways, member-checking, and use of rich, thick descriptions.

The researcher's personal knowledge of this organization and these employees was a benefit in qualitative research and resulted in more specific and meaningful questions that help to elicit more detailed responses (Cleary et al., 2014). Due to the researcher's familiarity with the topic and the participants, care was taken not to inject personal assumptions into the conversation (Snyder, 2012). Additionally, the researcher did not create questions that would potentially lead to a desired outcome or elicit anticipated responses (Snyder, 2012). All interview questions were vetted by the OAAR, HR department, and the district's legal department to safeguard the study participants and minimize any potential harm present in this low-risk study. The OAAR, HR department, and legal team review helped to ensure the interview questions were not likely to cause discomfort or elicit specific answers meant to satisfy the researcher.

Observations

Observations are an essential element of qualitative research as they allow the researcher to view participant behaviors and relationships in the natural setting (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). For each subgroup, the researcher observed one staff meeting where all members of the subgroup were observed at one time. Each of these staff meetings ran for a minimum of 2 hours. During observations, the researcher analyzed the behaviors of school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists with longevity to assess their behavior when interacting with their colleagues. The researcher made general observations of the interactions and conversations of noninstructional itinerant staff with longevity that may be related

to the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During observations, the researcher was in a nonparticipant role and observed the participants from a designated spot away from the activity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As with the interviews, the researcher utilized a notebook for observations related to body language and any “hunches, intuitions or emotional responses” (Cleary et al., 2014, p. 712).

Documentation

Documentation can be a critical component of data collection in qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). For this study, there was limited available documentation related to longevity. The documentation for this part of the study was collected for 2 weeks at the researcher’s request. The supervisors for noninstructional itinerant staff with longevity documented communication with these individuals by marking one of the following categories: directive, requesting, or informational for emails, meetings, phone calls and text messages. This documentation yielded information about staff with longevity by identifying the types of communication they typically receive. The actual correspondence between the supervisors and the noninstructional itinerant staff members was reviewed, so the researcher took care not to overinterpret simple documentation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Additionally, independently created documents may be provided by the participants if they believe the documents are critical to their personal stories or experiences related to longevity.

Data Analysis Strategies

During the data-collection process, Yin’s (2015) five analytic phases process was utilized. The process includes collecting the data (compiling), separating the data into groups (disassembling), regrouping the data into themes (reassembling), assessing the information (interpreting), and developing conclusions (concluding; p. 185). In the first step of the data collection process, the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder with participant permission (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Transcript-based analysis was used for all interview data (Krueger & Casey, 2015), and data were initially transcribed using Otter voice-to-text transcription services. In

addition, the researcher transcribed each interview using the Otter text as a foundation to ensure the accuracy of the transcription.

In the second part of the data collection process, the researcher coded the data. Although there is software designed specifically for qualitative research to help manage large text sets (Krueger & Casey, 2015), the researcher hand-coded the documents. This process utilized in this study aligned with Saldaña and Omasta's (2018) recommendation that the researcher personally transcribes all records to "reexperience and analyze" the data (p. 115). With hand-coding, the researcher underlined valuable information and wrote notes in the margin of the paper using the constant comparative method, where answers were coded based on their similarity (Snyder, 2012). The information provided in the interviews was broken up into segments that include: "words, phrases, sentences, or even whole paragraphs" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 241). Data were color coded using *in vivo*, process, and values coding. *In vivo* coding was used to identify the important words or phrases used by participants, and process coding was used to identify "-ing" words related to the participants' actions, reactions, and interactions (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Snyder, 2012). Finally, value coding identified any values, attitudes, and beliefs that emerged from participant responses (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018).

Additionally, data were coded with consideration to each theoretical foundation to see if any emerge as more prevalent in this study. During coding the following coding abbreviations were used for each theory: human capital theory (HCT), self-determination theory (SDT), person-environment fit (PEF), person-job fit (PJF), person-organization fit (POF), work as a calling (WC), job embeddedness theory (JET), job-demands resources (JDR), conservation of resources (CR), Kanter's theory of structural empowerment (KSE), psychological empowerment theory (PET), Locke's range of affect (LRA), equity theory (ET), Herzberg's two-factor theory (HTF), and Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model (TCM).

In the fourth step of the data collection process, all coded information was analyzed to see if any common patterns emerge (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). The researcher identified patterns when the information appears more than two times in the responses (Saldaña, 2021). After patterns were established, the researcher looked

for broader themes in the data (Saldaña, 2021). In the fifth and final step, the researcher used these broader themes to develop conclusions.

Summary

This chapter detailed the research design utilized for this study and the reasoning for this design selection. The researcher also provided an overview of the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures in this qualitative research study, in which noninstructional itinerant staff shared their career experiences and how they believe these experiences have impacted their longevity. The opportunity to meet individually with each participant through a personal initial interview helped to ensure a deeper understanding of the career experiences of these professionals in the K–12 setting. In addition to interviews, observations and document reviews provided a more detailed and complex understanding of the phenomenon. This researcher aimed to promote the longevity of noninstructional itinerant public-school staff. A deeper understanding of why some professionals stay may help mitigate the turnover of these individuals who play a critical role in supporting the well-being of students.

Chapter 4 – Findings

This study examined the career experiences of noninstructional itinerants with longevity. In this study, the identified noninstructional itinerants were school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers who provide critical services to students in the K–12 public school system. Understanding why some individuals stay in the role can help school administrators support the longevity of these professionals. In this chapter, the collected data are reviewed in relation to the current literature and the central research question of this study:

1. Why do the noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 public school system stay?

The findings of this study were distilled into five distinct themes reflecting the information shared by the noninstructional itinerants: *passion/purpose*, *expertise*, *working conditions*, *connections*, and *personal characteristics*. Within each theme, subthemes were identified that supported the overarching themes. In the area of purpose and passion, several participants discussed their commitment to public schools. A lack of purpose and passion was also noted as an important subtheme based on the information shared. Under the overarching theme of expertise, the noninstructional itinerants shared their experiences related to autonomy and mentoring. While discussing working conditions, the participants repeatedly referenced their working schedules, salaries and benefits, workload, and workspace. The connections reported by the professionals in this study included those with administrators, colleagues, and the community. Finally, the personal characteristics that many of the study participants noted in their experiences were flexibility and resiliency/mindset. Challenges with resiliency were also identified as a subtheme in this area.

When identifying the potential reasons why nonitinerant personnel in the public K–12 system stay, the significant finding was that these individuals overwhelmingly have a sense of passion and purpose. When the overarching themes identified in this study are perceived as positive, they can help support longevity. Conversely, when these factors are viewed as negative, nonitinerants may be less

likely to remain with the organization. Participants who shared how these factors impacted them negatively still remained in the position due to the schedule, the pension, and the colleague connections.

For this study, 14 itinerants in a public school system in the southeastern United States were interviewed to gather information about the impact of their longevity. The pseudonyms used throughout this chapter for the five school nurses are SN1, SN2, SN3, SN4, and SN5. For the five school psychologists, the pseudonyms are SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, and SP5 and for the school social workers, SSW1, SSW2, SSW3, and SSW4.

Each participant had worked in this public school system for at least 10 years. The least tenured participant had been employed for 10 years, and the most tenured participant for 23 years. The longevity of each participant is noted in Table 2. The individuals in this study are listed as participants rather than their organizational roles to ensure anonymity.

Table 2

Participants' Years of Seniority

Participants	Years Employed
Participant 1	10
Participant 2	10
Participant 3	11
Participant 4	15
Participant 5	17
Participant 6	17
Participant 7	17
Participant 8	18
Participant 9	18
Participant 10	19
Participant 11	19
Participant 12	21
Participant 13	23
Participant 14	25

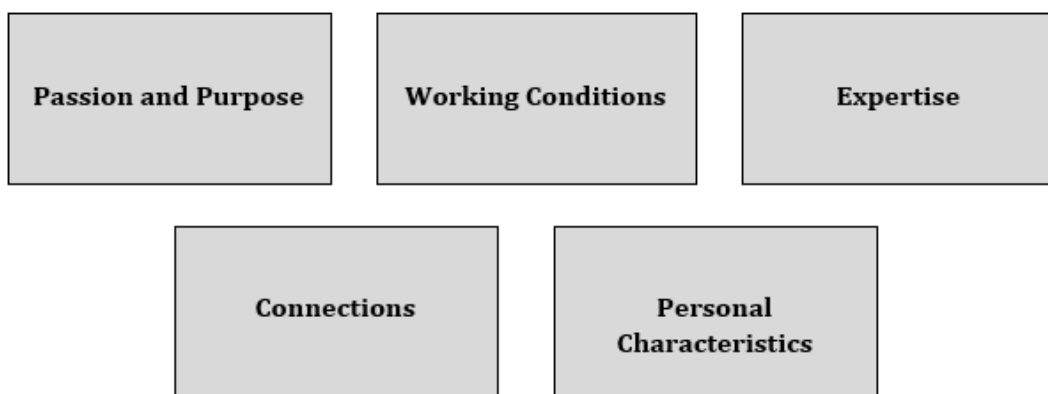
Interview Findings

After a thorough analysis, the researcher determined that several job-related factors impacted noninstructional itinerants, which included passion/purpose,

expertise, working conditions, and connections. An analysis of the data also identified some personal characteristics such as flexibility and resiliency. These five overarching themes are noted in Figure 1. The study participants' information showed the benefits they identified in their experiences in the itinerant role. Participants also shared challenges that they have faced or that their less-tenured itinerant colleagues face.

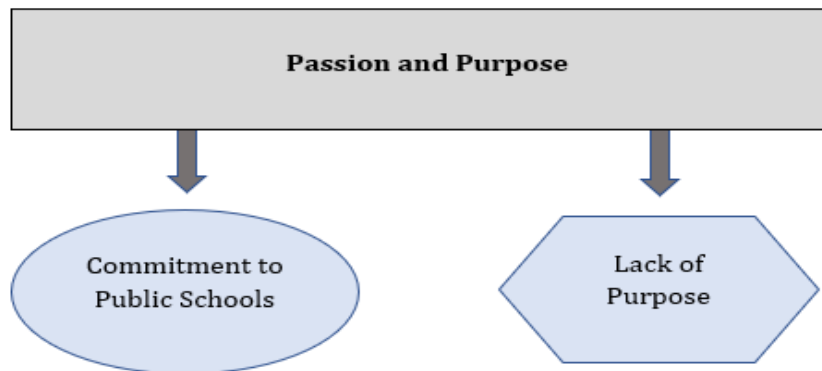
Figure 1

Overarching Themes



Passion and Purpose

One motivational-based reason reported by each noninstructional itinerant for staying in this position was a passion for the work and the differences that can be made in these roles. As shown in Figure 2, the overarching theme of passion and purpose also included the subthemes of a commitment to public education and a lack of purpose.

Figure 2*Passion and Purpose and Identified Subthemes*

The noninstructional itinerants noted that activities such as helping families in need, spending time with students, and helping students progress were important to them. When describing how they felt about working with students and families, the noninstructional itinerants used terms such as “important,” “love it,” “continuing something of value,” “fulfilling,” and “the best job ever.” SSW2 stated that she “wouldn't trade it for the world,” while SSW4 reported that she “lives and breathes” for social work and helping people. SSW4 posited that those feelings will never go away. SSW2 noted that one of the activities she found most gratifying was graduation and seeing all of the students' hard work come to fruition. SS1 shared,

If you don't find that rewarding of helping families or even greeting kids at the beginning of their day, and I mean, what better job do you have than spending a whole day with children? It really is. I mean, I can't think of something that's better.

This statement highlights the perspective held by a majority of the participants regarding the deep internal reward they get from helping families and students. The passion and purpose noted by many of these professionals result in a high level of engagement in the work, and SN3 posited that noninstructional professionals who work for the school district often go above and beyond. SN3 also asserted that their high level of involvement benefits the district because these professionals do many things for kids. SN3 reported trying to regularly identify special projects that will assist the department and, ultimately, the district in being better.

The passion and purpose theme was so significant that five noninstructional itinerants reported that fulfillment from their role was more important than monetary benefits. SN1 asserted, “If what you're doing is more important than the money, I think you do well in the district.” SP5 asserted that regardless of the opportunity to make more money elsewhere, being a school psychologist was an excellent personal and professional fit:

Yes, like I could make more money, but I have no desire to do that. At this point, as my youngest is [redacted], like I don't, I don't want to; like my main objective in life is not going out and making money. Like, I want to have a job that's meaningful, and I want to be there for my kids at the end of the day.

Of the noninstructional itinerants in this study, 93% spoke specifically about the sense of purpose they received from the role, reporting that part of what was important to them was making a difference and contributing something of value. Spending time with students, seeing them make progress, and being able to make an impact were specific reasons that seven noninstructional itinerants reported when asked why they stayed in their roles. SN4 also shared that based on her experiences, more money would not be motivation to leave the school nursing role:

I just love coming into the schools, being with the staff being with those kids every day and just helping them throughout their day if they're having a bad day and getting them through their bad morning and getting them to class and helping them realize, okay, just because my morning was bad doesn't mean my days gonna be bad. You know, I just love that I just think that that no other job could be, as you say, as heartfelt or whatnot rewarding as being here helping these kids. No money or anything could support that for me.

This sentiment is supported by the fact that there are several other job sites where noninstructional itinerants can work and make more money, but the individuals in this study have opted to stay in the public school system. Ten of the 14 participants have previously worked in these other settings, while two still work part-time. Several participants have worked both in the school setting and in outside agencies. They described their school experiences as being more fulfilling due to the

significant impact they can make, sometimes at a very early stage in a student's life. SSW2 recalled,

And I enjoyed working with the families in both agencies; I really did enjoy working with the families. However, I think there's something impactful again when you are growing a student's academic success because then you're trying to set students up for success. And if you can provide those supports to students through that, I think that is especially impactful. Not that those other agencies aren't a help, but I really felt joining the school system was something where I can really make a difference for students and for families.

The participants provided several reasons for working in other settings, including working in the field before they found out about working in the school setting, not needing a job with a more specific schedule to accommodate family needs, and supplementing their salary. In each case, the noninstructional itinerants reported losing salary overall but gaining things such as a better work-life balance and high job satisfaction. Even the four participants who noted lower levels of job satisfaction, either overall or with some aspects of their role, noted these benefits.

Like SSW2, SN3 reported something similar when talking about working in the school setting rather than working in the hospital setting:

And I feel that I'm doing something that is I feel I'm providing a service that is really appreciated as opposed to in a hospital setting. It is so fast paced. Yeah, it's more money-oriented. You're working to pay your bills. This isn't just the school nurse, it's a lot more than that. You feel like you're contributing something of value, something of worth. You get to see these youngsters complete school, graduate as they move on to college, some of them become nurses.

This statement demonstrates the value that noninstructional itinerants place on working directly with children. In the noninstructional role, professionals can work closely with students and their families, sometimes for several years. SSW4 reported that she loves working with young children, and it brings her so much joy because “when they're little like that, not only does it bring out the nurturing in me, but there's so much joy in them. You know, they love to learn everything. It's exciting for them.”

SP2 reported the importance of being an advocate and voice for the students and families that do not understand the system.

For some professionals, this desire to work with students and families evolved during their professional careers. From early on, SSW3 knew she wanted to help people. Initially, she was not sure what was out there, but once she learned about school social work and eventually completed her internship, she knew she was in a field she loved. SSW4 shared that she loves social work and everything to do with the field. After many years in the profession, SSW4 reported being very interested in anything that she picks up concerning mental health, homelessness, poverty, and at-risk kids. SP3 shared that her gift is being able to work with students, and when she considers moving into a different position or an administrative role, she thinks about the fact that a move would take her away from her work with students. Similarly, SN4 reported,

You know, I think that the reason that I stayed this long is I love helping the families. Like if there's a child struggling, and that's why I like where I am right now is if there's a child struggling, I'd love to help the family come to terms with that and get the resources and help that they need to help their child succeed because I think that not everybody is the same or learns the same or needs the same instruction in the same way. I've had so many families, just it might take a year. It might take 2 years, it might take 3 years, but they finally come to me and say, "Thank you for not giving up on me or not giving up on my child," and that's what makes me stay. That's what I love.

Four other noninstructional itinerants noted the enjoyment of working with families. Two professionals reported experiences where they had challenges working with families, but the outcome of their work helped to ensure student safety and health in the long run. Noting a positive experience, SSW1 shared that she had developed a strong working relationship with a family who found out the father had a tumor. During her work with the family, the student's father passed away. She was able to support the family through the loss and asked,

What if this family didn't have somebody? What if this family didn't have one particular person who was able to reach out and provide resources or support

the student at school when she was having difficult times, especially at the loss of her father?

This experience highlights what noninstructional itinerants feel when they are able to provide support during a critical time in a child's life. In addition to working directly with students and their families, this sense of purpose was also noted in experiences where students received services and support that they otherwise would not have received without the noninstructional itinerants in the school setting. SN3 shared the deep sense of purpose that comes from knowing the school clinic may be some student's only source of health care. This scenario is especially true of settings where some students might have parents who are undocumented and are afraid to seek health care in a medical setting outside of the school:

I work at [redacted] Elementary School, where if the students are sick over the weekend, they come to school to go to the clinic in the morning because they know that school clinic is almost like a community clinic, you know, and the parents are so happy knowing that there is a registered nurse and that school that can see their child that can help them to make a decision as to what to do whether there should be a follow up with a physician, whether there should be you know, a follow up with a pharmacist, or whether it's something that the school can handle the nurse can handle within the school setting.

Additionally, this strong commitment is evidenced in the information shared by nine participants who expressed that they planned to stay in the role long-term or retire from the role. SN5 reported that she thinks she will stay in this role forever. Although in a position where she could retire, SP3 reported that she loves what she does and is not ready to leave the school district. SN1 is looking to retire in the next couple of years but would love to work part-time. SN4 will be retiring for family reasons, but also expressed a desire to remain in the position. SN4 also shared that if she were to come back, she might want to work in a clinic assistant capacity. Similarly, SP3 reported wanting to return after retirement in a volunteer capacity demonstrating the sense of purpose that the public school system can provide some noninstructional itinerants.

Commitment to Public Schools

In addition to their commitment to students and families, the noninstructional itinerants in this study demonstrated a strong commitment to public schools. Many noninstructional itinerants had previously worked in the private sector or were currently working part-time in the private sector. SP3 had a deep respect for public education instilled in her at an early age by her grandmother. SSW4 has worked in several other settings but is a strong supporter of public education because “we work with everybody.” After working in a private school setting, she realized that private schools did not have the resources available to public schools. SSW1 shared that while she enjoyed working with families in the private sector, being in the school system and focusing on academic success made her feel like she was really making a difference for students and families. SN3 stated,

School nursing provides me with a huge degree of contentment and satisfaction having to work with kids. It's not the same as in a hospital setting. You know, in a hospital setting, you see the patient for a short period of time. You do what you have to do, the patients get discharged, and that's it. That's the end of that relationship. In the school system, I see the kids for 3 years, 4 years, 5 years, and they know me, they say, “Hey, Nurse [redacted].” There is a long-lasting relationship, which brings me a huge degree of satisfaction.

This long-lasting relationship was of the factors that noninstructional itinerants noted that they could not find in other positions outside of the school setting. These experiences support the desire that many noninstructional itinerants have for their work to make a long-lasting and significant difference in another's life.

It is important to note that even when some of the working conditions offered in the private sector might be more appealing, the participants in this study continue to work in the public school setting. Often, noninstructional itinerants who work in the public school setting have higher caseloads than professionals in the private sector, but the ability to work directly with students may ameliorate some of the stress and burnout associated with these caseloads.

One participant noted that her workload in the private sector was significantly lower. When asked about her transition into the public school system, SP5 shared that

she initially took a job in a mental health facility where the main focus was on making a profit. SP5 stated,

So, what I found there was all they cared about was billable hours, billable hours, and they drove me into the ground. Like, and I'm a worker. I mean, I was coming home and writing notes, and like it was, how many hours did I have, and they didn't really seem to care about the quality of the therapy. Or anything else. And it was just really horrible. And when I got here, it was like, just so great. Like, like, compared to like the hours and the billable stuff that I was dealing with like it was a normal schedule, and I just loved the opportunity to be here like I feel like the schools are the frontline. So, like when you were in your therapy setting, they get to you eventually, but like here it was like the I could reach kids that they probably would not be sent that way, but they still needed that help. So, I just fell into it that way and then I loved it.

This sentiment was shared by other professionals who said that their work “starts with the child,” where professionals get to see the “progression of growth” and play a critical role in “growing academic success.” The relationships that noninstructional itinerants share with their students and families are of a greater frequency and duration than some of their colleagues in other settings. These professionals get to work with their students weekly, sometimes multiple times per week for years, creating deep, personal relationships.

Lack of Purpose

Although the tenured professionals in this study shared primarily positive feelings about their experiences, many noninstructional itinerants leave the public system each year. One noninstructional itinerant believed that less-tenured staff should not make knee-jerk reactions and should talk to a trusted colleague or supervisor. Another professional stated that newer staff with an issue or concern should determine whether it can be resolved because no job is perfect, and there are many benefits to working in the public school system. For professionals considering leaving the public school system, SP5 stated that the public school system feels like

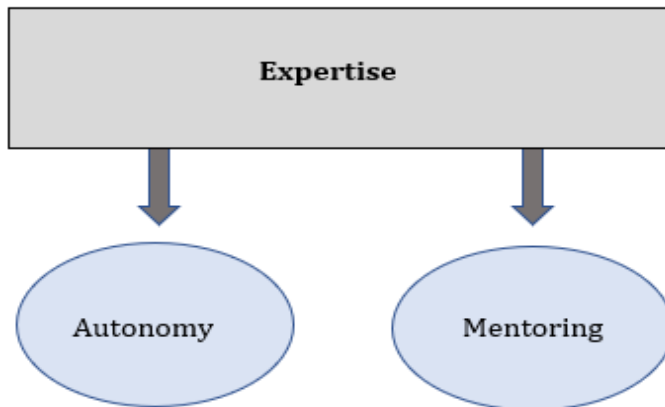
the heart of it, where professionals can make a difference in kids' lives. SP5 believes working in the public school system is a great opportunity. SN3 asserted,

Well, this has happened before, and I usually say “Well, you know you're leaving the very best job to get into a very stressful job. That probably is going to drive you crazy for the rest of your life. You know, make the best of this situation, work in an environment where it's fulfilling.” It's wholesome it's something you can look back and smile and say, “You know, I gave it my best shot, and I was part of something bigger than I am.” That's my advice.

The passion and purpose noted by this professional played a significant role in their desire to stay in public education, but not all professionals reported having a passion for their work. One of the noninstructional itinerants who has struggled to find a sense of purpose reported feeling discouraged, helpless, and hopeless. SP4 reported spending an exorbitant amount of time on clerical tasks and asked, “What was the purpose of that? I didn't, I didn't help a student, I didn't help a family.” Likewise, more than half of the school psychologists reported spending most of their time conducting evaluations when they were more passionate about counseling or conducting social skills groups.

Expertise

Another theme that emerged after being discussed by every noninstructional itinerant was expertise. The noninstructional itinerants with longevity in this study report having a high level of expertise. In some cases, they have special training; in others, their expertise comes from experience and time in the role. As shown in Figure 3, the overarching theme of expertise was further broken down into autonomy and mentoring.

Figure 3*Expertise and Identified Subthemes*

SN1 reported that there are many facets to school nursing that are strengthened with longevity that newer school nurses may not understand. SN1 asserted that it takes at least 1 year to be comfortable in the role and that students have a much higher level of acuity with medical issues such as diabetes, asthma, and students on the autism spectrum with medical needs. As a new school social worker, even making a daily schedule can be a challenge. SSW3 shared,

...creating more of a schedule as a new school social worker is difficult because you're not quite sure kind of where you fit yet in the school environment or, you know, in the culture of the school. So, I think picking where to start because I mean, we have so much on our plate, you know, what, where does my day start or how does my day look? So, I think making a schedule is difficult.

Through this statement, SN1 has demonstrated that the ability to prioritize comes with time in the role. When there are many responsibilities and expectations, it can be challenging for new professionals to identify what aspects of the work are the most critical. Additionally, SN2 posited that when a noninstructional itinerant is new, no one knows who they are, so staff is not as comfortable accessing them for support.

During the first year, some school nurses think the role is easy, but as time goes on, they start getting more piled on them, and it starts to get very busy. SN3 also shared that school nurses become more proficient at triaging a wide array of

childhood illnesses and disease states over time. SN4 shared that with longevity comes increased knowledge and resources that can be used to support students and families. Longevity provides the experience needed to know how to streamline work. SP4 asserted that a new school nurse would be less efficient because they do not know the ins and outs of the system or who to go to with specific questions. As a noninstructional itinerant with longevity, SP5 reported being able to test and write a report in about half the time of a new school psychologist. Even so, SP5 asserted that she would need to seek guidance with some evaluations. If she were evaluating a student who was blind, she would want to consult with a psychologist with more experience with this population. SP5 shared,

I mean, I love when we have the opportunity to be together and have little workgroups, and I feel like when we are in that situation, people do look to me for, you know, like questions or like guidance or things like that.

The increased comfortability in the role that comes with longevity was also noted by SP3 who shared that many parts of her role have become second nature, whereas new staff need to research everything and often look up district procedures. Similarly, SP1 reported not realizing her level of expertise until working with an intern where step-by-step directions had to be provided for daily activities. When asked if she considered herself an expert, SP3 reported that having an intern required that she explain everything that was going on in her head, which she has never had to explain to anybody. The things that require explanation are not just assessments but also how to work with parents or deal with difficult situations.

Additionally, SP3 realized that she naturally does a lot of preventative work, such as getting background information, conducting observations, and having a sense of how things will play out based on her extensive experience in the role. Similarly, SP1 reported that working with new school psychologists has been eye-opening for her and has made her realize how her expertise impacts the workday. SP1 said,

That is not in a book, and that is not school taught, and it has to do with clinical decision-making. And so I feel that with, you know, just my work with a new school psychologist, I'm constantly having to stop and explain the minutiae of things that I just immediately like, will pick up on with a student

and just know how, what assessment I'm going to give based on working with them for the first 10 minutes, whereas I think a new school psychologist is like, Okay, well, we need to do Step A, Step B, and Step C, because that's what they're referred for. Whereas I'm looking at okay, well, I'm seeing some indicators of visual motor integration difficulties, or I'm seeing possible language-based learning disability. So, I'm going to add some other testing components to this evaluation. Whereas a new school psychologist is really going to kind of, I guess, maybe do things by the book.

This statement highlights that noninstructional itinerants with longevity do much of their work intuitively without having to put considerable thought into each decision. So intuitive that these itinerants have to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about what they do in order to explain it to new staff.

In addition to the influence that longevity has on comfort and intuitiveness in the role, participants reported it has helped with patience, decision-making, and employee voice. SSW1 asserted that longevity also increases your professional patience and a realization that things do not always happen when you want them to happen. SP4 shared that longevity increased her ability to work through unique situations, as she had encountered many situations during her tenure. Additionally, more tenured noninstructional itinerants may be more likely to speak up and share their opinion. SP2 posited that less-tenured school psychologists may not know what to stand up to or would feel like they were just supposed to listen to the administrator. SP2 shared that she is “comfortable enough standing up for the kids' rights, legal rights. You know, I speak up, I don't care. They don't have to agree with me.”

In relation to employee voice, SSW3 reported that longevity also brings a higher level of comfort with inserting oneself into different situations that might require specialized assistance. One thing SSW3 does is help with morning attendance so that she can have some face-to-face interactions with students who are signing in late. Assisting with attendance is an intervention that a newer school social worker might not think of or may feel that they are intruding on someone else's responsibilities. This sentiment was also shared by SN5, who noted that school nurses have skills that can be used outside the clinic, and they could “offer things like health

fairs or bring the health department into the schools for immunizations, and partner more with them.”

When asked if they consider themselves experts, hesitation and a sense of humility were noted in many of the responses. Half of the participants would not label themselves as experts, even when they went on to describe their levels of expertise. Seven noninstructional itinerants indicated they would consider themselves professionals based on their experience and time in the position. SSW1 said that she would not consider herself an expert but a lifelong learner. SSW1 stated that they likely consider her an expert based on the questions she gets from other school social workers. SSW2 considered herself an expert but still needs retraining on new programs and expectations in the organization. SSW4 noted that expertise comes with time in the role and is not something that can be learned in school. SSW4 stated,

And when you're first out of school, you don't have any of that, and they you know, they teach you about systems family systems, and that helps. They teach you about, you know, how to work with at-risk families, things like that. But you don't have the experience that comes with, okay, this is going on. I need to deal with this calmly. I'm not gonna freak out you know because I've dealt with this a million times. This is the agency I need to reach out to. This is the person I need to reach out to this department. All those things come into play.

The fact that noninstructional itinerants need to be working in the role to truly know what it entails was noted by multiple participants. Part of gaining expertise is just working through various situations which supports competence development. One factor impacting newer professionals is that even their school experience may not have included a field component due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When asked whether she perceives herself as an expert, SN5 shared that while she considers herself an expert, she still learns new things daily and loves going to state conferences and talking to other professionals. She considered herself an expert in the school district policies and procedures, which is something that has come with longevity in the role. SN5 shared that when she does not know something, she knows

who to ask or where to look for the information. Similarly, when asked whether she was an expert, SP2 responded,

Yeah, to some extent, I don't like the term expert very much because I think it carries with it some arrogances. I'm not a fan of that term, I don't think. Because if I say I'm an expert, I feel like that means I can't learn anymore. To me, that's an expert. That's someone that's just, but am I highly knowledgeable in my field? Absolutely. Can I still learn? Absolutely. Am I better versed in some areas than others? Absolutely. Do I know everything? No, which is why I don't consider myself an expert.

Although SP3 believed that her longevity in the district increased her expertise, she asserted that people look to her as the expert because she has specific skills she has used for several years. Though SP2 hoped that others would see her as an expert, she would not want that to be based solely on longevity in the district. SP2 stated that in order for others to consider her an expert,

I think it would depend on how much experience they've had getting to know me. I don't know that they just, you know, assume that I'm good at what I'm doing just because I'm tenured. I don't ever want that to happen. I don't ever want someone to think that I know what I'm doing just because I've been here 23 years. I want them to look at me as an expert, and someone to go to because of either my reputation or because of past experience, a brief experience we've had, or somebody has said, you know, this is who you need to talk to that kind of thing that you know, I hope my reputation is a positive one in the district. And that that would be why people would come to me not just because, "Oh, yeah, she's been here 23 years; go to her."

This sentiment shared by SP2 indicates that one can be employed in a position for many years and still not be competent. While time in the role often increases expertise and competency, it is not a guarantee.

In addition to overall instructional expertise, SSW3 reported that professionals can possess specific expertise in various areas. Although SSW3 shared that she is an expert in the process and procedures for different things, she could benefit from help in facilitating interventions. Similarly, SN1 explained that expertise

in school nursing, when related to district processes, is one type of expertise. SN1 noted, however, that nurses come from many specialty areas with high levels of expertise. SN1 reported that the school district has nurses with backgrounds in areas such as pediatrics, labor and delivery, surgery, and psychiatric nursing, and it was a great benefit to be able to go to a colleague and get their professional input. Although not an expert in every medical area, SN1 reported being an expert and knowing how to function as a school nurse. Similarly, SN3 shared,

I do regard myself as an expert in the field of nursing now. That is not to say that I know everything and I'm happy that the school district has a wide array of different nurses who specialize in different areas. We have pediatric nurses working in the school district. We have surgical nurses working, we have people in leadership like myself, we have people who have gone through the med surgery, and we have people who have worked in critical care. You know, we have a wide array of different nurses. And so, the beautiful thing is that we can always draw on each other's experience. You know, and learning is lifelong. So, if there's something that pops up that has to do with psych nursing, and I'm not the expert, [redacted] is available to speak with me because that's what he specialized in when he was in the hospital, inside nursing. If something comes up, and I need to be able to draw on somebody's knowledge, [redacted] worked as an educator, and she still works as an educator as a nurse, so I'm able to pull on that knowledge. So that's the beautiful thing.

School nursing is the one noninstructional itinerant position where some experience in the nursing field is expected. Because the school nursing job has such a high level of autonomy, it is imperative that school nurses have established nursing skills which they have often developed in another work setting. Many of their skills need to be developed in face-to-face training opportunities. School social workers and school psychologists are more likely to be hired directly out of their educational or internship program. Even though these roles also include high levels of autonomy, the skills that these individuals need to be effective in their roles can be more easily

developed in ways that may not be face-to-face such as reviews of their evaluations, phone conferences, and virtual professional development.

Expertise in noninstructional itinerants can be evident in several ways, one of which is collegial support in complex cases. When SN2 encountered a student with no breath sounds, she had to use her expertise to recognize the event's severity, which required her to activate the procedures that ultimately saved his life. SN3 reported that school nurses have to be good listeners because "you can look at all the symptoms in the world and all the disease states, but sometimes you really have to listen to the student or the parent. It's not always what's written in the textbook." SN3 was involved in one situation where a student reported weakness and looked emaciated. SN3 reported that the parent refused to get the student medical care and DCF had to be contacted. After working with a multidisciplinary team, the student got a critical medical appointment.

In addition to working with students and families, noninstructional itinerants may have opportunities to work directly with school staff. One noninstructional itinerant reported that she loved working with the staff in the school. In some capacity, all of the participating professionals in this study discussed teaming with other professionals in the school setting. One participant reported a time when she was able to support instructional staff in her professional capacity. SP5 used her expertise to support both students and staff working through trauma. SP5 stated that this year has been particularly powerful based on her school-wide impact and shared,

I mean, more recently, I would say, like the experience of helping the students through the trauma of [redacted]. I was involved in both my schools with the training of the teachers. So, I feel like there's just been a lot of heightened emotions surrounding the recovery from [redacted]. So, like, in both cases, like there were rooms full of teachers crying and just helping the teachers process those emotions and then getting connected with students that, you know, have a lot of what I've seen is past trauma retriggered [redacted]. It's just been really amazing to be like on the front line, being able to help both the teachers and the students that I don't necessarily would have sought that help like I have one student who comes from a family, a culture where they

do not value therapy or mental health. You know, they're a good family, strong family, but that's just not something that they emphasize.

Ultimately, using their professional expertise helped to provide that deep sense of purpose reported by many noninstructional itinerants with longevity. In addition to supporting students and their families, this expertise has been used to support staff in times of need. These statements show that expertise may increase a professional's comfort level in knowing how and when to utilize their professional skills.

Autonomy

The expertise exhibited by noninstructional itinerants was also reported to result in a high level of autonomy. Noninstructional itinerants often have considerable autonomy when creating their daily schedules and completing their work, as few people in the school district are qualified to complete this work. SP5 explained that she maps out her calendar for each month so she has an idea of when she will test students. It is up to her to create that schedule and ensure the work gets done. SP1 felt that having independence was a significant perk to the job. SP1 stated,

So yes, granted, you know, meetings, I accept meetings and go to meetings, but pretty much, you know, my day I'm, I direct myself, I am totally independently self-directing the whole school day. And I didn't realize how much until I had an intern, and I had to self-direct her, and, you know, guide her about, okay, well, okay, let's look down the road, what's coming up, and, okay, you know, this, this is, nobody's going to stand over you and tell you what to do, and when to do it, you need to figure it out on your own. And you need to have the drive to do it. I don't have a boss telling me A, B, C, and D need to be done. You know, today, you need to do this. I don't come in with, you know, a list to-do list. I make to-do lists. So, really you have to be self-directed. And that is a big thing. For me, I enjoy being self-directed. I enjoy the independence. And quite honestly, sometimes I feel like if I need to make something up at another school, and I'm at the high school, and I need to leave, I still have time in my day to go to another school. I like the independence.

This statement shows the importance of being able to self-direct. Professionals who have difficulty with taking initiative and scheduling their time appropriately will likely be less effective in their roles. Similarly, SP3 shared that she enjoys the testing component of the job because of the high level of autonomy. She reported that she enjoys being self-directed, making her own schedule, and crossing things off her lists. SP3 also shared that she likes the fact that she is not confined to any one space in a building. SP3 reported,

I love the kids. I tried teaching. I mean, I looked at doing an education program and becoming a teacher, but it was too confining. I needed something where I had more movement and that kind of thing. So that's how I kind of ended up in School Psychology. And I just, I don't know, I just love my job.

While SP3 noted that she did not want to lose autonomy by being confined to one room in one school, SN3 shared that being employed through the school district as a school nurse is better than being contracted through a hospital, where professionals have much less autonomy. SN3 asserted that nurses employed by the district have a greater sense of ownership over their work and increased autonomy. In this scenario, SN3 shared,

I feel this is the best way to do it, where the nurses feel a sense of ownership because I can go beyond still working within my scope, or I can go above and beyond to solve a problem in the district. And I know that I have the support of the district. You know if when you work in a system where you work for a hospital system, but you're a contractor to the district. You're just doing what the hospital expects, and that's it and nothing more, nothing less.

Conversely, nonitinerants in the school setting have very high levels of autonomy. Noninstructional itinerants have roles in the school setting that other professionals cannot cover, so they have to perform many components of their job alone. This factor was noted by the noninstructional participants, who reported that no one knows the noninstructional itinerant job and administrators do not understand what the job entails. In some schools, it is possible that many staff members do not know the noninstructional itinerants. This lack of understanding may result in more

autonomy, but it does not prevent some administrators from trying to dictate what happens in the noninstructional itinerant role. SP1 reported feeling frustrated when an administrator tries to micromanage her because she enjoys her autonomy. SP1 asserted,

I know my job; I know what I need to do. And I know in what order I need to do it. I've had a few principals that have tried to exert power and authority and tell me, like, dictate what I'm gonna do that day. And that just really, really rubs me the wrong way.

This statement demonstrates that when that autonomy was removed by someone with limited knowledge of the noninstructional itinerant role, it was viewed very negatively. Administrators can work collaboratively with these professionals to ensure that school-related goals are met without trying to take over.

Mentoring

Every noninstructional itinerant with longevity discussed how they mentor less-tenured colleagues who are interns and new colleagues. In some cases, this mentoring extends to veteran colleagues who want to consult about a specific area of expertise. Many of the noninstructional itinerants hold positions as leads, meaning that they are the first point of contact when other professionals in their field have questions. In describing this lead role for social workers, SSW1 shared that the leads provide guidance to team members if they need support. SSW1 explained that even though newer professionals may be assigned a mentor, they may still come to a lead for advice because most of the leads have been in the profession for a considerable amount of time and understand the school social worker's role. SSW2 asserted that mentoring meets a critical need and can be very rewarding. When talking about her mentoring experience, SSW2 stated,

That's really kind of just providing mentorship to newer social workers. I'm part of the [redacted]. So, bringing those social workers in my [redacted] together that we can debrief for, you know, have a safe place to talk about maybe things that stress us out, so that we can maintain in this job because the workloads are high, higher than maybe another job. But you know, being the leader and people, I do get some gratification when people are like, "You

know, you're really good at what you do. Thank you for doing what you're doing." And I still get to work with kids at the same time.

This focus on mentoring was also noted by SN2 and SN3 reported getting phone calls from staff all day long with questions and talking through various scenarios. SN3 posited that there is a degree of respect where newer nurses look up to the ones who have been here a long time. SP4 also reported taking multiple calls each day from staff with questions. Some staff members needed help with specific cases or with caseload management. If somebody needs help, SP4 can assist, especially when the case is highly unusual. Similarly, SSW3 reported that she used her expertise to support a mentee with many questions. SSW2 shared that an essential part of her role is imparting information that will help people be more effective in their roles. SSW2 noted,

I think just because I've been in this system for so long that things that come with like custody or kind of situations that maybe are difficult. It's easier for me to maneuver, and those newer social workers are like calling me and asking me like, "What would you do in that situation?" So, like, I give them my little like, tidbits of what helped, like just texting a parent and just putting their first name. Like if you text a parent like I did today, and it says, Sarah. Like, no person can get a text with their first name and not respond like, "Who's this?" So, like little pinpoints like that, like getting parents to work with you, like aligning with them. So, I think those little things come easier for me to make those connections. So, it may differ from a newer social worker who may take longer to make those connections or may be like not as secure when making decisions. And so, they come in and have to ask someone else, like, "Hey, would you do this?" So, I think I'm just more secure in my decisions because I've kind of been faced with so many things already being a social worker for so long.

In addition to informal mentoring, some noninstructional participants reported opportunities for formal mentoring through an internship program. SP3 shared that in the district, school psychologists must have worked in the role for at least 3 years to have an intern. SP3 reported having three interns in her tenure. SP3 shared that

mentoring usually adds to her plate during the first semester because she does not do anything without the intern. The second semester having an intern takes away some work because they ended up taking over a school.

This mentorship looks slightly different in the school nurse roles as professionals enter this role with some level of nursing experience. SN4 stated that mentorship can be trying to support and mold new nurses through orientation and training. SN4 hopes that new nurses will “stay as long as I am because this is the best job I've ever had.” In addition to working with professionals who are new to school nursing, school nurses train clinic assistants. Additionally, SN2 reported that she would help nurses if they needed help in their school to get ready for screenings or support if a new nurse needs to meet with an administrator. New nurses do not know the policies or procedures when they first start, meaning that they need additional support. SN2 shared that she tells administrators when new nurses are still in training and that it is part of the mentor's role to assist.

In addition to training interns and new employees, mentorship could also take place with other colleagues. One example of this is the tenured school nurses in this study who reported combining their expertise and mentoring skills to train other professionals, including tenured colleagues. One part of the school nurse's role is helping to move the district to 100% compliance in first aid and CPR. As an instructor for the American Heart Association, SN3 helps lead this charge by training district staff and helping other school nurses attain their trainers' certification. The mentorship role is extremely important to SN3, who stated,

About that, well, I'm a little bit older now, and I'm getting closer to that retirement. So, I see my role as a school nurse now as more or less of being a mentor for newer nurses. So, I'm not trying to achieve anything else other than to do the very best job that I can possibly do and be available to help others. You know, that's it. I have considered going back to school and master's prepared, and I have considered going back to school, but that would only, you know, be to allow me to have the knowledge to be able to help, you know, the new nurses coming in. They're much better because there's more knowledge, it's more power and more being able to help and so you know, I'm

comfortable with the role I'm playing but approaching retirement, I'm stepping up to try to mentor people and be there for the younger nurses coming in.

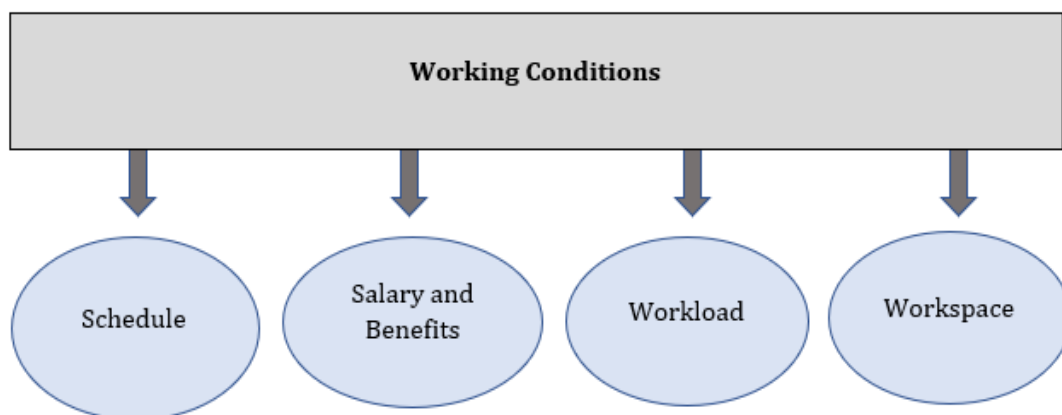
This experience shows that mentoring other professionals is a fundamental part of the noninstructional role and one factor that could support employee longevity. When employees feel that their workload is too high, mentoring can feel like one more thing added to the plate. Even with this, noninstructional itinerants with longevity in the K–12 system do not give up these opportunities.

Working Conditions

After data analysis, several subthemes were identified under the overarching themes of working conditions: schedule, salary, benefits, workload, and workspace (see Figure 4). Various opinions were shared related to each of the subthemes. It is important to note that district agreements or state regulations dictate two working conditions: schedule and salary/benefits. The other two working conditions, workload and workspace, vary from school to school.

Figure 4

Working Conditions and Identified Subthemes



Schedule

Many aspects of the public school system are different from other work sites. Most notably, the school schedule is unlike the work schedules in other locations such as hospitals, community agencies, or private practice. There are two types of

scheduling: the yearly schedule and the daily schedule. In this section, the discussion focused on the yearly schedule. The daily schedule is reviewed later in this section, as it relates to expertise and autonomy.

All 14 participants noted the importance of the work schedule due to family obligations. SSW4 took a significant pay cut to come work in the district, but she got out of work every day in the early afternoon and got to spend valuable time with her daughter. She recognized that she would not have had this opportunity with other jobs and does not regret her decision to work in the public school system. SN2 shared that after 20 years at the hospital, she found that working 12-hour shifts, nights, and every other weekend in the hospital was not conducive to raising children. The other benefit of moving to the school district was that it eliminated the need to find or pay for childcare in the summer when the children are not in school. Instead, she got to spend the summer with her children, which is not an option for individuals in many other professions. Similar benefits were noted by SP1, who shared that the impacts of being on a school schedule affected her family for many years. SP1 shared,

Well, first and foremost, I have [redacted] children. And so, I've got quite an age span, from the oldest to the youngest, which means that I have spent the past 2 decades seeing them through public education K to 12, and I still have 2 more years. So, that is a big component of me working for the school district because I'm working the school calendar. And that has made the lifestyle very appealing to me, having their holidays off, and my holidays are the same, summer vacation is the same. So that was a big, big component.

In total, three noninstructional itinerants reported that they planned to stay in the school system at least while their children were in school. SP5 discussed possibly doing something else when her child left for college. As her child is not yet school-aged, she plans to stay in the district for many years, largely based on the schedule. Another school nurse who faced interpersonal challenges while working in the school district noted that there were many opportunities to work elsewhere during the COVID-19 pandemic and make much more money. She ultimately decided to stay as the schedule is critical, it works well for her family, and she truly genuinely loves the job.

SP5 and SN5 shared that they had other jobs before having children that were not conducive to raising a family. SP5 stated, "I have to be home and take my kids places, and that's where, you know, that's where I want to be." SN5 worked 12-hour shifts in a hospital four or five times a week and had never thought about being a school nurse; however, starting a family with that schedule was daunting, so when a friend told SN5 about an opening, it made sense to apply. SN5 shared, "Now, I can't imagine doing anything different."

In some counties, the school district contracts with local hospitals. Under this type of agreement, nurses may be required to work in the hospital during school breaks, including the summer. Having to work summers would be a challenge for some families, and SN5 reported, "And to me, that's one of the biggest benefits of the job is to have the summers off with young kids." The convenience of the schedule is optimized when noninstructional itinerants work at the same school site where their children attend school. This benefit reduced travel time, possible costs related to after-school care, and increased the time professionals could spend with their children. This scenario was experienced by three professionals, and SP4 reported,

So, it was just nice, like, you know, okay, when you're done with school, just come work in my room for a while and I'll take you home, but just you have to wait for me. Like, it was just easy. It worked out well, with my kids being in the school that I was working in for 11 years.

Interestingly, even when childcare is not part of the equation, there are other benefits to the school calendar. The salary portion of this chapter reviews the opportunity that noninstructional itinerants have to work in other positions to supplement their income based on their schedule. Another benefit shared about the public school schedule was the psychological closure that the school schedule provides. SSW2 noted that working on a school year brings closure not often found in other positions because it has a distinct beginning and end. She recalled,

The end of the year feels like there's closure, and then I feel like there's always more hope. Okay, next year is going to be fun. So, I think always looking that I can make more changes, I can help more kids in the next year always keeps me positive. And you know, well, so and so didn't do maybe

that well this year, but next year they're going to do better. So, I think that's what keeps me happy with the job is that there's hope that it can always get better.

This distinct beginning and end to the work year provides a chance for professionals to recharge and prepare for the new year. This is an opportunity that is not found in many other work settings. Additionally, SSW2 noted that the beginning of the year also brings a sense of excitement. Like many students, staff go out and buy new clothes and look forward to seeing colleagues. SSW2 noted that preparing for a new school year makes her feel young.

Salary and Benefits

Although salary was brought up in each interview, the specifics related to this factor varied depending on the specific itinerant role. SSW4 shared that the importance of staying in a good job with good benefits was instilled in her at a young age. She noted that the younger generations seem to move around a lot. SSW4 recalls that when she was starting in the field, her mom asked her whether she was sure it was the right career path due to the low pay. SSW4 opined that although she wished it paid more, she loved the work, so money was not the most important factor. It was noted that the school district salary for school social workers is competitive when compared to the salaries offered by outside agencies. Conversely, several school nurses noted that the earning capacity was much higher in the hospital setting. During the height of the COVID-19 epidemic, some nurses were making \$100 per hour.

SN1 posited that 90% of the reason that school nurses leave is financial, even though school nurses make more per hour than nurses in many other settings. They often do not consider the week off at Thanksgiving, 2 weeks at Christmas, 1 week in the spring, and 2 months off in the summer. Typically, a nurse in the hospital would likely be working 50 weeks in the hospital with 2 weeks' vacation to start. Both SN2 and SN5 shared nurses can still make a lot more money in the hospital, and some of the young ones with families need to make a living.

SN1 asserted that working in the hospital is stressful and the potential increase in stress is not worth the potential pay increase. There is a comfort level, especially once one has been in the public school system for a period, and while

nurses can make more money in other settings, “it is not all about the money.” SN3 reported that school nurses could supplement their salary with a part-time job while still enjoying the benefits of the school district and giving something meaningful back to society. SN5 did work part-time when she first started working in the school district. After 5 years, salary increases bridged the initial salary gap, and SN5 was able to stop working the second job. SN3 reported that several nurses came from the hospital setting, where they were making more money but chose to stay with the district. Conversely, several other school nurses could not figure out how to make ends meet and ultimately left the position.

Another reason noted for staying in the public school system is the inconsistency and lack of financial security when getting paid through a private practice. SP1 worked privately in several different outpatient settings. She noted that she did not have consistent pay and never knew how much she would bring in each month. When self-pay clients do not show up for appointments, there is no way to recoup that lost salary, and it is often too late to fill that time slot. For clients paying with insurance, professionals depend on insurance companies paying out at the rate they determine they want to pay for that service.

Pension/Retirement Plan. One of the benefits of working in the public school system noted by some study participants is the option to have a pension or investment plan for retirement. SSW2 became certified in multiple academic areas just in case her position was ever cut so she could maintain her pension. SSW2 noted that, early in their careers, professionals might not fully understand the benefits of having a pension. After working with a financial planner, SSW2 not only understands the significance of this benefit but also shares this information with newer school social workers who may be evaluating their employment options. SSW2 noted,

Well, I really discussed even when I'm trying to hire social workers who are coming from other agencies, I talk to them about our retirement. Which in a lot of agencies, you don't get the retirement we get working in the school district. So, I talked to them about that, about how I didn't even realize how good it was. Until I met with my financial planner, and he's like, “You know, this is worth this much.” And I was like, “Really?” And he's like, “Yeah,

cause look, you know what you're getting.” So, I think when you're younger, you don't look into the future and think about pensions and where do you get pensions, where you get a 401 K possibly? If you put money in, then you get more but not a pension. So that's another factor I think that has really also made me stay the, you know, having a pension and in looking at the retirement, so I've had a lot of people come over, even though they would be initially making less money. But when we go over, you know, pension, and then I tell them, “We'll look at your hourly rate compared to this hourly rate.” I mean, technically, we do get a higher hourly rate than social workers usually do out in the field, especially when you're looking at like the breaks and incorporating all that. So, like I break it down for them and all that.

The information shared by SSW2 related to pensions indicates that newer employees who are focused solely on salary may be overlooking important benefits. While not provided up front, the pension ensures employees will have an income source when they are ready to retire. While there are ways other than a pension to prepare for retirement, they may require employees to have more knowledge of the financial market and a higher level of personal discipline.

The length of time an individual has been working may also impact how they feel about their pensions. For newer employees, it takes 8 years to become vested, and even at 8 years, the pension would not be significant and would not be available for collection until age 62 with 8 years of service or 30 years of service before age 62 (FRS, 2022). SSW3 reported that the pension is a significant factor in her decision to stay in the public school system. SSW3 shared, “Yeah, the idea of retiring early, it's, you know, I started when I was 24, so that sounds nice.”

One professional considering moving out of the K–12 system shared that she would be most likely to move to a higher education setting, where she could continue with a school schedule and remain in the Florida Retirement System. She noted that keeping her retirement is “very appealing” and would likely impact her future plans. Another noninstructional itinerant indicated that although her pension would be extremely important if legislation was passed in the state allowing teachers to carry firearms, she would have to see how the legislation was implemented in the school

setting. If the implementation made her feel less safe, this could motivate her to leave the school setting regardless of the loss of potential benefits.

Inequities in Salary and Benefits. Three noninstructional itinerants noted that there are inequities in salary and experience credit. One professional shared that less-tenured employees are sometimes given higher pay rates than more experienced professionals. Although this inequity has reduced job satisfaction and has resulted in some itinerants exploring their options, the noninstructional itinerants in this study ultimately did not leave. SSW4 noted, “It is frustrating, as someone with many years of experience, to see someone fresh out of college is making as, almost as, much as I make.” SSW4 shared the following frustration:

I mean, like because you see the revolving door, you know that I mean, I think the district hires, you know, up to 500 teachers or instructional staff a year. That's a lot of money that you're spending on training, benefits, everything and then they walk out the door and go somewhere else. And then, but for the people who have stayed, who train them, who literally train them because I'm telling you, we get text messages and emails from the newbies all the time. How do I do this? How do I do that? You know, we train them, but yet they keep getting salary bumps.

This inequity in pay is a course of contention for more tenured employees. Although they may not leave the role because they have invested considerable time, this could potentially lower job satisfaction and negatively impact employee productivity and organizational commitment behaviors. Because less-tenured employees may have salaries comparable to more tenured nurses depending on their experience credit, there are not the same inequities present that may influence their decision; however, there may be significant discrepancies compared to salaries at other professional organizations or school districts. SN2 noted that when she moved to the school district after 2 decades in the hospital where she was maxed out, the difference was only \$0.05 per hour. Though the salary offered from outside organizations has continued to grow, the salary within the school district has grown at a much slower rate.

In this district, decisions related to salary are bargained, and noninstructional itinerants are represented on the bargaining team. Each noninstructional team has a group representative, selected by the group members, who shares their concerns with the bargaining team representative. When discussing the district's career progression plan, SN3 shared that even though some inequities exist, noninstructional itinerants continue to try to change the status quo:

We know it's not about the money. It definitely is not because we have choices and would have been out, but we still fight for some of the things that we deem important. So, you know, you always have to take the good with the bad, joy and sadness and nothing is perfect in life.

This statement highlights the fact that employees who are not satisfied with every aspect of their job do not have to let the negative aspects overshadow the positive. This does not mean that noninstructional itinerants just need to accept things they do not like and can work to make positive changes in the workplace.

Ultimately, although salary is a point of contention for professionals with longevity who assert they should be making considerably more than their newer counterparts, these study participants may be influenced more by other work-related factors such as passion and purpose, the work schedule, or the state pension. Although they may receive a higher salary with an outside organization, they may not receive any of these other benefits. The professionals who feel strongly about the salary work closely with the union and their union representative to ensure their concerns are voiced during bargaining.

Workload

As with salaries, a wide variety of information was shared about noninstructional itinerant workloads, as individuals had different perspectives based on their work assignments. The workload fluctuates from serving a primary school while supporting others to having up to five schools. SN4 was primarily at one school but filled in if other nurses were out or to support vacancies. In SN4's role as the team lead, she supports other schools when the school nurse or clinic assistant needs help. SSW4 noted that although the workload has always been high, the stress of it can be

more significant for newer employees who do not know how or don't have the confidence to set necessary boundaries.

When compared to other settings, such as hospice, SSW2 shared that a caseload at that site might be around 30, while the caseload in the school setting is closer to 500. SP1 noted that the school psychologist caseload is significantly higher than the accepted standard supported by the National Association of School Psychologists, which makes it challenging to provide a high level of service. SN1 shared that comparing the workload in the hospital and school settings is difficult. SN1 noted that staff are always going and have little down time in the school district, but the stress level in the hospital is much higher. SN1 reported, "You'll get an ulcer working at a hospital. You get satisfaction in the school district. That's been my experience anyway."

Several noninstructional itinerants noted the impact that a lack of work-life balance has on time outside of work hours. Working well beyond the scheduled work day posed no issues for two professionals, as they reported enjoying the work. One school social worker described herself as a "workaholic." Two noninstructional itinerants noted the negative aspects of a poor work-life balance. SP1 noted struggling to meet work expectations even when working at home after work hours. Participants reported that high work expectations were very challenging, but professionals in each subgroup accomplished as much as possible during the school day. SP1 noted that not meeting job expectations is stressful and might be especially stressful for newer employees:

Working here in [redacted] County really requires you to give up the idea of perfection because there's just no way that we can get everything done with the limited resources, the limited staff members. So, if it's the type of person that is losing sleep and stressed out about the fact that they're, you know, they have five, 60-day timelines that have come and gone, and they're out of compliance. And that's, you know, upsetting them and how in the end, they're pushing, pushing themselves to, you know, meet all of the expectations. And they continue to kind of add to our role. They don't take anything from us, but they continue to add to the plate.

This assertion by SP1 shows that longevity can help employees feel more confident in their roles even when they cannot meet every expectation. It was previously noted that time in the role increases a professional's comfort level with prioritizing tasks and also with using their employee voice if there are expectations that are unrealistic given the confines of the workday.

Although the work expectations keep growing, it is critical that noninstructional itinerants find a way to balance their work with other areas of their lives. To find a better work-life balance, SP1 reported trying to leave work in the office and not write evaluation reports all night. The challenge is that even when time is blocked to work on reports during the school day, "life happens" and that time disappears. SSW4 asserted that work-life balance is a priority and, to support others, it is vital to take care of yourself. SSW4 shared,

But I'm not going to work until 10 o'clock at night because you're just going to burn out and then you can't help anybody. So, and, you know, not everybody sees that. You know, there's some of the teachers, you know, we see these teachers that are here till eight o'clock at night, you know, administrators that are working till 10 o'clock at night. And I'm like, you know what, when your kids are young, you can never get that time back. Go spend time with your family, go spend time with your parents, whatever. That's what's important in life. I mean, your job is important and yes, you need to be good at your job. But that isn't all there is to life.

In addition to challenges with work-life balance, the increased workload has led to increased clerical tasks, negatively impacting some professionals' work-life balance and making it more difficult to find meaning in the work. SSW4 shared that she did not like the attendance part of the job and believed that newer people were also frustrated with this piece. She asserted that some other places hire truancy officers to do that piece, instead of having master's-level professionals oversee truancy. She shared that experienced social workers talk to parents but go deeper to find out why the child is not in school. If the family is impacted by things such as family issues or financial issues, the school social worker's role is to connect the family with resources. SSW4 asserted that there is so much pressure on school social

workers related to attendance that sometimes new professionals feel they must focus on the numbers, not the people. She understands how an over focus on numbers can happen and shared that the caseloads are astronomical. In a private agency, you might have 10 cases where you could work with hundreds of people in the school district, so it is crucial for professionals to find a work-life balance. Similarly, SP1 reported,

And that's where it gets very frustrating for me personally, is, you know, when I first started with the district, I had a lot more time to fulfill that requirement of my job, which is I'm the only one in that building who can do that. Whereas now, I'm using my expertise to do a lot of clerical things. Albeit a lot of them are related to ESE law and regulation and require my knowledge, but a lot of it really does not require somebody with my degree to complete. So, it's very challenging and frustrating for me. It's right now that the number one contributor to not feeling satisfied with my job.

Similarly, another school psychologist asserted that the increase in work perceived as being clerical has significantly impacted job satisfaction to the point where "I used to like it [the job], but I feel like I just don't have time." This statement shows the wide variations in the perceptions of workload. Although some professionals think their workload is too high, others perceive it as manageable. There is also a subset of professionals who think the workload is too high but have developed strategies to mitigate the stress that potentially comes with their assignments.

To mitigate the possible effects of having a high caseload, SP5 has made a concerted effort not to work from home due to family obligations, but that becomes more challenging as the workload increases:

Yeah, it's just as things are getting added. It's like I had, I mean, I'm very organized, but I feel like it's getting to a point where like I feel like "Okay, am I up to date with everything I need to be doing?" Because yeah, it's a lot to keep track of. I feel like this year more than other years I have a feeling in the back of my head like, "Am I missing something that I was supposed to be doing?" Whereas I don't feel like I've had that feeling other years, like it's just gotten to be more.

This quote highlights the fact that even professionals with longevity and established work systems are struggling with the increases in workload. For some professionals, the higher workload has led to a decrease in task diversity. SP5 reported not having a good balance and stated, “I think I definitely do more testing. Overwhelmingly, my days at the elementary are testing and report writing and meetings and MTSS meetings.” SP4 reported spending excessive time in the students' records room at the beginning of the year just reviewing and cleaning up files. SW3 shared that for her, burnout is real. SW3 reported that she felt entirely supported by the administration but indicated, “The climate we are in right now makes the noninstructional itinerant role an uphill battle.”

Smaller Caseloads and Fewer Schools. SP3 shared that as a department, psychological services has gotten to the point where most school psychologists have one or two schools, so they do not have caseloads as large as they used to be. SP3 also asserted that school psychologists have access to resources such as different tests and staff support. Likewise, SSW2 reported that the workload is very high and much higher than other organizations but asserted that it is much better than it was years ago. SSW2 stated that when people with two or three school assignments complain, she tells them how they used to have five schools each. Similarly, SSW3 reported that the department had grown so much in the last several years. When SSW3 started in this role, she had four schools, and now most school social workers have two schools allowing for a better connection with staff and students.

Although schools vary in size and student enrollment, even having multiple smaller schools may require a considerable time investment. Fewer resources may be available at a smaller school requiring more outreach to families and community agencies; however, being assigned to a smaller school can also have benefits. SN3s shared,

I do support two schools. I think that's the ideal setting. Because, you know, I started out with four schools, and with four schools, you're all over the place. You have very little time in which to get work done. You spend a lot of time traveling back and forth. At least with two schools. You can spend quality

time to problem solve or to deal with some of the issues that may arise in those.

When noninstructional itinerants have multiple schools, they lose direct time with students when they are traveling between sites or have limited time at any one site due to needs at another. Although SN3 noted that having two schools is ideal, this may be impacted by factors such as school level, student need, and school location.

A school psychologist with four schools has no desire to give up any of her assigned sites; if asked, she would not want to give one up because “she likes them all.” Professionals who have interns report higher caseloads early on in the relationship. She did share that the workload is more manageable because she has an intern who can assist. SP3 posited that having an intern can be more work while they are being trained but once they are ready to support a school, the workload decreases.

Having fewer schools does not necessarily equate to increased availability. Being at just one or two schools may increase site-based expectations when the nonitinerant is more visible and has a more consistent schedule. SSW3 reported feeling busier when working primarily at one school than when she was assigned to multiple schools. SSW3 shared,

I've established more relationships with different teachers and students, so people feel more comfortable using me as a resource. So, I feel like I'm going from as soon as I clock in until it's time to go with phone calls and meeting with kids, you know, supporting teachers and just different meetings that we have here. And now, too, I think there's more teams, so we have threat assessments, we have student services meetings, we have mental health team meetings. So, just as the job has changed and evolved, there's a lot more to do.

In addition to the number of schools that a noninstructional itinerant is assigned to support, another factor influencing one's workload is serving on special committees or teams. SN3 shared that being on the screening team and supporting multiple schools requires time management and scheduling. Multitasking and completing work for school sites in between screenings is one way to help ensure the work is completed. Although it may not be easy, SN3 asserts that “it's doable.” SSW1 noted that another issue is that no matter how organized a noninstructional itinerant is

when a crisis arises, it could take them away from their duties. SSW1 also noted, however, that “you kind of get used to that kind of schedule, and it usually does work out.”

Benefits of Supporting Multiple Schools. Although having multiple schools may impact a professional's workload, there may be some benefits. SSW3 asserted that only having to be at a school 1 or 2 days a week makes it more palatable if a noninstructional itinerant is assigned someplace that is not a good fit. Additionally, if things are slow at one school, professionals can go to another school to catch up on work there, so multischool assignments allow for more flexibility. Another benefit noted by SP2 is that those multiple school assignments allow a noninstructional itinerant to change environments and get a bigger perspective of different things. SSW2 shared that changing schools keeps the role interesting.

Other Impacts on Workload. Although there may often be disparities in workload based on school size and experience, critical shortages in noninstructional itinerants and lingering impacts of COVID-19 have exacerbated some of these inequities. SSW2 declared that some of the more recent increases in the workload are a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. SSW3 shared that in the aftermath of COVID, it has been difficult to find solutions for many challenges. SSW3 reported,

I feel like I have a lot more to do now, because attendance, I feel like, was impacted so much after COVID. But I think it also opened a lot of teachers' eyes as to what I can do in my role. So, a lot of you know, this kid needs this resource. Can you help with that? Or even teachers? I need this resource, or I have a family member that needs this resource. How can you help me? I was able to kind of put myself out there as far as this is what I can do to help.

A decrease in role confusion is one positive of challenging situations that require higher levels of resources to support students. This quote also highlights the fact that while the increase in an understanding of the school social worker role is good, it also leads to increased workloads.

Increased workloads and increases in critical shortages in noninstructional itinerants have also required districts to hire innovatively. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SSW2 reported that the department lost school social workers to jobs

that offered Zoom options because they were so available. Additionally, SP1 shared that some school psychologists hired through a nonlocal outside agency may only be required to work on-site 2 or 3 days a week and can work virtually the rest of the work week. Meanwhile, school psychologists in the district are on-site 5 days a week. When noninstructional itinerants are on-site, they are more accessible to staff, increasing their workloads and decreasing the time they have to complete assigned duties.

Another impact on the workload at some school sites is the influx of students at certain times of the year. SN5 discussed the increase in her work as 32 new students entered over 2 weeks from countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. If the students entering do not have access to healthcare outside of the school system, they will come to the school clinic with every need. SN5 detailed a time when a student had to go to the hospital, and the father, an undocumented immigrant, was scared to come to the hospital. Over 4 hours, the school nurse had to make multiple calls, go to the family's home, and go to the hospital. After working with the staff at the hospital, she convinced the father to come to the hospital to pick up his child.

Workspace

Two school nurses and two school psychologists discussed the impact of appropriate workspaces. Often, noninstructional itinerants are placed in workspaces based on space availability rather than on the work they complete. SN2 posited that some locations are not adequate, which can have a significant impact on job satisfaction. SN2 shared that other school nurses have reported that they are expected to talk to parents in the front office because they do not have a private office. SN2 asserted that it is impossible to do the school nurse job from the front office and having to deal with these types of issues makes professionals not want to work in the school setting. SN1 expanded on the impact of inadequate workspace by saying,

But I know, like when a nurse goes into a school, and they don't have a spot to do their work or talk to a parent confidentially. Then they interpret that as, you know, not being appreciated and their work's not important.

This experience shows how critical it is that school administrators consider the work of the noninstructional itinerant and their collaboration with other itinerants. In one case, SP2 shared that an administrator wanted the school psychologist to share office space with the speech-language pathologist (SLP). Given that they pull students to their offices for testing and therapy, this placement was not conducive to student support. The administrator asserted that the two professionals would need to adjust their workdays so that they were not in the office space simultaneously. Given that the school psychologist and the SLP often participate in IEP meetings for the same students, they often need to be at the same site on the same days. SP2 felt that the administrative suggestion showed a lack of understanding of their respective roles in the school. In another case, SP4 reported being provided a workspace in a costume closet and having to take 10 minutes to move racks of costumes around every time she needed to meet with students. The space also had a large picture window, so the room lacked any privacy.

Although not asked directly, three noninstructional itinerants shared that they have an appropriate workspace. One individual reported that she had an inadequate workspace at one site and an ideal workspace at another. Having an appropriate workspace increased her positive feelings about that site. SP2 shared,

It's just my opinion, you know, but they value my opinion, they value my presence, they value me to the point where, you know, it's the silly little things where I have a room that nobody touches, don't use the room, it's my room, I can go in and out whenever I want. They don't use it as storage. I don't share it with three other people. So, it's easy. That makes it easier for me to do my job. And they're thoughtful in the location. I'm not up on the stage in the cafeteria. You know, I'm not in the, you know, closet. They're thoughtful about that. So, it's just those little things that may seem silly, but it shows me that they think about what I do and that support's been there even with the administration changes. Yeah, you know, it's always been a good administration coming on, and they still value me and that's so important. I don't know that I'd still be here if I didn't have that.

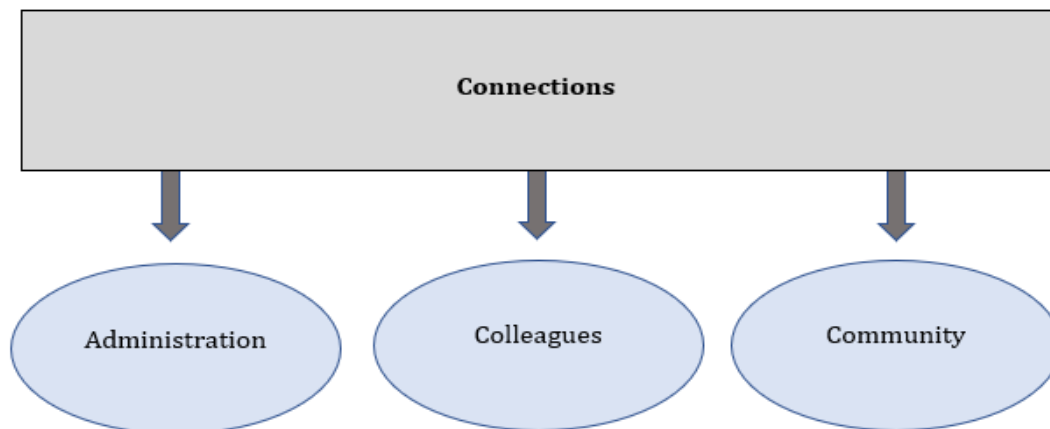
When working at multiple sites, noninstructional itinerants can have very different experiences. The experience shared by SP2 shows how a supportive administrator can influence job satisfaction. Although a lack of administrative support could have a negative impact on longevity, a positive relationship with colleagues could mitigate the impact of low support. Understanding more about the job of the noninstructional itinerant demonstrates a level of care for the person. Additionally, inclusive opportunities can be offered through both administrators and colleagues.

Connections

Another central theme identified through the data analysis was connections. As identified in Figure 5, the three subthemes identified under this overarching theme of connections were administration, colleagues, and community. The study participants shared various experiences related to their interpersonal and community connections.

Figure 5

Connections and Identified Subthemes



SSW4 reported feeling very welcome and included at her elementary schools but thinks middle and high school are different. For SSW4, who has worked at all levels, the culture is different at middle and high schools, while elementary school is very nurturing and inclusive. SP3 shared that it is easy to become disconnected from people when one has a very individualized job, while SSW2 noted that

noninstructional itinerants must navigate different personalities and school expectations. SN4 reported,

And it is difficult to be an itinerant because you go into these schools and nobody knows you versus this is their school family, and they see each other all day all the time, and they know each other, and they support each other.

The experience of SN4 highlights the importance of having opportunities for teams to work together to strengthen relationships and support inclusivity. The responsibility to create these opportunities often falls to the school administrator.

Regardless of the challenges that noninstructional itinerants face with inclusion, they reported wanting to be included in their work settings. SSW1 viewed these connections as an essential part of the noninstructional role, and SN4 shared that she believes the inclusion level has continued to improve:

I'm very happy where I am now. Everybody's, you know, very receptive to me because they know me. You know, everybody seems very receptive to everything nowadays. I think this was a while back, but it is difficult still being an itinerant walking into a place where everyone's friends, everybody knows each other. And then you're the odd man out, you know, so yeah, that is hard. So that is I think that would be a reason why people don't stay so long. And like us getting together in these screenings and supporting school nurses and then getting together for our school nurse meetings once a month and supporting each other that way. I think those are very important ways to keep people together and to keep them in this role and reaching out and making sure that everybody's doing okay, and if there was anything that they need to help support them in that because that shouldn't be there. Just touch base with each other and network with people who get it.

Similarly, SP1 also shared how she felt about being included on a deep and meaningful level at one site where they were so welcoming and embracing. The staff even had a baby shower for her, which made a long-lasting impression. SP1 stated,

And I'll never forget it. I mean, it just really, I loved going out to that school. They really, really treated me very, you know, like family, as though I was one of the coworkers and not just the itinerant who came and went.

In this case, the school administrators and staff went above-and-beyond to make SP1 feel included. While this is a model experience, other staff reported being satisfied with inclusion at more moderate levels as long as they were included. Conversely, not being included can be incredibly challenging for a noninstructional itinerant as it makes it more difficult to build relationships with the administration and other staff in the building. SP3 noted that the inclusion at some sites is inconsistent based on what the staff believes about the noninstructional itinerant role. SP3 gets invited to Christmas parties and that kind of thing but shared that she might "find out after the fact like they had a reading night or something. And I would love to be able to participate in their reading nights for the math nights or whatever." SP3 also recognized that one of the reasons she is not included in some school activities is because noninstructional itinerants cannot be completely reliable and say, "I'm going to be there every Tuesday." Even though SN4 shared that she sees improvements in inclusion, there are times when important information is not communicated. SP1 shared,

There are sometimes, as an itinerant, it kind of gets under your skin when different things are going on at a school, and you don't know. And then you show up, and it's a spirit day or something like that. Nobody has, you know, informed you; it's that kind of thing. It's like you're the outsider, or when, you know, they put special things in everybody's mailbox, but they don't put one in your mailbox, or every year at the, at the Christmas party, all the staff members get like, a nice little gift bag with, you know, different little, just silly things, but always every year not get one is kind of, you know, kind of crummy feeling like, you know, I'm here 3 days a week, and yet, you know, you guys forget about me. So that's, that's a little bit of a drawback for sure, is not being building-based.

SP2 asserted that it could take at least a year to become established in a site and feel valued in the school. Even with multiple school assignments, those assignments can be stable year-to-year. SP2 asserted that team building, the collaboration is very important to school psychologists, and itinerants in general,

especially since they put the school mental health teams in place. As noninstructional itinerant are all mental health team members the team-building component is critical.

Although SP2 shared that it takes at least a year to feel valued, SN5 shared that the length of time one has been at a site can have a direct impact on the relationships with colleagues. SN5 has been at one site for several years and another for just about a year. Although SN5 expressed having good relationships at both schools, she noted some differences:

So, at the one school here, I, 100% I'm included in absolutely everything. Even the teams, you know, 504, MTSS, mental health, IEPs. All of those people come to me on a regular daily basis, probably to talk about students because I do know these families, I know these kids. At my other school, I'm still working on those relationships. I'm, you know, here, I feel like I'm in such, I'm such a core part, especially of our mental health team, very, very high number of kids on our mental health caseload here. So, I am, I'm a part of that team. I get the consensus. I talk to the parents. I always have input at the meetings. Whereas at my other school, I go to the meetings, but I don't typically. I'm not asked for much. And I really don't honestly have much to offer because I don't know those students, and they don't ask me to be a part of it. They don't use me as much. So, I really think here, I've always been a part of the team. So that might be the difference. I've been there from the ground up, whereas the other site I just started there in October of last year. So, it's just been about a year. And I kind of came into a team that was already established. So that that might be part of it.

This experience highlights the importance of time and consistency to relationship development. Although the timeline of a year was noted as an important timeframe in understanding the role, that only provides the most basic level of understanding. The longer in the role, and the longer in the role at one site, increases inclusive opportunities. Those opportunities combined with other experiences ensure that individuals who can demonstrate longevity have a deeper understanding of their role.

Administration

Overwhelmingly, the information related to connections focused on the relationships with school principals, with all noninstructional itinerants sharing something about the role that school administrators play in noninstructional itinerants' job satisfaction. Two professionals stated that school administrators can "make or break it" for noninstructional itinerants in the public school setting. SP2 stated, "a school is only as good as the administrative staff, and that's just the bottom line."

SSW4 noted that it is vital to have an empathetic supervisor, and it affects staff if they feel that people do not care about them. SSW4 asserted that this job could take an emotional toll; thus, supervisor support is critical and could be important when encouraging new people to stay longer. SSW4 also shared that it means a lot when the principals take care of their staff and do "little things." Even doing something as simple as passing out candy bars or other small things to acknowledge people makes a difference. SSW4 shared that in one school, the principal has hot chocolate and coffee in the office on cold days and does special things on days that have been especially stressful for people.

In this study, the school nurses expressed high levels of satisfaction with the leadership at their assigned sites but shared experiences they had had in the past or experiences they had heard about from other school nurses who were unsatisfied with their assignments. SSW3 reported having a great relationship with school-based and district administration. SP5 shared feeling heard and being able to provide input to administration. SP1 even shared the impact of being able to develop both a professional and personal relationship with school-based administration:

You know, they treated me as a staff member, not as an itinerant, you know, we went antiquing on the weekends with the principal and assistant principal, you know, they included me as one of them. They even sat down and had lunch with me on different occasions. Like, we would eat lunch together. And that really made that school assignment very enjoyable for me because I really, I miss that. I missed that sense of being a staff member at one school and really getting to know people on a personal level rather than just professionally. That has made a huge difference.

This quote shows that noninstructional itinerants, like other staff in the school setting, want to feel valued and seen. Due to the fact that itinerants service multiple schools, relationships development with school administrators can be more challenging for them.

With one exception, the participants in this study report positive relationships with the administrative staff. These high levels of satisfaction noted by participants could be due in part to the fact that these noninstructional itinerants are provided with an opportunity to provide input regarding their placements. When noninstructional itinerants ask not to be placed at sites where they perceive they are unappreciated, vacancies in those buildings are often filled with noninstructional itinerants new to the public school setting. SP2 provided insight into the challenges that new noninstructional itinerants with less input over their placements face, as she knows some of the sites where new people are often assigned and understands why they leave. SP2 has had assignments that she has enjoyed overall but has been in a situation where she was battling with administration every day to complete her job, and if she was required to stay at that site, she would likely look for other employment.

Similarly, SP5 reported asking to be reassigned at the end of the year after working in a toxic work culture with a principal whom she found difficult. It is important to note that SP5 did not have any issues personally, but there were many complaints from other upset and emotional staff. SP5 noted that one of the best parts about being an itinerant in this type of situation was being able to say, “Okay, I’m leaving. See you on Wednesday.” SN2 reported,

The biggest challenge is because you're not really part of the school itself, and you get really good administrators, and you get those that don't understand what we do, don't respect what we do, give us a super hard time. I happen to have two good ones. So, it's easier for me, but I'm constantly getting calls from other nurses about this happening and that happening, and you know, what am I supposed to do and so forth and so on. So, for newer nurses coming in and getting, they seem to always get those types of schools because nobody

wants to go there that's been here. So, it's hard for them because they don't know the whole environment.

To mitigate some of the challenges with relationship development, SN2 reported trying to connect with the administrators at her sites as much as possible and explaining what school nurses do to support school operations. SN2 shared that pulling monthly reports and letting them know what is happening is helpful. Additionally, if there is a situation with a parent, informing school administrators immediately so they are not blindsided is helpful. SN2 reported no issues with her administration, who provides good support when there is an issue. In addition to sharing information with administrators, SP2 believed that administrators should come to noninstructional itinerants when they have questions. SP2 asserted, "Rather than just give me a directive and bypassing my professional judgment. [Ask] 'What's going on? What's your perspective?' Utilize me as a professional, not a, 'Hey, we need you to test this kid...'"

SN5 also discussed the importance of having administrators who understand the capabilities of school nurses. SN5 shared that it can be challenging to direct-report to a district-based supervisor but then spend all day in a school where the principal is in charge. Again, SN5 is a tenured professional who has not had any issues with the administration but has worked with new school nurses who are having difficulty integrating into their assigned sites. She noted that the issues often have to do with personality differences and that not all administrators understand the role of the noninstructional itinerants. SN5 stated that the relationships between school nurses and school administration have improved over the last 3 or 4 years, but she would still like to see district administration, across the board at every school level, have a baseline understanding of what the school nurse job entails. She asserted that this understanding would help administrators understand what school nurses can offer them. SN5 shared,

Although, you know, some people say, "Well, you don't have a master's, you only have a bachelor's." Okay. Yes, but for nurses, that bachelor's is considered a higher level degree in nursing because you can be a nurse with an associate degree, a registered nurse just like we all are. So, the bachelor's

level is that higher level of education for a lot of us, and yes, many of us will work towards our master's and get that. But we still have that higher level of education. A bachelor's in nursing is a very difficult degree to get. And the biggest difference between an associate's and a bachelor's is that community health public health component, which is what we're here to offer. And a lot of times, I think they view us as just a clinic assistant or a glorified clinic assistant. And we can work here for so much more we can do case management, we understand. Like the interdisciplinary teams, we understand working together. We do it in the hospital all the time. We work with social workers and, case managers, and doctors. We have to plan for our patients; we can be advocates for our families. We really can just bring an additional layer of understanding to what's going on with our students and their families if they'll just listen and give us the opportunity.

Likewise, SN2 shared that school nurses who feel disrespected and unappreciated feel that they “didn't go to school and spend all these hours working and studying to be treated this way.” SN1 asserted that in the hospital, the nurse is the “top dog,” and it is very different in the school setting, which can be especially hard for new nurses, who feel unappreciated. SN1 explained that some administrators need to be more open to understanding that the school nurse's role is more than band-aids and bellyaches. Like many other professionals in this section, SN1 has not had any issues with administrators and has found them willing to learn.

During the interview, one noninstructional itinerant shared that they planned to ask for a change of assignment from one school for the upcoming school year. SP2 explained the dichotomy of feeling valued in one location and not in another. She shared that in her elementary school, where they often consult with her, she is able to do more group work. At the middle school, they started to utilize her in a different capacity, but they did not consult with her as a professional and scheduled her at a time that was not conducive to effective group work with students. When thinking about this lack of utilization, SP2 indicated,

All I can do is just keep letting them know what I can do. And if they don't want to utilize me then I can't make them, and I'm just done. So, I'm pretty

much done with that school. But at the elementary, I talked to them about what I can do, and they embraced it. And they bring me in, and they consult with me, they say, “Hey, [redacted], we've got this kid.” And I’m like, “Thank you,” and I research, and I find out stuff, and we meet as a team. They actually use me as part of the problem-solving team.

SP2’s insights show that specialized skills that noninstructional itinerants possess can be a benefit to school teams when administrators take the time to learn about these roles. SP2 shared information about another situation related to role confusion when she offered to help review different interventions for a team meeting. SP2's attendance was not requested, as the school administrator said the student was not in special education and believed that the school psychologist’s role was solely aligned with ESE. Although this situation and others have reduced SP2's job satisfaction, she reported compartmentalizing her feelings about how she is utilized at this site so that negativity does not bleed over into her work at other sites. SP2 posited that someone at the district office should be taking a look at schools with a high staff turnover rate. The perception is that there is a systems issue when concerns are ignored, or administrators with high turnover are just moved around without addressing the root issues.

Being at the same site for a long time is no guarantee that a noninstructional itinerant will have a good working relationship with the administrators as they often move between schools in the district. SN5 had been at one site for several years when the principal changed. SN5 reported suddenly not feeling valued or appreciated at a site with no previous issues:

So, you know, I didn't love it, I didn't enjoy going there for a period of time, but I, you know, I would go, I would do my job what I needed to do and leave. Whereas in other schools, I go and I feel part of the family, and that makes me want to give more to the school, you know, to stay after and help and do things with the students, or you know, we have trunk or treat or after school events. So, when I feel valued and part of the school family, I definitely want to be more a part of that. But I found a good balance. If I'm not super happy with the school, I still have a job to do. I go in; I do my job.

Although SN5 eventually ended up leaving this site, this participant noted that there are often many administrative changes across the district. If a staff member is somewhere they feel undervalued by an administrator, it may be an option to wait it out. Moving to another site does not guarantee that the noninstructional itinerant-administrator relationship will be positive.

Colleagues

Colleague support was reported as having a significant impact on longevity by every noninstructional itinerant in this study. SP2 noted that while she loved working with students, there were many different work environments where that could happen. The one notable difference with the public school system is the team approach. SP2 shared that the support of colleagues makes her feel valued and that her opinion matters. SN3 also noted the significance of the team approach, stating,

It helps all of us as nurses. There's always a resource there for us, whether it's the other nurse or a member of the multidisciplinary team, we talk to the psychologists, and we talk to the social worker, the mental health worker, the guidance counselor, and we work together you know, and that togetherness helps us to be able to conquer a lot of issues, a lot of problems, problems having to do with staff problems having to do with students, so you're never alone. You never feel alone.

Like SN3, five noninstructional itinerants also discussed their views on the importance of networking with other district professionals in the field. SN1 shared that the school nurse community is a big reason people stay in the role. SN1 likes the other school nurses and the professional community and has not had the same collegial relationships when working in the hospital. Several noninstructional itinerants reported jumping in to help each other. SSW3 reported making a concerted effort to include licensed mental health professionals (LMHPs) and school psychologists so that these professionals know they are still valued members of the team even if they are only at a school 2 days a week. SP2 reported that her colleagues were a major reason she loved being a school psychologist in this county. SP2 noted,

I love the colleagues in my department. You don't get that everywhere. When I think of my internship, we weren't a cohesive group. And other people will

come and say that they're like, "Wow, you guys meet, you have meetings, you send weekend email and get an answer." And I don't hear that from when psychs come from other places. That's unheard of, or I know psychs, and they're like, "Yeah, we're so siloed." And so, honestly, what's kept me here is the cohesive group of the psych department and it just keeps getting stronger.

This networking with noninstructional itinerants in other districts helped to show SP2 that school psychologists are not part of a cohesive team in every school district. This information deepened her appreciation for the collegial connections she had in the district where she is employed. When considering relationship development with colleagues, SN1 asserted that one's personality has much to do with building connections. SN1 shared that it is crucial to connect with people and approach situations in a certain way. SN1 explained that using a negative or demanding approach does not work, and school-based staff will push back and rebel if the psychologist does not communicate in a way that people will accept what they are saying:

You need to be able to connect with people. And there's certain ways to do that where people will accept you. But there's other ways if you approach a situation in a negative way where you're demanding or confrontational, that doesn't work. People rebel against that. So, you have to connect with people somehow. You have to find a method to do that. And I think that's probably how I get through it.

SN1 also shared that finding common ground can help build or strengthen workplace connections. Relationship development can be accomplished by finding something that another individual is interested in, even if it is about something that is not work-related.

Community

Living in the school district was a primary reason for working there. One participant was raised in the area and decided to stay in the community. This professional explained that when working with students, she describes the school as "this is your community, and what you learn here, you'll take with you into your community outside of school, and that's going to be your foundation for how you live

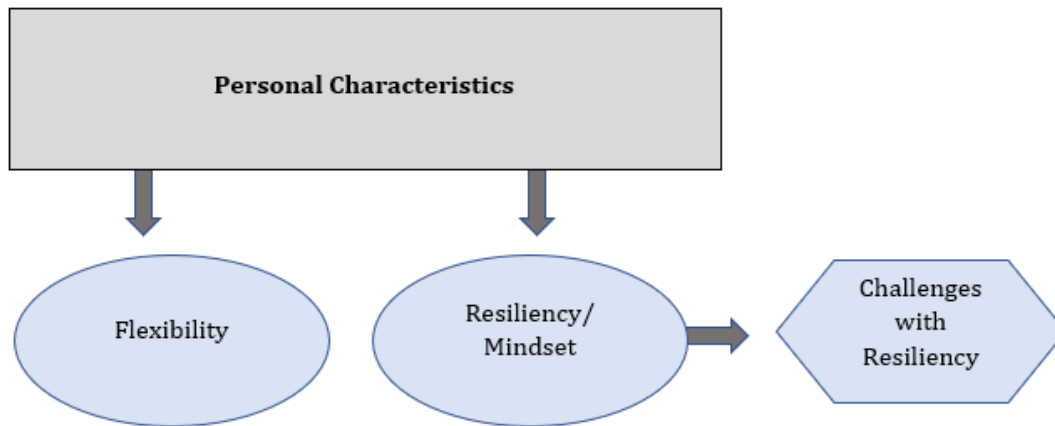
your life essentially.” SP1 and SP5 both asserted that they were established in the community and had no desire to add to their commute by finding employment in a neighboring district. Likewise, SSW1 shared that she started in the role because she had children in the district, but stayed for the community:

I guess when I started out, my sons were young. And matter of fact, my one son started his school career here, and then my other son was going into third grade when we first moved here, and I wanted to be part of a system where my sons were going to the same school system at that point. I mean, I was younger then; my sons were younger. So, I wanted to be part of the same school system for that main reason. And because I wanted to be in the same school system where I lived and where my community was.

The community's reputation was also a consideration for SN1, who lives in the district. While at a state conference, SN1 received positive feedback from other nurses across the state about the county. Additionally, when listening to what was happening in other counties, SN1 was able to determine that “this is a pretty good district to work in.”

Personal Characteristics

The data showed that noninstructional itinerants possess personal characteristics that make them well-suited for their positions in the public school system. These professionals report being flexible and able to adapt quickly to changes in their roles. It also shows that many noninstructional itinerants are resilient (see Figure 6). Some noninstructional itinerants see themselves as flexible or resilient but report a limit to what they can provide at their jobs.

Figure 6*Personal Characteristics and Identified Subthemes****Flexibility***

Earlier in Chapter 4, the researcher discussed the need to be responsive to various needs and the ability to adjust to different settings. Many changes impact noninstructional itinerants, and how these changes are approached may impact the satisfaction levels and longevity of these professionals. SP2 and SSW1 shared that the schedule must be highly flexible to accommodate MTSS meetings, 504 meetings, or IEP meetings; writing reports; working with kids; counseling; and consulting with parents, parent contacts, and teachers. SSW1 explained,

I think understanding that education, no matter where you're at is something that's going to always be evolving, something that's always going to be changing. So, if you approach it not as, oh my gosh, another change, I can't do this, I can't. I try to look at it in a way that it's something new that I can learn, something that is going to hopefully help me help my students and help my families. So, I want to be a part of that change if it's something that's going to be overall good. So, I think that's, that's one thing that I look at it, you know, even though sometimes it's hard, it's once you do achieve that change, you know, it's a great feeling.

SSW1's views on change indicate that the mindset of the noninstructional itinerant can have a profound impact on how they approach change. Itinerants who view change as an opportunity rather than a setback are less likely to see it as a

negative experience. SSW4 also shared that there is no typical day. There are days when she walks in the door, and it is nonstop, with a short break to go to the bathroom and eat some lunch. SSW4 shared, “Those are the kinds of crazy days, but I’m so used to it that I’m you know, I just kind of go with the flow.” SP1 shared what skills she has used and how her longevity has helped her learn how to handle unexpected changes:

The first thing that comes to mind is a lot of flexibility because there’s so much change, and the change is so rapid and without much forewarning. And so, it’s about being able to just go with the flow and push through it, and sometimes I use the, you know, the term like we are flying the plane as we build it, and that is often the experience I’ve had with my longevity here with the district is that changes are not piloted at certain schools. They’re not rolled out in an orderly manner. A lot of time and consideration, it seems that they’re just very spur of the moment, or at least that’s how we receive it because it’s like just one day we will have a meeting and be like, okay, here, this has changed. This is what we’re going to do from here on out. And these are some; we’re talking like big changes that impact our job daily. So, a big, big attribute to longevity here is flexibility.

This statement highlights the frustration that noninstructional itinerants can face when they are not advised of changes that affect their work. As this is reported to be a common experience, being able to adjust to impromptu changes is an important characteristic of successful noninstructional itinerants. Each noninstructional itinerant discussed that there is no typical day in their profession. SP1 noted that different schools could have different start times, which can put another demand on an itinerant’s schedule. SN5 shared that some days there are things that can get marked off the to-do list, and other days things come up, like a new diabetic student enrolling, that requires the school nurse to adjust their whole schedule. SN4 shared that it is a miracle if she accomplishes anything on her list of things to do each day. SN5 shared that longevity has helped her to prioritize what she needs to accomplish for the day and how she does not have to get everything done. With time and experience, she has found that she can say, “Oh, well, tomorrow. I’ll work on that list

tomorrow.” SP3 indicated that her adaptability comes from raising her children, who are all very different. SP3 posited that her adaptability and easygoing nature had served her well in her relationships with her administrators, where she has developed a high level of trust. Her principals all know she will do what she needs to get the job done.

In addition to assigned tasks, noninstructional itinerants often have to demonstrate flexibility in their site schedules. Although most noninstructional itinerants are scheduled at one school each day, that is not always realistic based on student needs. SP3 reported running from school to school some days. SN1 reported how quickly a day could change because of one of two unexpected things. SN1 provided an example of a teacher who forgot to let SN1 know that a group of students were going on a field trip. This oversight meant that medications had to be prepared, people had to be trained to administer the medications, and parent consents had to be obtained. The need for flexibility was also reported by SSW2, who shared that she enjoyed the variety of tasks she was engaged in during the day. SSW2 reported,

But I like what I do as a social worker. I feel like it's more well-rounded. I'm just not focusing on one part of the student. Like doing mental health all day. I think that would affect my mental health. So, I think having the ability to work on mental health one minute, then give a student some shoes, give another kid some, you know, some Christmas gifts, or working on a parent meeting, having a parent come in for an academic review. So, my day is so different that I think it's healthy for me to have different things, just not one thing that I do every day, every moment.

SSW2's statement shows that a variety of tasks is viewed as a benefit of the noninstructional itinerant role and each of the noninstructional itinerants in this study noted the task variety. In addition to the daily work in the schools, school nurses have other district-wide responsibilities. For example, the vision team travels to different schools across the district to conduct vision screenings. SN1 explained how each area has a team, and the district has three SPOT machines. It is the responsibility of the vision team members to conduct the screenings and print out the student referrals.

The student data are uploaded into a specialized system for nurses called CTMS so they can be tracked.

Resiliency/Mindset

When discussing the flexibility needed to meet students' needs, some noninstructional itinerants mentioned resiliency or demonstrated resiliency in their statements. SSW2 said that one's viewpoint is about perception, how one views things and then living for "those moments." SSW3 talked about never having the same day twice. She shared, "And I think that, depending on what you're looking for, is either a really good thing or a really bad thing. To me, I love that." SSW2 described herself as resilient, tenacious, and committed.

SSW4 asserted that it might be good for the school district to hire more people with experience who can look at the positives of the role, such as the good benefits and great schedule. More experienced professionals may not like some aspects of their role, but they may be better at identifying what they like because they know what it is like in other organizations. SP5 shared that while she believes some people in education are unhappy, she is happy. Although she knows there have been many changes, she "kind of just rolls with it." SP5 stated,

I definitely would rather have more time with the students than doing the clerical stuff. But I think it's just in the bigger picture, like I am the type of person that just rolls with it. I'm just like it has to be done. Complaining about it isn't going to help and overall, I'm happy. Like yes, like if I could redesign like how I spend my time, I would. Like, it's definitely not an ideal balance. Like, I would do more, more time with interventions and therapy with the, you know, time with the children. But I appreciate the time I have, and I feel like I am able to make an impact on the students that I am able to reach.

Although SP5 is not satisfied with every aspect of her role, she chooses to focus on the components of her job that she enjoys. Noninstructional itinerants who focus on the less desirable components of the work can influence their colleagues into having a more negative mindset as well, especially newer colleagues. When discussing newer noninstructional itinerants who are considering a change in

employment, SP5 advised that new people buffer themselves from negativity because complaining can impact a new person and their perspective. SP5 shared,

And I feel like I would ask them to just like look at the job and like appreciate the things that they do like about it. No job is perfect. Like, let's be realistic, it doesn't matter where you are. There's always gonna be things that you don't like, but like, just really to sit down and like what do you like about that job and like, maybe try to encourage them to expand their role in the things that they do like because I feel like our job does give us that flexibility. Like, if I want to do more counseling, I could be like, "Hey, like, give me five more cases in my team," and [redacted] would be like, "Yeah, like, here you go." So, I feel like there is that flexibility if you have the time and you can manage it. You can broaden the role that you want and kind of make the job what you want it, so I'd encourage them to look at those aspects of it.

This statement shows that, to some extent, a job is what one makes of it based on one's mindset. SN5 also shared that a positive attitude is essential when working in schools. SN4 talked about the difficulty of getting everyone to follow protocol and the need to stay positive when faced with these obstacles. SN4 shared that these barriers can be frustrating, but it is possible to work through them.

In addition to guarding against workplace negativity, another critical component related to resiliency is self-care. SSW4 noted that noninstructional itinerants are often involved in work that can be emotionally draining and may be associated with vicarious trauma. SSW4 asserted that understanding one's triggers and consistent self-care is essential in these jobs. SSW4 said,

And that takes a long time to kind of get that because when you first start, and you didn't matter what job you're in, there's certain ones that are, they're a trigger for you based on your own background. You have to learn, okay, this is something that upsets me. This is something that I have to go home and cry about, this is something I'm gonna worry about, because I don't know where that kid's gonna sleep tonight. And, you know, you get better at handling it as time goes on. But I have families and kids and adults that I've worked with over the years, that I still wonder, where are they? Are they okay? You know,

you never get over some of those situations, and it does wear on you. So, you have to learn, how do I cope with that? How do I deal with those situations? What do I need to do for self-care to make sure that it's not affecting me, you know, emotionally affecting my job, affecting whatever? So, what you will see I mean, I'm sure you've seen it that there are people in this field that they have not done what they need to do to work on themselves, and so they can't help others.

This finding shows that in order to be a resource to others, noninstructional itinerants must ensure they consistently engage in wellness and self-reflection. Vicarious trauma can impact professionals until it leads to burnout and an early exit from the field. It is not beneficial for students or families when professionals let the job expectations exhaust them.

Challenges with Resiliency

Although the amount of change that noninstructional itinerants experience may require a great deal of resiliency, daily challenges can push some professionals past their personal resiliency. SSW3 reported that she enjoys her role but has also struggled with burnout. SSW3 shared,

Yes, I'm frustrated I, I struggle with my value. And what I do is based on other people's changes that their, I want them to make, I want to see them make, or our attendance rate. And so, when our attendance is as terrible as it is, or I can have a conversation with you know, I mean, we had such a great conversation, you know, the kid really made some, some, you know, great gains, and I really see that this is going to be a change, then they're absent the very next day. I tend to take that personally; I think that's where a lot of my frustration comes from.

Despite the frustrations related to student behavior that does not improve, SSW3 reported having one or two kids a year who flourish and who serve as her source of inspiration. She recognizes that there are wins and losses, but there are times when she reported having to “change my, my lens a little bit more frequently.” This was unlike SSW3, another professional who is struggling and reported not

enjoying the job; that professional is considering other work options but unsure of her next steps.

One noninstructional itinerant also reported that some potential changes in Florida legislation could be the tipping point when considering an early exit. SP2, will not work in the school setting if teachers are allowed to carry concealed weapons. SP2 stated,

So, I'm waiting for further clarification and guidance on all of it, to see where it's going to see if it still aligns with my professional and personal philosophy and ethics. I don't want us to go backwards. And I'm concerned we're going backwards.

Although these decisions are not made at the local level, this finding shows that resiliency can be impacted by decisions made at the state or federal level. As these factors are not things that the school district has control over, noninstructional itinerants have to make personal decisions related to these factors. If enough school district employees express concern over decisions made at the state level, they can have lobbyists work on their behalf.

Documentation Analysis Findings

In the communication analysis of the frequency of emails, calls, texts, and meetings between tenured and less-tenured noninstructional itinerants and their direct supervisors was reviewed. As Table 3 shows, the frequency of these communications was recorded by the direct supervisor of each noninstructional itinerant group and documented as directive, requesting, or informational (consultative). The actual substance of the communication was not reviewed.

Table 3*Communication Between Direct-Report Supervisors and Noninstructional Itinerants*

Correspondence	Tenured		Less-Tenured		Both	
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2	Week 1	Week 2
Directive Email	3	3	4	3	2	0
Requesting Email	5	2	14	8	1	0
Informational Email	7	10	16	19	3	6
Directive Texts	5	2	0	0	0	0
Requesting Texts	1	5	3	4	5	3
Informational Texts	17	9	15	10	2	0
Directive Calls	1	4	4	2	0	0
Requesting Calls	6	9	4	3	0	0
Informational Calls	7	11	4	8	0	0
Directive Meetings	2	2	0	3	1	0
Requesting Meetings	1	2	2	2	0	1
Informational Meetings	6	3	7	2	2	0

There were a total of 134 communications during the first week of data collection and 126 during the second week, for a combined total of 260 documented communications to either tenured or less-tenured professionals. The most used communication over the 2 weeks was informational emails, informational calls, and informational texts. When considering the communication between tenured and less-tenured, 67% of the informational emails were sent to less-tenured staff, and 60% of the informational calls were to tenured staff. An equitable number of informational texts were sent to tenured and less-tenured professionals.

After the first week of data collection between supervisors and noninstructional itinerants, not including combined communication, tenured professionals had 61 documented communications, while less-tenured professionals had 73 documented communications. After the second week, tenured professionals had 62 documented communications compared to 64 with less-tenured professionals. Tenured professionals made up only 20% of the noninstructional itinerant group, yet communications with this group account for 47% of the total communication to employees (not including communication that included both groups) during the first week and 49% during the second week.

During Week 1 of data collection, less-tenured professionals received 74% of requesting emails and 70% of informational emails during the first week of data collection. Tenured professionals received 64% of informational calls. During Week 2, tenured staff received 75% of requesting calls and 61% of informational calls. Less-tenured staff received 80% of requesting emails and 66% of informational emails.

Observation Analysis Findings

For each noninstructional itinerant subgroup, the researcher conducted a direct observation at a staff meeting. Each observation was a minimum of 2 hours. During observations, the seating arrangements, informal interactions, and professional interactions of tenured professionals were noted.

School Nurses

The researcher observed all school nurses in a staff meeting on December 12, 2022. During this observation, two school nurses with longevity, who were also participants in this study, were absent; therefore, it was determined that another meeting would be observed in addition to the December staff meeting. During the December staff meeting, the three school nurses with longevity sat at one table. Two other school nurses with longevity sat at tables with newer nurses. Three questions were asked at the end of the session, one by a school nurse with longevity. The question was about where the training materials could be located for future reference.

During the second observation on January 20, 2023, a local hospital facilitated a whole-group training. Prior to the formal part of the training, all school nurses interacted with each other. Three tenured nurses were talking at one side of the room. Four other tenured nurses were talking to less-tenured school nurses. When seated in a circle formation, three tenured staff were seated together on one side of the circle, and two tenured staff were seated together on the other side. Two tenured staff were seated next to less-tenured school nurses. After the presentation, the first three questions were asked by less-tenured staff. A tenured school nurse made a clarifying statement related to district processes. That same tenured staff member then went on to compare how the procedure is handled in the hospital to the school setting.

During a break, one tenured school nurse walked over to check on a pregnant less-tenured colleague. In another part of the room, two tenured professionals were interacting with two less-tenured colleagues. After the break, less-tenured professionals commented on the training, asked a question, and presented a scenario to the group. Two tenured staff shared district-wide concerns. A less-tenured school nurse shared a concern, and then two-tenured school nurses each shared an additional concern.

School Psychologists

On January 25, 2023, the school psychologists' meeting was held with the school psychologists seated in a circle formation. Three tenured staff were seated together in one part of the circle, two were seated together in another part of the circle, and three were seated next to less-tenured professionals. The meeting started with a staff "share out" led by a tenured school psychologist, and both tenured and less-tenured professionals shared with the larger group during this time. After a review of new information, a less-tenured school psychologist asked a clarifying question. The supervisor answered the question with follow-up clarification provided by a tenured professional.

After this "share out," the group reviewed goals they had created at the beginning of the year. They were tasked with revising their goals or creating new ones and volunteers were asked to share their goals with the group. No tenured school psychologists shared their goals with the larger group. During the group discussion, two less-tenured professionals shared a problem they were having, followed by two suggestions by tenured school psychologists. When the final item was presented, a tenured school psychologist asked a question. A tenured colleague provided a suggestion in response to the question.

School Social Workers

On February 3, 2023, the school social workers were observed as a group. The seating was in seven rows, with seven professionals in each row. Several school social workers were seated in the far back corner. Two tenured professionals were seated together in the second row on the far right side of the room, two were seated in the middle of the room toward the middle of their row, and one was seated in the

third row on the far right. All of the tenured school social workers were interacting with their less-tenured colleagues. The seating arrangement did not allow for much interaction once the presentations started. After a brief presentation, six questions were asked, two by the same tenured professional.

During a second presentation, the presenter asked how many people felt their caseloads were too high. Approximately 15 professionals out of the 60 who were present raised their hands. After the second presentation, four questions were asked, two by the same tenured professional who asked a question after the first presentation. Clarification to one part of the presentation was provided by a tenured professional and one less-tenured professional. A concern regarding current practice was presented by a less-tenured professional.

In the third and last part of the meeting, a tenured professional presented to the group. This SSW shared that another tenured professional had secured vouchers for family dental insurance. At the conclusion of the presentation, four questions were asked, one of which was asked by a tenured colleague. One suggestion was made by a tenured colleague.

Theory Analysis

When looking at various frameworks that may be related to employee longevity, factors such as employee characteristics, job characteristics, empowerment, job satisfaction, and commitment were explored. During theory analysis, it was not meaningful to directly compare theories based on the frequency of their evidence in the transcription. For some theories, such as self-determination theory, there are three factors that need to be noted for it to be deemed present: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Conversely, with Herzberg's two-factor theory, evidence of any hygiene factor or motivation factors must be noted for this theory to be deemed present. Given this need to identify multiple factors, it would be expected that the frequency count would be much higher for Herzberg's two-factor theory than for self-determination theory.

Additionally, some theories aligned with each other, such as work as a calling and person-job fit. Several times, participants reported loving their job, which would

fit into both categories. Table 4 shows the number of times the theory was noted in this study. Although a direct correlation cannot be made between the theories or with the theories and longevity, the table below provides information to be used for discussion and suggestions for future research, which are addressed in Chapter 5.

Table 4

Theories Noted During Analysis

Theories	Number of Times Noted
Human Capital Theory	74
Self-Determination Theory	19
Person-Environment Fit	27
Person-Job Fit	29
Person-Organization Fit	38
Social Exchange Theory	46
Work as a Calling	32
Job Embeddedness Theory	24
Job-Demands Resources	49
Conservation of Resources	17
Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment	32
Psychological Empowerment Theory	9
Locke's Range of Effect	24
Equity Theory	21
Herzberg's Two Factor Theory	65
Hygiene	43
Motivation	22
Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Theory	25
Affective Commitment	20
Normative Commitment	3
Continuance Commitment	2

Summary

Several themes emerged through an analysis of the information shared by each participant: passion/purpose, expertise, working conditions, connections, and personal characteristics. There were 14 subthemes that emerged under the five overarching themes. These subthemes were: autonomy, mentoring, lack of purpose, work schedules, salaries/benefits, workload, workspace, connections with administrators, colleagues and the community, flexibility, resiliency, and challenges with resiliency. The noninstructional itinerants in this study had a wide variety of experiences, and their interpretations of each experience were highly individualized.

Almost 80% of the study participants reported loving their jobs and being passionate about their work. Having passion and purpose and believing that the work was meaningful and improved students' lives was more important to these professionals than money. The professionals who talked less about their passion and purpose struggled with the workload, salary, and work expectation inequities, or challenging interpersonal relationships. These factors can significantly impact the day-to-day work of a noninstructional itinerant, but it is also possible for these things to change. Workload and interpersonal relationships can be changed with a school reassignment or support from other colleagues. Concerns with salary and work expectations are factors that are more difficult to change because noninstructional itinerants and their supervisors have less control over these areas.

Another factor individuals have little control over, but emerged as the most significant working condition reported by all participants was the work schedule. The schedule provided opportunities for noninstructional itinerants to have the same work schedule as their children or a job in another setting, such as a hospital or community agency. For one professional, the school schedule provided a sense of closure each year and a sense of hope in each new year. Even with a good schedule, three professionals struggled with the workload, while others reported finding ways to create work-life boundaries by not taking work home.

Similar to discussions related to the work schedule, all tenured professionals also mentioned the theme of workplace connections. Many noted that school administrators did not completely understand the role of noninstructional itinerants. Although all participants mentioned the potential challenges with administration, only three noted their own experiences and many shared information that other professionals had shared with them. Conversely, 93% of participants shared information about their positive relationships, including two of the three that shared personal concerns. Additionally, personal characteristics such as the need for flexibility and resiliency were reported at some level by all 14 participants.

Another component of the relationships that noninstructional have with administrators is the level and type of communication shared between these two groups. A review of the communication showed that tenured professionals made up

only 20% of the population but accounted for almost half of the communications through email, text, phone, and meetings. There were more emails to nontenured staff, more phone calls to tenured staff, and a relatively even number of texts between the groups. The number of meetings reported for both groups was low.

A source of information used in addition to the communication review was direct observation of noninstructional itinerant groups. Observations conducted of the school psychologists and the school nurses showed that tenured professionals interact with each other and interact with less-tenured staff. Tenured staff ask questions, offer suggestions, and provide clarifications when less-tenured noninstructional itinerants ask questions. The leadership provided by tenured professionals was also noted in the observation of school social workers where a tenured professional presented to the group. Although both tenured and less-tenured professionals asked questions, more tenured professionals offered clarification and suggestions to the group in response to questions.

Considering all of the documentation and information in its totality, there are several theories that can be associated with longevity. Evidence of each of the 16 theories used in the interpretive phenomenological analysis was noted during data analysis. Human capital, job-demands resource, and Herzberg's two-factor theory were the theories that were identified at a high level during coding, but the frequency does not diminish the importance of considering the other theories when considering longevity. These theories and the identified themes are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

School nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists are all noninstructional itinerant employees who are critical to the work of K–12 public but schools but retaining them is becoming increasingly more difficult. Considering that the average longevity of an employee between the ages of 25–38 is less than 3 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020b), increasing employee longevity is challenging for school districts that hire noninstructional itinerants. Vacancies in these positions are detrimental, as these professionals are often the only ones who can complete the specialized work required in their roles. Additionally, noninstructional itinerants are vital members of the school’s mental health team. With the mental health needs of students on the rise, vacancies in these positions have a direct and negative impact on the support that students receive (Wang et al., 2021).

Despite the need to retain these professionals, there is a gap in the current research on the longevity of school nurses, school psychologists, or school social workers. Through the current study, the researcher sought to fill this gap in the literature by examining the individual work experiences of 14 noninstructional itinerants with 10 or more years of experience through individual interviews, a review of communication, and group observations. In this chapter, the researcher reviews the themes that emerged from data collection, study limitations, implications for study findings, and recommendations for future research.

Background

Many challenges are related to these positions, as professionals working in an itinerant capacity are assigned to support multiple schools. Traveling between multiple schools can make it more difficult to establish strong relationships with administrators and colleagues, and this work can be isolating (Yonkaitis, 2018). There is often considerable role confusion, and other staff in the school do not understand the role of noninstructional itinerants (Houlahan, 2018; Houlahan & Deveneau, 2019). This lack of understanding means these professionals are often underutilized or asked to perform tasks outside of their scope of practice (Anderson et al., 2018; Finigan-Carr & Shaia, 2018).

Unlike their instructional colleagues, noninstructional itinerants can work in several settings, such as hospitals, private offices, and community agencies. These opportunities may not require travel and may provide professionals with more opportunities to work directly with others in their field, reducing the isolation that some itinerants experience. Employment in these settings may come with a higher salary and a decreased workload. Given the myriad of challenges that noninstructional itinerants in the K–12 public school face, it is important to explore how school administrators can create an environment that supports longevity.

The purpose of this research was to understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant K–12 staff with longevity. In this study, the researcher collected data in the form of firsthand experiences of noninstructional itinerant staff (school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers) currently working in the K–12 public school system who have been in their role for at least 10 years. These experiences were reviewed in order to answer the central research question in this study:

1. Why do the noninstructional itinerant personnel in the K–12 public school system stay?

The findings of this study contribute to the literature by identifying factors that support the longevity of noninstructional itinerants in K–12 public schools. These results are theoretically relevant as they consider the 16 theories that may be related to longevity. Additionally, these results have practical significance, as school administrators can work to ensure that conditions are in place that support longevity in their schools. The researcher examined the individual experiences of 14 noninstructional itinerants to better understand the itinerant experience and what each individual with longevity views as important to their role. The researcher also analyzed a log of the communication between noninstructional itinerants with longevity and their direct supervisors. Finally, information gathered from direct observations of the subgroups was used to determine whether noninstructional itinerants' actions aligned with the information shared during individual interviews.

No known studies included these three noninstructional groups when looking at longevity. Although these findings are individualized, a comparison of the data

provided by the 14 participants showed that these professionals had several factors that several participants discussed. The five common themes that eventually emerged can be used to inform possible study implications and ideas for future research.

Discussion of Major Findings

In this study, the noninstructional itinerants had varied work experiences and unique perspectives regarding these experiences. There were differences in tenure, gender, workload, and relationships that all potentially impacted the experiences of noninstructional itinerants in the public school system. Despite the myriad of individual differences among participants, multiple participants shared similar information in several areas, resulting in the five overarching themes. The overarching themes were *passion and purpose, expertise, working conditions, and connections*.

Passion and Purpose in Employees with Longevity

One of the most significant findings was the passion and purpose that noninstructional itinerants bring to the role in the public school system. With many options outside of the public school system available to them, which would likely come with a larger salary and a smaller caseload, many individuals stay because they find deep meaning in their work. In this study, higher job satisfaction levels were associated with the participants who reported having the greatest passion for the work. The finding aligns with those of Yalabik et al. (2017), who found that out of nine facets of job satisfaction, the work itself was the most critical facet.

In another study regarding passion and purpose, Alexander et al. (2020) cited that a strong interest in one's work can influence longevity. Although the present study is qualitative in nature, the information that study participants shared regarding their passion and purpose supports these previous findings. In this study, 93% of the participants noted that the sense of purpose they got from their work was a reason they stayed in their roles, even when other opportunities with lower caseloads and increased salaries were available.

Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) found that psychological satisfaction was such a significant motivator that people chose it over monetary incentives. Likewise, this

finding was noted in the current study, as four participants specifically noted that making a difference in the lives of students and their families outweighed the salary. Overwhelmingly, participants working as school-based nurses, psychologists, and social workers enjoyed their work and believed they were making a difference. Several participants talked about the importance of being able to help students meet their goals and the belief that their work had long-lasting impacts on the lives of their students and their families.

When looking at longevity and organizational commitment, Scales and Quincy Brown (2020) found that 226 social workers with 15 or more years of employment within an organization had higher levels of organizational commitment. The longevity in the current study was based on employment within the organization for 10 or more years. In the current study, 11 participants exhibited higher levels of OC, two exhibited moderate levels, and one exhibited lower levels. As the study of Scales and Quincy Brown was quantitative and based specifically on OC, a direct comparison between the studies cannot be made; however, with 79% of the participants exhibiting high levels of OC, the findings in this study are somewhat aligned with those of Scales and Quincy Brown.

The noninstructional itinerant employees who expressed lower satisfaction in their role reported a lack of purpose. In the experiences where participants reported lower satisfaction levels, they were more engaged with paperwork and processes than with people. This finding corroborated those of Kohlfürst et al. (2022), who determined that the doctors in their study had the lowest levels of job satisfaction when completing paperwork and not using their professional skills. Additionally, two participants still found passion and purpose in the role, but felt the job lacked a sense of balance because they spent most of their time engaged in less fulfilling tasks. Notably, these low levels of job satisfaction and work engagement are not static and can change based on interventions such as changes in work expectations or leadership (Murphy, 2018).

Even when identifying the need for change, one school nurse noted that every job would have preferred and nonpreferred components. This statement indicates that this school nurse will work toward change, yet recognizes that all jobs have benefits

and drawbacks. The experiences of one SSW showed that it is possible to be productive and still have a strong sense of purpose despite some concerns with working conditions, such as a high workload.

Employees with Longevity and Working Conditions

Several workplace conditions were discussed by the noninstructional itinerants in this study: schedule, pension/retirement, workload, and workspace. The pension was considered a significant perk by the four professionals who discussed this workplace benefit. Workload and workspace were mentioned as positives by some participants and negatives by others depending on their personal experiences or the experiences they had heard about from their colleagues. The workplace condition noted as a benefit by every participant was the 10-month, Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. schedule.

In a study involving workplace conditions, Yalabik et al. (2017) considered nine facets of work and their relation to job satisfaction: nature of the work, operating conditions, pay, benefits, rewards, promotions, supervision, coworkers, and communication. They found that working conditions such as workload were closely associated with decreased job satisfaction. These findings were corroborated when Hellín Gil et al. (2022) reported a direct correlation between low job satisfaction and high workloads. The finding of these two studies aligned with the experiences of two participants in the current study, but not the majority.

Even though most participants mentioned the workload in some capacity, sometimes comparing it to the smaller caseload found in other organizations, the discussions about public school workloads were not necessarily negative. Two participants felt overwhelmed by the part of the workload they disliked, such as paperwork. Others indicated that the workload was much less than it used to be or that they had found ways to manage it. Still others talked about how having an intern could increase a noninstructional itinerant's workload early in the relationship and reduce it once the intern became more proficient and could work independently. The satisfaction of training an intern mitigated any negative feelings about the increased workload associated with having an intern.

When the workload increases, it can be more difficult for individuals to maintain a work-life balance, so administrators must look for ways to support WLB. A study conducted by Thakur and Bhatnagar (2017) showed that supporting a work-life balance and supporting professionals with alternative work schedules or daycare options are strong motivators for individuals to maintain their employment in an organization. These findings are supported by the current study, as one factor mentioned by all of the study participants was a schedule conducive to having a family. The school district does not offer daycare, but does offer a schedule that is conducive to accessing daycare. With school-aged children, noninstructional itinerants can often have their children attend one of the schools where they are assigned.

The results of the current study showed that the work schedule was directly aligned with work-life balance, as most study participants reported that they wanted to be on their children's school schedule. Others liked the schedule so they could work at another job in their field, such as a hospital or community agency. Khateeb (2021) noted that the extensive research on WLB could be divided into several areas: "behavioral/personal, organizational, temporal/role, and boundary/equilibrium" (p. 29). Boundary/equilibrium, one category identified in Khateeb's research on WLB, is directly related to factors that can influence the competing priorities between work and personal life such as one's work schedule.

Another factor reported by the noninstructional itinerants that increases their workload is that some employees are hired from out of the county and work remotely. Noninstructional itinerants who work on-site do not have the assistance of colleagues to help with high workloads because of their colleagues' physical location. This finding supported previous findings of Wax et al. (2022), who determined that working from home can decrease organizational behaviors and connectedness. As administrators become more innovative in their hiring processes due to staff shortages, the impact on existing staff workload and morale must be considered.

In addition to workload, another working condition, workspace, emerged as a critical subtheme. With workspace, four participants mentioned the experiences of other professionals they worked with who had shared challenges with them, even if

they were not personally experiencing these challenges. Maher and von Hippel (2005) found that working in open spaces can impact an individual's distraction level and ability to complete more complex tasks. Additionally, the lack of privacy could influence job satisfaction, depending on the individual's perception of privacy. When noninstructional itinerants are assigned to workspaces in the front office or a room with several other itinerants, distractions are increased while privacy is decreased. All three subgroups in this study have roles that require them to work closely with families and discuss private matters. When evaluating students, school psychologists must have an area with no distractions.

Beyond the challenges that an inadequate workspace can present related to meeting job responsibilities, four participants spoke very directly about the psychological implications. The participants who shared either personal or colleagues' experiences with inadequate workspace equated that with not being valued. The belief was that if an administrator puts a noninstructional itinerant in the front office, they do not understand the role. Therefore, the assumption was made that if an administrator does not care to understand these professional roles, they do not care about the people in these roles.

Employees with Longevity and Workplace Connections

Another significant finding of this study was the potential impact of the school district administration on longevity. The tenured professionals discussed the wide variations in administrative support and understanding of the noninstructional itinerant role. In a study that included nurses in the hospital setting, Stewart et al., (2020) discovered an increase in intent to leave when nurses were given duties beyond or below the scope of their ability.

Many studies in the current literature evaluate the impact of administrative support. Yalabik et al. (2017) noted that when an employee's goals, values, and opinions were considered, the result was higher employee enthusiasm and engagement. The input and opinions from the tenured staff were evident in the communication review, which showed that supervisors are likelier to call tenured staff than they are less-tenured staff. Supervisors report having a more established

relationship with these professionals and calling them for consultation on various topics.

Tlaiss et al. (2017) determined that positive connections between supervisors and employees were critical for talent retention. Likewise, Walker and Clendon (2018) found that a lack of supervisory support was the primary reason nurses left their roles. This finding is completely aligned with the findings in the current study, where every participant talked about their relationships with their school-based administrators. Two noninstructional itinerants even reported that the principal can “make or break you.”

Tenured professionals who reported more positive relationships with administrators shared that open communication and having administrators who got to know them as people. The noninstructional itinerants who had stronger relationships with the administration reported being valued for their expertise and being in schools with higher inclusion levels. Even included participants believed that there were opportunities for greater inclusion in school events outside of the more prominent holiday celebrations or back-to-school events. In contrast, working with administrators who do not understand the noninstructional itinerant role and do not utilize these professionals resulted in lower job satisfaction.

Study participants noted that a critical component of longevity and the relationship with administrators is that professionals have more voice in their school assignments. This finding aligns with the recent research of Zhou et al. (2021), in which the scholars found a positive correlation between job embeddedness and employee voice. Increased organizational voice in noninstructional itinerants with longevity means that more experienced professionals can leave schools where they do not feel supported by the administrators. The unintended consequence of this benefit to more-tenured staff means that new people may start in the role in a school where they feel less valued, resulting in an early exit from the organization. This turnover increases the workload of the professionals with longevity who are responsible for the orientation, mentorship, and training of new staff.

Although the experiences with administrators were varied, the experiences with colleagues were overwhelmingly positive. Study participants enjoyed

networking, teamwork, and sharing expertise with colleagues. These findings were supported by observation data showing tenured employees in every subgroup interacting with less-tenured and tenured employees. One participant reported staying in the school district primarily because of the strong relationships she had developed with her colleagues. She noted that she could work with students in many different organizations, but would not have the same team approach in a hospital or community agency found in the public school setting.

In addition to connecting with administrators, noninstructional itinerants value their relationships with colleagues. Al-Madi et al. (2017) found that collegial relationships motivated the 97 study participants more than salary. Although all participants in the current study noted the importance of workplace connections, none of the participants reported that these relationships were more motivating than money. The only factor that participants identified as more important than money was having a career that provided a sense of purpose.

Another benefit of collegial connections is an increase in available resources. Teasley (2018) asserted that school social workers should continue working collaboratively to secure student resources. The current study's findings align with Teasley's study, as all participants in the current study, regardless of subgroup, noted the importance of collaboration. The school nurses shared that many of the professionals in their subgroup come to the school district with expertise in a specific area of nursing which significantly increases the benefits of collaboration. Conversely, Jaskyte and Lee (2009) noted that social workers demonstrated lower levels of OC when working with various groups with different expectations. The current study did not support these findings, as several participants noted that working at different sites kept the job interesting.

Finally, a factor that may negatively impact workplace connections is that supervisors might have to hire noninstructional itinerants that may conduct the itinerant job or parts of their job remotely due to staff shortages. Significant changes in workplace environments may have a negative impact on workplace relationship development. This assertion is confirmed by Wax et al. (2022), who found that virtual work opportunities can negatively impact connectedness in addition to the

negative impact on workloads. This lack of connectedness could also result in an early exit from the organization.

Employees with Longevity and Expertise

For the participants in this study, along with longevity came a level of either organizational or field expertise. Collins (2017) asserted that:

An expert in some domain is a matter of becoming embedded in the social life of the domain, acquiring what is, to a large extent, tacit knowledge, so as to internalize the associated concepts and skillful actions to the point of fluency.
(p. 67)

This definition is aligned with the expertise of the noninstructional itinerants who were highly embedded in the work and developed high degrees of fluency. One school psychologist discussed how she intuitively knows what evaluations need to be conducted; this skill cannot be taught in schools. This tacit knowledge is another component of expertise that results in the ability to perform specialized tasks and make complex decisions (Ericsson, 2013).

This finding supports current research conducted by Ott et al. (2018) showing that supervisors could motivate employees by empowering them through active roles within the organization. Desai (2016) similarly found that school psychologists who supervise interns have an average longevity of 11 years, indicating that leadership positions may support professional longevity. The participants in the current study also reported that having active leadership roles in the organization is essential to them. These leadership roles can involve things such as training interns, lead roles within their subgroups, or offering professional development opportunities. The information gathered from the observations showed that noninstructional itinerants take an active role in leading professional development or offering constructive feedback and suggestions to colleagues during professional development.

Additionally, the current body of literature indicates that supervisors empower employees through activities such as feedback meetings, coaching, and opportunities for professional development (Hu et al., 2019; Ott et al., 2018). Although coaching and professional development were not factors that emerged in the current study, opportunities to meet for feedback were discussed by more than half of the

participants. The opportunity to mentor or train others emerged as a significant part of the tenured professionals' roles. A majority of the participants in the study were engaged in some activity beyond the typical work, whether it was having an intern, being a department lead, or being a trainer. For noninstructional itinerants in school nursing, three participants shared that many nurses come into school nursing with high levels of expertise in a specific area, such as mental health, so expertise in public schools is not just related to longevity. School nurses who have been in the school system would be the experts in school nursing, which comes with state and district rules and procedures specific to work in public schools.

It is important to note that not all participants in the study considered themselves experts, even though all asserted that others would come to them with questions. One participant did not want to be considered an expert simply because of her longevity. Ericsson (2013) concurred with this assertion, noting that doing something for a long time can enhance automaticity but not necessarily expertise. Instead, Ericsson posited that expertise requires the identification of goals and deliberately working to improve performance. Several participants noted that they felt like experts in an area of their work or in school district processes and procedures. It is important to note that the professionals in this study reported working with many experts who did not have organizational longevity but may have extensive experience in their field.

Although some participants were reluctant to consider themselves experts, one third felt they had expertise in specific areas of work. In contrast, two other participants mentioned having expertise in organizational processes and procedures. For two participants, it took having an intern to realize that they were experts. Because so much of the job came naturally to them, they did not realize their level of expertise until they had to explain every aspect of the work to someone else.

One of the subthemes of expertise, autonomy, was noted as a longevity benefit. Barslund et al. (2019) found that autonomy was one of four factors that resulted in at least a brief delay in retirement, with the other three being pressure, perceived support, and job security. Although some level of autonomy is found in all noninstructional itinerant positions, as they are the only individuals in the school who

can complete their jobs, this autonomy increases with longevity. Increased expertise related to school district procedures and more developed coping strategies for handling workloads resulted in even more autonomy. School district administrators can provide oversight without decreasing autonomy by setting up scheduled times to meet with noninstructional itinerants to ensure that critical information and updates are communicated.

Employees with Longevity and Personal Characteristics

In addition to workplace and job-related themes, personal characteristics emerged as an essential component of the noninstructional itinerants in this study. The two personal characteristics noted in this study were flexibility and resiliency. The wide variety of work-related tasks, many of which arise unexpectedly, increase the need for flexibility on the part of noninstructional itinerants. The more flexible professionals enjoyed engaging in different tasks throughout the day. Even the participants who talked about the need to be flexible due to oversights by other colleagues (e.g., not putting in for a field trip in advance to allow time to prepare medication and train staff) expressed that they had the experience needed to make quick adjustments.

The findings in the current research related to personal characteristics are supported by research conducted by Capper et al. (2020), who found that coping skills and resilience were related to longevity. The findings of the current study showed that participants who demonstrated the greatest resiliency discussed how they could work through difficult situations with staff, families, and students. Kohlfürst et al. (2022) cited that doctors with tenure are better able to handle higher workloads and work-related stress. The more experienced doctors in this study had well-developed coping strategies, increased knowledge, and increased self-confidence, resulting in increased resiliency (Kohlfürst et al., 2022). These findings align with those of the current study, as several participants discussed how their longevity and the range of their experiences had prepared them to complete work more efficiently. One participant also discussed how her extensive experience helps her work through vicarious trauma from the challenges of working through difficult situations with students.

Discussion of Theories

Evidence of each theory was noted in some parts of the itinerant experience. The four theories highly aligned with the themes that emerged through the data analysis process were human capital, social exchange theory, job-demands resources, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Three other theories with a high level of alignment are Kanter's theory of structural empowerment, work as a calling, and person-organization fit. The tenured professionals in this study demonstrated high levels of human capital through their experience, education, and skills. They are each educated in a specialty area that utilizes their professional skills and extensive experience in their role in and to train others.

Human capital is the combination of experience, education, and skills that an individual possesses (Myers et al., 2004). This human capital is closely aligned with the competency noted in self-determination theory. Although not one of this study's most frequently noted theories, SDT involves autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2014). All three components are noted in these tenured professionals. In this study, noninstructional itinerants with longevity have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their competence. These professionals have high levels of autonomy, more than many professionals in the public school system, due to the inherent nature of their roles. Additionally, the relatedness of these employees is noted through their connections with students, families, colleagues, and administrators. All of the noninstructional itinerants in this study supported other professionals through the supervision of an intern, mentoring, supporting less-tenured colleagues, and facilitating professional development opportunities. This high level of connectedness is also evidenced in the frequency of social exchange theory notations. The tenured professionals in this study emphasized the exchange of information between tenured and less-tenured colleagues.

The relevance of the job-demand resources theory is evidenced by the noninstructional itinerants' ability to work through high demands and maintain high job satisfaction levels. Various experiences were shared where these noninstructional professionals utilized personal resources such as resiliency and optimism (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). They also exhibited high levels of self-efficacy because they had the

personal resources (i.e., skills and abilities) to perform their roles competently (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Similarly, tenured professionals used their resources and support to complete their work-related tasks as identified as part of Kanter's theory of structural empowerment. The tenure of these employees provides them with more opportunities to participate in decision-making and demonstrate professional power through their autonomy and collaboration with peers (Baruch, 1998). Through the development of relationships in the schools they have worked at, sometimes for an extended period, there are colleagues, school administrators, and supervisors that trust them. This increased trust is evidenced by the leadership roles they hold within the organization and the number of colleagues who reach out to them for support daily. These opportunities help increase the person-organization fit for these professionals. The overwhelming majority enjoyed working in the public school system and the opportunity that the job provided for an excellent work-life balance. They love networking with other professionals and supporting students and families.

This support of students and their families is most closely aligned with the work as a calling theory. These professionals reported the deep level of purpose and meaning they get from their work. Several participants reported that being a school nurse, school psychologist, or school social worker is the best job ever and that they could not see themselves working in any other profession. These individuals report enjoying the work, and a majority have high levels of alignment with their organization, resulting in a strong person-organization fit. They discussed being able to retire but still wanting to work—and, once retired, coming back to work in the district part-time or as a volunteer.

Finally, for the purposes of categorization, Herzberg's two-factor theory could be used to categorize job-related factors into two overarching areas: hygiene factors and motivational factors. Herzberg noted that hygiene factors included salary, benefits, working conditions, workplace relationships, and job security (Bhatt et al., 2022). The hygiene factors identified in this study were working conditions and relationships. Herzberg's two-factor theory categorizes motivational factors as things such as growth, recognition, meaningful work, and authority (Bhatt et al., 2022). The

identified themes related to motivation were passion and purpose, expertise, mentoring, and autonomy.

Herzberg's theory asserts that motivational factors are directly related to job satisfaction (Chu & Kuo, 2015). Although hygiene factors do not result in job satisfaction, their absence can result in dissatisfaction (Chu & Kuo, 2015). The participants in this study spent a considerable amount of time discussing hygiene factors. Even if hygiene factors do not increase job satisfaction, factors such as the work schedule impact WLB, directly affecting satisfaction (Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017). One professional noted that she stays in her role because she has amazing colleagues. These connections would also be categorized as hygiene factors, which Herzberg asserted do not lead to job satisfaction (Chu & Kuo, 2015). The current participants' focus on workplace connections seems to impact job satisfaction directly.

Conversely, other hygiene factors, such as salary, did not seem to have as great of an impact on job satisfaction, and 13 out of the 14 participants asserted that the sense of purpose they found through their work outweighed the importance of salary. Additional considerations related to the true impact of motivation and hygiene factors are reviewed later in this chapter in the section on recommendations for future research.

Study Limitations

The results of this study yielded deep and rich data regarding the experiences of 14 noninstructional itinerants in a K–12 public school setting with organizational tenure of at least 10 years. Despite the wealth of information shared by participants, there are still limitations to this study that must be considered when viewing the results and attempting to generalize these results to other sample populations. Some limitations related to this study include the geographical area of the study, the study population and sampling method, and the study design.

One limitation of this study is that it was conducted in one school district in the southeastern United States, so the results may not be generalizable to other school districts in this or other areas in the United States. Information was gathered from

three specific subgroups (school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers), and these experiences cannot be generalized to professionals employed in other positions in the public school setting. Likewise, the information gathered in this study cannot be generalized to nurses, psychologists, and social workers who work in a professional setting outside of the public school system. The interpretive phenomenological analysis used in this study looks at participants' varied experiences, which may have similarities but are also highly individualized. With an IPA, it is recommended that a homogenous sample be used to compare results (Pringle et al., 2011). Although the sample in this study was comprised of all noninstructional itinerants, there are some variances in the subgroups due to the low number of individuals who represent this sample. Future studies may be conducted with just one subgroup.

In addition to the limited geographical scope of the researcher, this study also used convenience sampling and was conducted in the researcher's place of employment. Though precautions were taken, it must be noted that this familiarity could have skewed the participants' responses if they were trying to provide the researcher with a response that they believed the researcher wanted, rather than their authentic experiences. This same study could be replicated with participants selected in another way, such as purposeful sampling through collaboration with a professional organization and not in conjunction with convenience sampling to help mitigate any concerns with skewed responses.

Another limitation may be the information shared by the participants, whose perspectives may have been influenced by COVID-19 or Hurricane Ian, which impacted much of the southeastern United States in the fall of 2022, when this study was conducted. Significant leadership changes within this district may have impacted the participant responses. A longitudinal study with these participants over 1 year or multiple years may have helped to mitigate some of these temporary influences. Depending on the time between data collection, longitudinal studies on longevity may be challenging to conduct using the same population due to retirements, promotions, or attrition for various reasons.

A final limitation of this study is the use of the IPA design, which does not result in a specific answer to a question but instead explores experiences while noting the researcher's previous experiences and potential bias (Pringle et al., 2011). The researcher of the current study used a sprinkling of theories within the IPA design to determine whether one theory is more prominent during data analysis; however, the research is not grounded in one specific theory. The experiences of one individual can potentially be impacted by a number of factors from their past and current environment. Personal characteristics can also impact individual responses. The highly individualized nature of this design means that any generalization should be considered with caution and results used as more of a guideline or starting point for additional research.

Implications

Given these study findings, several implications can inform the work of K–12 public education administrators. The implications reported in this section can be used to review the current work conditions, workplace connections, and opportunities for inclusion to support the longevity of noninstructional itinerants in the K–12 public school system. These implications can also be used to inform recommendations for future research related to noninstitutional itinerants in public schools within the United States. The implications for the practice section provide specific strategies that administrators can employ within the school setting.

Research Implications

This study has implications for researchers interested in understanding the individual experiences of noninstructional itinerants in K–12 public schools. In this study, those individuals were school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers. Individuals who work in these roles in the school setting must have knowledge, certification, and expertise vastly different from their colleagues in other settings. The researchers interested in these topics may consider how the findings in the current study compared to the research conducted by Wiens et al. (2022), who found that school psychologists do not have the level of autonomy or salary commensurate with psychologists in private practice. While the current study did not

directly correlate K–12 positions and private practice, autonomy was a subtheme of the overarching theme of expertise.

The current study also has implications for researchers studying longevity and any of the following that has been determined to be related to longevity: working conditions, workplace connections, expertise, and personal characteristics, which include resiliency and mindset. Currently, there is limited information specific to longevity, as most scholars have focused on burnout, intent to leave, intent to stay, and retention. While employee retention and the intent to stay are critical, they are not the same as longevity. Longevity is the prolonged retention or intent to stay of an employee for a specified period.

The current study added another dimension to the research conducted by Cowden and Cummings (2012), who identified four characteristics that impacted the intent to stay of nurses: manager, organization, work, and employee characteristics. Although there is limited research specific to school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers, this current study extended that of Cowden and Cummings (2012), who found that school nurses have factors that extend longevity.

Likewise, the current study adds another dimension to studies conducted by Barrett (2016) and Wermeling (2013), who noted that high numbers of professionals are leaving the social work profession. Although not conducted in the broad field of social work, the information gathered shows that school social workers are also leaving the field, and there were few school social workers with longevity in the district utilized in the current study.

In addition to research related to the study variable, this research furthered the information on theories associated with longevity. Using an IPA approach, 16 theories were considered, and all had some connection to longevity. The conceptual frameworks selected included: human capital theory, self-determination theory (SDT), person-environment fit (P-E fit), person-organization fit (P-O fit), person-job fit (P-J fit), social exchange theory (SET), work as a calling, theory of job embeddedness (JE), job demands-resource (JD-R) theory, conservation of resources theory, Kanter's (1993) theory of structural empowerment, psychological

empowerment theory, Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model, Locke's (1969) range of affect, equity theory, and Herzberg's (1974) two-factor theory.

There may be specific implications related to Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation for researchers that have a specific interest in this theory. Although Herzberg posited that hygiene factors do not lead to job satisfaction, not having them can lead to dissatisfaction. The participants in this study spent more time talking about hygiene factors. While this study was not looking to find a correlation, it is possible that both hygiene and motivation factors impact job satisfaction, as Bhatt et al. (2022) posited.

Practical Implications

Considering the study participants' first-hand experiences, several practical implications could be implemented to improve current practices related to noninstructional itinerants. This information would benefit administrators who want to promote the longevity of noninstructional itinerants in K–12 public schools. The current study findings included five themes and 15 subthemes that should guide the practical implications of this research study. The five overarching themes were *passion and purpose*, *expertise*, *working conditions*, and *connections*. School and district administrators have little direct control over some factors in this study, such as salary and schedule, which are handled through collective bargaining; however, administrators have considerably more control over things in the school, such as workload, workspace, autonomy, mentoring opportunities, inclusion, and creating solid relationships.

Workload. Administrators may be unable to control the workload, but they are responsible for utilizing practices to ensure it is as evenly distributed as possible. If the workload is excessive after equitable distribution, Poppy (2012) recommended that school districts can continue to allocate funds to hire more professionals. Administrators can look for supplemental funding sources to compensate professionals for completing this work after hours or on the weekends. The availability of noninstructional itinerant professionals is not within the school district's control, as there is a nationwide shortage. Creating programs for interns and

engaging in ongoing recruiting activities are two ways that administrators can encourage nonitinerants to work in their district.

Workspace. As with workload, administrators must employ practices that help ensure workplace equity. As a result of changing employee needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, de Lucas Ancillo et al. (2021) recommended conducting workspace reviews to ensure the spaces meet employee needs. Although this recommendation is not specific to noninstructional itinerants, it is good practice and would benefit this group of professionals. Noninstructional itinerants should not be placed in the front office or a costume closet, as reported in the current study. With workspace, administrators can engage with noninstructional itinerants to better understand the role and see what type of workspace is needed. When space is limited and multiple individuals must use the same space, administrators must bring individuals together to develop a schedule collaboratively to determine whether there are days when these professionals can work in the space together or whether they need opposite schedules due to a need for privacy and limited distractions. Even when the workspace is not optimal, getting input from these professionals may help to mitigate some of the dissatisfaction they feel by being placed in an inadequate workspace.

Autonomy. As autonomy was identified as another crucial factor by noninstructional itinerants, administrators can meet with these professionals to learn more about their roles and the scope of their expertise. Slemp et al. (2018) noted that leaders who want to increase autonomy could ask for input, seek out employee perspectives, and reward accomplishments/self-initiation. Leaders can offer choices and communicate in a collaborative, informational manner (Slemp et al., 2018). Rather than being directive with noninstructional itinerants, their input can be solicited regarding various school-based issues. If there are requests related to specific concerns raised by parents, work through collaborative solutions and determine whether an outcome can be reached that does not bring into question a noninstructional itinerant's expertise or integrity. Their role is so specialized that no one in the school setting has the expertise they have, and that should be valued. As with any professional, there are times when noninstructional itinerants will need

coaching and guidance. There are also times, however, when they need to be supported when asked to do things they perceive as unreasonable or out of the scope of their expertise.

Expertise. Administrators who work to develop autonomy will naturally develop this characteristic to some extent. They must also make a concerted effort to support the growth of their noninstructional itinerant personnel. Administrators must ensure professional growth and development opportunities relevant to noninstructional itinerants, including leadership opportunities. Noninstructional itinerants may have no pathway or narrow pathways to formal leadership opportunities due to their certification. Additionally, many noninstructional itinerants must obtain a master's degree. They would need to obtain a second master's degree to work as an administrator in a school; however, leadership opportunities outside of administrative positions are available in schools, and noninstructional itinerants can play an essential role in the school leadership team.

In a study conducted on the role of the school social worker, Poppy (2012) recommended including these professionals on leadership teams as they have experience with employing systemic approaches to address issues. Similarly, Davis et al. (2021) shared the same recommendation for school nurses. With school psychologists, McCaslin-Timmons (2016) asserted that administrators must employ strategies that allow school psychologists to do more than evaluate students. They can help create school policies and mentor new staff members in various ways (McCaslin-Timmons, 2016).

Mentorship, another opportunity that includes a leadership component, was noted as an essential part of the role of a noninstructional itinerant with longevity. Similarly, Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) suggested that leaders could employ other strategies, such as collaborative decision-making, competency development, empowerment, and leadership opportunities, that organizations can implement to increase work engagement. Utilization of these strategies supports employees' psychological need for autonomy and competence while providing a sense of purpose (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015).

Connections. The noninstructional itinerant’s schedule can negatively impact connections with administrators and colleagues; therefore, it is critical that administrators deliberately schedule opportunities for relationship development. One way for administrators to create connections is to consistently meet with their noninstructional itinerants and allow them opportunities to share as experts in their field (Davis et al., 2021). Additionally, Davis et al. reported that administrators should be directly involved in creating multidisciplinary teams at their schools. Administrators should include noninstructional itinerants in meetings where their input could help the team achieve a better outcome for the student or school. They can also be included in informal events such as staff parties. Outside of the more significant staff events, administrators should include these professionals in other school-wide events such as curriculum nights, open houses, or spirit weeks. These events are great opportunities for noninstructional itinerants to engage with families positively while becoming more embedded in the school's culture. Even when administrators do small things, such as putting a candy bar in the teacher’s mailbox, noninstructional itinerants must be included in these practices.

Administrators and colleagues can create connections with the noninstructional itinerants beyond their professional role and develop personal relationships. Even when they are only there 1 or 2 days a week, noninstructional itinerants want to be greeted and spoken to like welcome and trusted colleagues, not visitors. Itinerants also play a role in developing these relationships. They can meet individuals with different professionals in the school setting. They can also schedule time with administrators to share important information or reports related to their role.

As with any position, there are times when personalities are not a good fit and a professional should work at another site. If noninstructional itinerants ask to leave the same sites every year, resulting in constant turnover, this is not beneficial for the noninstitutional itinerant, school staff, or students and their families. With constant turnover, building trusting relationships with colleagues, students, and their families is difficult—if not impossible. In these situations, district personnel who oversee administrators must look deeper into why staff are asking to leave and see if

additional coaching is needed for the administrator. Likewise, if noninstructional staff are not being asked to return to several school sites, more information should be gathered to identify the root causes of these requests.

Ultimately, no one factor has been identified that directly increases longevity. Even when these factors have been addressed proactively, there may be reasons outside of an administrator's control that a noninstitutional itinerant leaves a school district. The identified factors that current study participants noted as being important in the school setting are not difficult or costly to implement. They take time, a desire to maintain staff, and possibly some self-reflection related to an organization's current practices. There is always room for improvement, which can be a collaborative effort between the administrator and the employee. Ultimately, the impact when noninstructional itinerants stay is more consistent services for students by professionals with higher levels of organizational expertise.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several implications for further research. Future studies could include replication of this study with changes in geographical location, participants, or research design. Although the current researcher looked primarily at longevity, the findings touched briefly on other retention-related aspects, such as turnover, burnout, intent to leave, and intent to stay. Future researchers could look more deeply at these areas as there is limited literature on noninstructional itinerants. An investigation could also be expanded to other employees within and outside the public school system.

The current researcher explored longevity from the perspective of the individual with longevity. Future scholars could also consider the impact of longevity from a leadership perspective or from the perspective of a new employee who might benefit from the mentorship of more tenured employees. Additionally, the nonitinerants with longevity for this study had at least 10 years of experience. Future studies might define longevity using a different measurement of time, such as more than 5 years, with employees who could have vastly different experiences.

Another possible consideration for future research is to replicate this study in another area of the United States, as this study was conducted in one school district in the southeastern United States. Likewise, this study was conducted at one point in time. Recognizing that individual experiences and perceptions are not static, replicating this study using longitudinal data may be valuable. A longitudinal study may help mitigate temporary influences on an individual's perspectives, such as recent changes in leadership.

As this study was qualitative, the researcher did not look for any correlation between participant demographics (i.e., gender, age, and education) that might impact their longevity. Engeda et al. (2014) found that factors such as education, age, and marital status increase an employee's intent to stay (ITS). Nurses in their 40s were four times more likely to report ITS than nurses in their 20s (Engeda et al., 2014). Married nurses and nurses with bachelor's degrees were twice likelier to report ITS (Engeda et al., 2014). Based on the findings of this current research, considering the impact of demographics on the longevity of noninstructional itinerants could be another topic for future research.

In addition to participant demographics, another factor that could be explored regarding longevity is generational influences. The current study briefly touched on the influence of generational factors on these specialized positions. As the Millennial workforce grows and Generation Z enters the workforce, it will be vital that leaders understand these populations and what they value in employment. Societal factors such as the COVID-19 global pandemic will have long-term implications for the workforce. As more employees opt for virtual options and seek jobs with increased flexibility due to the nationwide crisis, additional research could be completed in this area.

Other theories could potentially be explored concerning longevity, such as resiliency, individual adaptability theory, and theories related to work-life balance, such as spillover theory, conflict theory, and border and boundary theory (Khateeb, 2021). One theory used in this study was Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation. Many factors noted during the interviews could be placed in the hygiene or motivation categories. Although Herzberg asserts that hygiene factors do not lead to

job satisfaction, not having them can lead to dissatisfaction. Participants in every interview brought up hygiene factors such as the employee schedule and interpersonal connections. Bhatt et al. (2022) determined that hygiene and motivation factors impacted job satisfaction. These finds are not aligned with Herzberg's theory. Additional studies should be conducted to see the impact of hygiene factors on satisfaction.

Finally, this study utilized a qualitative research design. Future research could be conducted using a quantitative design to look at longevity compared to career commitment, organizational commitment, or job satisfaction. In place of the interviews used in the current quantitative study, survey instruments such as the Allen and Meyer Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, the Multidimensional Career Commitment Measure (MCCM; Carson, 1991), or the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS).

Summary

These individuals play critical roles in the public school setting, and the retention of their skills is vital for student success. Many noninstructional itinerants have a passion and purpose for the work. The findings of the current study showed that not all noninstructional itinerants stay in their role because they have a deep passion and purpose. The decision to stay can be impacted by the state pension offered in this position which may not be available to these professionals in roles outside the school district. It may also be impacted by family needs and the need to maintain a specific schedule or stay in a particular location to meet those needs. Some professionals may stay because they do not feel like they have other options.

Regardless of each person's motivation to stay, school districts must consider any factors in their control that will help increase instructional longevity. School administrators can better understand the job of each of these professionals in the organization. Administrators should consider the work that noninstructional itinerants must complete when assigning workspace. School staff can ensure high levels of inclusion and seek out itinerants for their specialized expertise. Administrators and central office supervisors can help to ensure the availability of leadership and

mentoring opportunities to noninstructional itinerants and the equitability of workloads among these professionals.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY



NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: November 17, 2022
TO: Jessica Duncan, Debra Dean, Jennifer Carter
FROM: SEU IRB
PROTOCOL TITLE: The Career Experiences of Non-Instructional Itinerants in K-12 Public Schools With Demonstrated Longevity
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 22 BE 17
APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: November 17, 2022 Expiration Date: November 16, 2023

Dear Investigator(s),

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled, The Career Experiences of Non-Instructional Itinerants in K-12 Public Schools With Demonstrated Longevity. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol pending the following change:

- Please add IRB contact information to the informed consent (irb@seu.edu)

Any changes require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. If your study requires any changes, the proposed modifications will need to be submitted in the form of an amendment request to the IRB to include the following:

- Description of proposed revisions;
- *If applicable*, any new or revised materials;
- *If applicable*, updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions

If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the IRB within 24 hours of the event or problem.

At present time, there is no need for further action on your part with the IRB.

This approval is issued under Southeastern University's Federal Wide Assurance 00006943 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the IRB's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Rustin L. Floyd
Chair, Institutional Review Board
irb@seu.edu

Appendix B

Research Invitation

Dear School Nurse/School Social Worker/School Psychologist,

My name is Jessica Duncan, and I am a student at Southeastern University. As part of my Ph.D. research, I am conducting research to learn more about your role as an itinerant noninstructional staff member with at least ten years in the role within your school district. I also want to learn more about your longevity.

If you are available, I would love to invite you to participate in an interview, which will take 45–60 minutes on _____ 2022, at 3:30 p.m.

All information collected will remain anonymous and will be kept in a secure, password-protected computer file. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be coded for anonymity. You have the right to withdraw your answers anytime.

Access to the anonymous results will be provided upon request so that you may benefit from the findings.

If you have any questions or would like the results of the study, you can contact me at 239-888-0942 or jkduncan@seu.edu.

Sincerely,

Jessica Duncan

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research interview on TBD, 2022.

You were chosen for the interview because of your experience as a noninstructional itinerant staff member who has been working in this role in your school district for at least ten years. Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the interview.

This interview is being conducted by a researcher named Jessica Duncan, who is a doctoral student at Southeastern University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this interview is to better understand the career experiences of noninstructional itinerant personnel with longevity.

Procedures:

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Interview:

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the interview. No one in the School District of Lee County will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the interview. If you decide to join the interview now, you can still change your mind later. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Interview:

There is the minimal risk of psychological stress during this interview. If you feel stressed during the interview, you may stop at any time. There are no benefits to you

from participating in this interview. The interviewer will benefit by practicing interviewing skills.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this interview.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this interview project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the interview.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher's name is Jessica Duncan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at jkduncan@seu.edu. If you want to communicate privately about your rights as a participant, you can contact Dr. Jennifer Carter, the Chair of the Southeastern University Ph.D./DSL programs, at jlcarter@seu.edu. You can also contact the Southeastern University Institutional Review Board directly at irb@seu.edu.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the interview.

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Written Signature: _____

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Demographic Questions (1-3):

1. Please tell me your name and your current position.
2. How long have you been a school nurse/school social worker/school psychologist in this K–12 public school?
3. In your capacity as an itinerant, how many schools do you support?

Ice Breaker (Question 4):

4. Please describe a “typical” day as a noninstructional itinerant.

Itinerant Role Questions (5-12):

5. Take a minute to think about your longevity. Tell me about an experience you have had that made you think about your longevity/tenure within this organization).
6. How might your day or your work differ from newer school nurses/school psychologists/school social workers?
7. Because of your longevity, do you consider yourself an expert in your field?
8. Tell me about your considerations when you decided to stay in the K–12 public school system as opposed to going to work in a hospital, private practice, or community agency?
9. Why do you stay in this K–12 system?
10. If a new employee came to you and told you they were thinking about leaving the school district, what advice would you provide based on your own work experience?
11. Do you see yourself staying in this role? Tell me more about what you are thinking regarding your (continued longevity/departure).
12. Is there anything else you want to share?

Appendix E

Coding Grid

IN VIVO CODING

Passion and Purpose	Flexibility	Expertise	Respect
Family in need	Three schools	Mental health (3)	In the hospital nurse is the top dog
Spending time with students	Change (2)	Well-rounded	Teacher and nurse aren't viewed the same
Working with students (2)	IEP/MTSS	Expertise	School nurses don't feel they are appreciated
Love (2)	Out of my comfort zone	Reputation (3)	Don't have a spot to do their work
Important	Learn something new (5)	Knowing the law	You want to feel that people care about you
Progression of growth	Learning process	Reaching out to those who know	Need an office to talk privately
Help families	Planning to do the same thing	Bigger perspective on different things	Men are perceived a little bit different
Love helping families	Two schools (ideal setting)	Mentee	Respect (2)
Provide that mentorship	What takes priority	Experience	Appreciated
Enjoy working with families (2)	Case manage	Past experience	Value
Growing academic success	Triage	State organization conference	Providing a service that's appreciated
Trying to set students up for success (3)	Find solutions	First line in communication	Ownership
Make a difference	Schedule (daily)	This is who you need to talk to	Feel belonged
Love it	Nobody really has a set role	Really good at what you do	Overwhelming support you get from the school district
Going into a school	If anything gets done it's a miracle	I really do know something	Nobody knows your role
Enjoyed it so much	Jump in and help schools	Special site expertise	I'm very happy where I am now
Look forward to	Putting out fires	This is the expert	Everybody very receptive (not always in other places)
Enjoy	Four schools (challenging)	Debrief	Difficult being an itinerant
Job is important	Flexibility (4)	Liaison	First start, nobody really knows who you are
Thanking about the child	Adaptability	Supporting (2)	Piling on more as you go along
Starts with the child	Go with the flow	Mature	
Contributing something of value	Flying the place as we build it	Patience	
Going above and beyond	Changes not rolled out in an orderly manner	Lifelong learner (3)	
Extremely involved	Life happens	Provide guidance (2)	
Part of something bigger	Two hours have disappeared	Mentorship (7)	
Fulfilling	Healthy for me to have different things	Stepping up to mentor	
Wholesome	Three schools – challenging	Resource	
Feel useful to society	Social groups	Knowledge	
Do the very best job		Power	
Help others		Lead (3)	
Contribute		Understanding	
		Be able to grow (3)	
		Screening team	
		Training (3)	
		Teach instructors	

<p>Fight for the things we deem important Guide the children Love coming into schools Love being with staff Love being with kids Love this job Best job ever Seeing all their smiles and their hard work come to fruition Graduate Wouldn't trade it for the world Live for these moments Resilient Tenacious Committed Workaholic I love working directly with kids I love being an itinerant I love being a psych I love being in this dept. Speak up for the kids Be a voice for the kids Advocate for families Enjoy it Public school I'm really glad I started this job I love the kids I just love my job I like the work Great opportunity Make a difference Schools are the frontline Ideal place to work with children Able to make an impact on students I appreciate the time that I have Passionate about counseling Love my school</p>	<p>Change my environment Adds to your plate Constant change in paperwork Change schools quite frequently (old admin) Job has gotten busier MH Team meeting (3) MTSS meetings 504 meetings Threat assessment Testing Counseling Report writing Roll with it Truancy Runaway Flexibility with your scheduled Consistent schedule (at site) Schedule (daily) Intervention (2) Attendance rate Never the same day twice Immunizations Home visits Prioritize Hearing and vision screenings Compliance Moved around Different positions No typical day Emails and calls Variety Needed the variety Attendance Mental Health Attendance</p>	<p>Don't know what it entails Representatives from other counties Political people Understanding what school nursing is about Expert (2) Persistent All different backgrounds (2) Draw on each other's experiences Pull on that knowledge – that's the beautiful thing Different skills sets Move the pace of testing Report writing streamlined Feel strong with my skill set Function as a school nurse Compromised airway Students that can't breathe Struggling to breathe Cardiac-related symptoms Anorexia nervosa Experience (3) Private practice License School clinic almost like a community clinic Good listener Open-mindedness Process Veterans Compliance Assist our department Assist the district in being better Understand my role Rely on me Knowledge Mold new nurses Orientation Come to me and ask for assistance</p>	<p>Those that don't understand what we do (admin) Supportive culture Culture was a little toxic Don't respect what we do (admin) They back me up (admin) Disrespect Spend all these hours working and studying to be treated like this Office space Sit in the front Different administration Make you not want to go to work I know my job; I know what I need to do Certain assignments that I really just like Overstepping boundaries Request not to go back to a school Principals can make or break Welcoming and embracing Baby shower for me Included (2) One of them Eat lunch together Culture feels different School assignment very enjoyable Getting to know people on a personal level Loved going out to that school treated like family Things are going on at a school and you don't know You guys forgot about me Utilize me (2) Consult with me</p>
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<p>I've always loved school Foundation I love that (diversity in job tasks) I truly love this job Part of the team Been here from the ground up Came into a team that was already established Ensure students are healthy and safe in school So many things that families are facing I love the kids I love the work Let me help you I love everything to do with the field Love the little kids Brings out the nurturing in me Brings me so much joy to be around the little kids Kids love their teachers</p>		<p>Special person Specialty Lots of phone calls from new nurses Help them/Support as assist (new) Giving direction and guidance Clinical decision-making Intern (3) Must be a school psychologist for 3 years to have an intern More expertise than I have given myself credit for Figure it out on your own Easier for me to maneuver Easier for me to make connections Secure in my decisions Work becomes second nature Have been faced with so many things already Call from other psychs Focused on learning More of an expert Keep some SWs Recruit Better versed in some areas Highly knowledgeable in my field Constantly reflect on what I can do better Perception You should have an understanding of mental health to be on the mental health team Therapeutic counseling Unusual circumstances Questions about specific cases Unusual cases Efficiency Frontline Health fairs</p>	<p>We don't need her Struggle with value Educate them on what I can do Feel for who you're working with Keep letting them know (your role) A month ago, broke down in tears Use me as part of the problem-solving team Testing in a closet Storage room One wanted me at the meeting – squashed by other admin One admin has respect Not let those feelings of negativity roll Lip service Nothing changes (2) Adversarial role in a meeting (admin) Pull me in Recognize my roll Does not respect what I say Respected by the majority of the building Implemented true change Not respected or listened to Environment that goes against my philosophy (New staff) wouldn't know to stand up Tell me not to come back I'm just supposed to listen to the administrator Early experiences State my opinion Dissent Stick to the data Principals make or break Level of power</p>
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		<p>Teach you about family systems in school (not the other stuff) Train them Navigating the system Invaluable Expert in certain areas Boundaries Confidence Speak up Crisis situations Working through the systems Intellectual stimulation Therapeutic skills</p>	<p>Battling with administration Downtown does nothing Empowered Naughty behavior reinforced I'm vital I matter My opinion matters They value my presence My room I can go in and out whenever I want I am not in the closet Shows me they think about what I do Power shift of parents Unfair balance Afterthoughts (2) Didn't know our role Not knowing the job Feel like an oversight Bounced back and forth We don't totally fit We lost our cubbies Why not reach out to me? Disrespectful Bypassing my professional judgment I wish the district would recognize what we do better Earn respect Frustrated by lack of respect Not a good fit for that school Don't have a level of trust High turnover (Admin issues) are ignored or they are moved somewhere else System problem We were done with being disrespected</p>
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			<p>(Would) love to participate in reading nights They do invite me to the Christmas party Glorified clinic assistant Leadership District-based Different personalities Understand what school nurses do A bachelor's in nursing is very difficult to get Sense of trust Totally supported Great relationship with my admin Great relationship with district admin I'm going to do what I need to do to get the job done – trust there We're going to make the changes to follow it the way it's supposed to be followed Very empathetic toward staff Supervisor that is in tune with us because we are very empathetic Take care of staff Acknowledge staff Wonderful principals and not so wonderful principals Very friendly with everyone Very down to earth Wonderful with the kids Calm demeanor (2) Don't even think they know my name Felt welcomed</p>
Connections	Communication	Motivation	
Bridge the home school gap Involved with family	Organized Resources (3)	Beginning and an end Closure and hope for the next year New clothes – feel young	

Community partners (2)	Approach the situation	Sons were young
Relationship	Demanding	Uproot the family
Essential	Confrontational	Children
Connections with people (3)	Get the parent on board	Schedule is great
Like the people	Nurse meetings once a month (2)	Schedule
Network	Reaching out	Part of a system
Network with people who get it	Touching base	Be there for my kids
Get along well (2)	Make sure everyone's okay	Complaining
Personality	Monthly reports	Not an ideal balance
Workgroups	Input on satisfaction with current assignment	No job is perfect
Common ground	Navigating different personalities	Buffer from negativity
Multidisciplinary team (2)	Really need the parents there	Appreciate the things you do like
Entire team	Talk to me	Billing
Long-lasting relationships	I can answer these questions	Grants
Parents are so happy	Communication	People in education are unhappy
Resource	Talk to somebody	Volunteering here after retirement
Togetherness	See if it (problems) can be fixed	Same school system (2)
Conquer issues	Further clarification	Work every other weekend and all the holidays
Operate in zones	Diplomatic	Holidays off
Bounce things off each other	Easygoing	Summers off
Takes a village	Heightened emotions	Good set up
Positive attitude	Getting connected	Good fit
Support each other (nurses)	Trauma	Working school calendars
Work as a team	Showing the value of therapy and mental health	Caseload
Team approach	Expand their role	Through COVID things have been hard
Team building with mental health	Broaden the role	Hire a lot more people
important to school psychs and itinerants in general	Getting along with all types of people	Consistency in pay (when working privately)
I love the colleagues in my department	Rarely have a personality conflict	Commuting time (work in district)
Cohesive group	Face-to face opportunity	Same hours
Getting stronger	Trust (2)	12-hour shifts
Strong cohesive work of the psych dept	Trust the school	Live in the district (2)
Time to build a relationship	Non-legal citizens (communication with)	Pretty good district to work in
Great relationships	Home/family	Community (4)
I like the people		Community feel
PLCs		Legal issues
Interjecting yourself		Liability
Part of the family		Not make decisions in the heat of the moment
Interdisciplinary team		Slow down
Health Dept		Input
		Burned out
		Burnout
		Good relationship with admin
		Discouraged, helpless, hopeless
		Didn't help a family
		Didn't add value
		Pros and cons
		Try something different
		No uninterrupted time at home
		Other avenues you can choose
		Hospital is touch
		End of career job
		Ulcer working at a hospital

Partners		<p>Unhappy at my job right now Comfortable (4) Content Good balance Resources the school system offers Keep that comfort level Financial Consider all the time they are not working Week for Thanksgiving Two weeks for Christmas Two months in the summer Schedule Work nights Watch the children Trunk or treat, Baby shower, Christmas party Retire (5) Financial planner Future Pensions (2) Break it down hourly- comparable to a hospital nurse Hourly rate Breaks Retirement Retirement benefits Come back as a clinic assistant Not about the money (4) Money Money isn't everything More money in the hospital (2) Survive longer Income requirements Opportunity Stressful situation (hospital) Part-time Time traveling back and forth Quality time to problem solve Hospital is so fast paced Commitment Satisfaction Huge degree of satisfaction Hospital setting – more money oriented Leaving the best job to get involved in a very stressful job Probably is going to drive you crazy Income Supplement your income Create a balance Love our leaders Love the way in which the school district is set up Love being here Nothing is perfect in life</p>
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		<p>I like the job I like what I do It has its challenges Some days are better than others I don't think I want to go back to the hospital setting Get really good administrators Different start times Another demand on your schedule Mothers it might be parent drop-off and pick-up When I first started with district, I had a lot more time to fulfill the requirements of my job Clinical things are the number one contributor to not feeling satisfied Give up the idea of perfection Pushing themselves Add to the plate Compromise for me professionally Enjoy the independence (2) Self-directing (2) Thought about becoming a teacher but it was too confining More movement Not ready to retire Drive Motivation to work All getting paid equal (regardless of longevity) New hires were given their years of experience Disparity Lower pay rate than new teachers Critical shortage Critical need Work from home (2) COVID Zoom options New hires are being allowed accommodations Paid comparable to stay home Don't have a boss telling me A, B, C, and D needs to be done Workloads are higher Hospice caseload of 30 – work with 500+ families Not as hard as when we were younger I know what I am doing Like that comfort at my age in this part of my life Addressing mental health – I don't feel it's good enough Only counseling one student – pulled too thin Not conducive to doing good social skills Family comes first Professional and personal philosophy Ethics Caregiving</p>
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		<p>Family thing Concealed weapon Safer than at a school Ultimatum I like the job I like what I do Moving sites all the time is illogical Get established Self-directed New psychs and interns have never tested an actual person (COVID) Grandma pro public school Proximity to where I live Not huge caseloads Good support system Little disconnected from people Very individualized job On your own for the most part Consider being an admin Chose the school district Things to get certified Hurdles Passing the test Get remedial help Position might get cut Back-up Turnover Family obligations Benefits Revolving door Never have time to go to the beach People come here from all over the country Helping in our community People in our community that need assistance Good job with good benefits Public education Great that people have options Divorce Mom Insane hours Burnout Spend time with family That isn't all there is to life (job) Trigger Own background Affecting me Emotionally affecting job Overwhelmed with caseload Truancy In an agency – 10 cases vs. hundreds Happy at my schools Work life balance Elementary is nurturing</p>
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PROCESS CODING

Passion and Purpose	Flexibility	Expertise	Respect
Not trading this for the world Living for these moments Bringing special people to these positions Spending time Reaching out Seeing their smiles Seeing their hard work come to fruition Watching him work hard (graduation) Trying to bridge gaps Guiding the children Being with staff Working with students (3) Working with families (2) Supporting families Supporting the students Helping families (3) Helping students (1) Providing resources (1) Spending a whole day with children Understanding Establishing programs Growing a student's academic success Trying to set students up for success Help them to succeed in school Trying to get students health insurance Making a difference Joining the school system	Changing (2) Being at your schools Working the school calendar Running from school-to-school Adding to your plate (interns semester 1) Taking away (interns semester 2) Going to the same school system (as children) Evolving Planning to do one thing Following a schedule (can't) Planning what you are going to do Worrying about picking up their kids Working nights Supporting other schools Supporting two schools Supporting three schools Supporting four schools Fluctuating between two and four, possibly five schools Covering five schools Not moving as much as I was Supporting home schooling and private schools Spending time traveling back and forth Spending quality time to problem solve	Doing something new Providing guidance (lead) (2) Giving advice Supporting colleagues Providing mentorship (2) Mentoring (4) Understanding the role Learning process Screening team (2) Training (3) Training new nurses Orientating New staff – helping, supporting, assisting Following the protocol Administering medications correctly Representing the county Understanding school nursing Knowing what you need to do Taking care of Band-Aids and bellyaches Addressing accommodations Learning Room to Grow Coming from all different backgrounds (nurses) Working in different areas of nursing Functioning as a school nurse Case managing Discussing her situation at length Intervening Training as many people as possible Teaching	Leaving Interpreting that as not being appreciated Respecting me and my opinion (3) Valuing me (2) Understanding my role (1) Understanding what we do Relying on me Explaining everything Talking to my administrators Backing me up Disrespect Spending all these hours working and studying to be treated this way Thinking we can sit in the front office Using my expertise to do clerical work Overstepping boundaries Attempting to micromanage me Exerting power and authority Dictating what I am going to do Welcoming and embracing Treating me like a staff member Including me as one of them Having lunch with me Getting to know people on a personal level Treating me like family HR policies upsetting long-haulers Putting our time in at the building while others stay home

<p>Going into a school (2) Surviving longer Thinking about the child Seeing the kids Contributing something of value Contributing something of worth Knowing you are part of something bigger Leaving the very best job Doing something that made me feel useful to society Assisting our department Assisting our district Helping a student breathe and giving him a nebulizer treatment Hoping it can always get better Making change Speaking up for kids Be a voice for kids I'm good at working with kids I like being with the kids Helping the student through trauma Helping both the teachers and the students Advocating for families Helping people Getting beyond barriers Bringing me so much joy Bringing out the nurturing in me</p>	<p>Triaging Working with a lot of students Creating a balance Accessing resources Filling in gaps Being flexible Jumping in when needed Managing the caseload Going through cumulative folders Conducting vision and hearing screenings Hosting health fairs Doing paperwork, faxing doctor's offices, overseeing clinic back-ups, educating clinic personnel, educating children on handwashing or taking care of themselves Checking in with teachers, Evaluating students (3), Attending MTSS meetings (3), Attending mental health team meetings (3), counseling (7), social groups, threat assessment Training teachers Having the ability to work on mental health (2) Not focusing on one part of the student - give a student some shoes, give a student some clothes, Christmas gifts Ensuring students are coming to school, parents showing up wanting to talk to a</p>	<p>Training interns Teaching instructors Delegating for the nurses Molding new nurses New situations to figure out Remediating situations Resolving issues Testing quickly Streamlining things Meeting with admin and other staff Taking phone calls from new nurses (2) Supervising an intern (2) Realizing I have more expertise Being secure in my decisions Becoming more of an expert Retraining myself on new programs and new expectations Knowing my job (2) Knowing what I need to do Trying to hire social workers Reaching out to me about how to test lower functioning children Teaching others how to share resources Convincing SWs to come to our dept. Learning more Not Knowing everything Looking beyond a test score, working with low incidence populations, interpreting data Hoping my reputation is positive Understanding the law Following the law</p>	<p>Not advocating that we should be working virtually Getting paid equally Working at a lower pay rate than new hires Don't see others pulling their weight Having candid conversations with the principal Utilizing me all the time (2) Feeling welcome and included Consulting with me Educating him on what I can do (2) Wanting me at the meeting Finding me a room Taking care of staff Doing the little things Not treating staff well Acknowledging people Implementing true change Going against my training Standing up for kids' rights Listening to the administrator Stating my opinion Dissenting Understanding and respecting the difficulties of being upper level management Going backwards Happening behind the scenes Powershifting of parents Wasting time on squeaky parents Calling downtown Feeling like an afterthought (2) Getting bounced back and forth (2) Losing our cubby space Bypassing my professional judgment</p>
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	<p>SW, finding out if there are any student records Fulfilling job requirements Working with 500 plus families Starting with a new caseload each year Working every other weekend (hospital) Working holidays (hospital) 1 Being on the same hours as the kids Worrying about daycare Arriving before the students arrive Agreeing to be at the same school every day to help (can't commit) Covering different schools that have different start times Providing additional support Going with the flow Pushing it through Flying the plane as we build it Clinical decision-making Broadening the role Dealing with parents Dealing with difficult situations Dealing with teachers Giving the idea of perfection Hiring truancy officer- counselors and social workers are dealing with other issues Pushing themselves to meet expectations Continuing to add to our role Adding to the plate</p>	<p>Feeling strong with my skill set Asking me questions Having extensive experience Calling you on the phone (new) Training them Getting text messages and emails from the newbies all the time Navigating the systems in the district Understanding the whole picture Setting boundaries Having confidence Speaking up about things Dealing with those situations Working on themselves Hiring people with experience Taking on extra responsibilities Needing intellectual stimulation Using therapeutic skills</p>	<p>Overseeing us Earning respect Participating in reading nights (want to) Not going back there Having a sense of trust Feeling totally supported Changing admin Working for the district Being district-based</p>
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	<p>Accepting that I can't do everything Compromising professionally Meeting the demands of the job within work timeframes Continuing to write reports at home Blocking out time to write reports Enjoying the independence of the job Self-directing Being resilient Being tenacious Being committed Being a workaholic Working Buying new clothes and feeling young (each new school year) Being pulled thin Compartmentalizing Knowing the law is constantly changing Moving sites all the time is illogical Getting established at a site Constantly reflecting on what he can do differently Looking at the whole picture Adapting Testing the kids (2) Cleaning up ESE filed Providing an IQ test Doing therapeutic counseling Redesigning your schedule Having more time with students Supporting teachers Picking where to start Making a schedule</p>		
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	<p>Facilitating interventions Going into classrooms Getting a new diabetic student Rearranging my whole schedule Teaching kids Doing paperwork Prioritizing needs Learning new things Planning for patients Needing the variety Balancing resources</p>		
Connections	Communication	Motivation	
<p>Ride bikes together (daughter and dad who passed) Greeting kids Making/building relationships (3) Growing community partnerships Networking Enjoying the professional community Connecting with people Connecting with people somehow Finding out something about that person Belonging Being available to help others Working together Conquering a lot of issues Operating in Zones Growing and working together Getting the information Going into schools and no one knows you Having a positive attitude</p>	<p>Calling parents (2) Calling DCF Explaining to parents Not approaching in a negative way Not demanding or confrontational Bouncing things off each other Listening Being open-minded Following district protocol Communication Frequent communication Printing up monthly reports Sharing how many kids have been seen Explaining the minutia Navigating the different personalities Holding parents accountable and having those conversations Coming to me right away Pulling me in at the beginning Discussing, not just giving me a directive</p>	<p>Try something different Considering the time that they are not working Moving back to the district Looking at breaks Look at your hourly rate Supplementing your income Approaching retirement Working night shifts Working a lot Taking a pay cut Taking an emotional toll on people Not caring about the money Sucking up every mental health person in the community Changing jobs every 5 years Moving around a lot Believing in public education Running around like a chicken with your head cut off working these insane hours Working until 10 o'clock at night Spending time with your family Struggling with my value Going into an admin job Doing your own thing Working in a school as a volunteer Retiring (3) Moving around to different jobs Having family obligations Keep getting a salary bump (new) Making as much as I make (new \$) Growing department Making more money Opening a private practice Having kids of my own</p>	

<p>Being able to get along with people Supporting school nurses Getting together Reaching out to those who know Working as a team Working together Colleagues supporting Cohesive group Getting stronger Building the collaboration Working very closely Assisting others Getting connected Impacting people Participating in workgroups Establishing relationships with different teachers and students Using me as a resource Working well together Including others Going to state organization conferences Talking to other nurses Working on those relationships Working with social workers, case managers, doctors Bringing the Health Dept into schools Partnering</p>	<p>Encouraging people to share job concerns Waiting for clarification Being easygoing Processing trauma Complaining (2) Venting Getting along with all types of people Explaining school as this is your community Getting texts and phone calls Following up with parents Doing a home visit Building an additional layer of understanding</p>	<p>Working privately – not knowing each month what I would bring in, depending on somebody else, depending on insurance companies Uprooting the family Realizing I have the motivation to work Staying in the system to attain full retirement benefits Having a part-time job Hiring a lot more people (need to) Talking about retirement (2) Meeting with my financial planner Billing Retiring Writing grants Looking to the future Thinking about pensions (2) Losing people to Zoom options Being autonomous Being self-directed Going through a lot of hurdles Jumping through hoops Passing the tests Staying in the school district Making my lists and crossing things off my list Aligned with my professional judgment, personal philosophy, and ethics Buffering against negativity Being realistic Changing my lens Thinking about leaving their careers Caregiving for mom and stepdad Carrying a concealed weapon Figuring out how to interpret (what is happening at DOE) Feeling discouraged, helpless, hopeless Looking at system issues and system failures Evolving sense of community Working from home Feeling the burnout Moving (Changing environments through physical movement while at work) Researching other places Coming back and volunteer Being loyal (questioning grandma about public education – don't do it) Moving to another state at one point</p>
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VALUES CODING

Passion and Purpose	Flexibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a significant difference in the lives of families (children) facing challenges. The importance of being “that person” • Value academic success • Making a life-long difference • Belief that student needs should be put first • Belief that school nurses can make a long-lasting difference in the lives of students • Belief that school nursing is meaningful • Belief that school nursing is the best job • Belief that the school clinic is the site for all health care for some students • Value one’s use to society • Value helping families get necessary resources • Value working with kids (2) • Values public education • Value public schools and time with students • Belief that school nursing is the most rewarding job • Belief that school nursing is the best job • Belief that the impact that school nurses have can be far-reaching to support students in other areas of the lives • Value supporting students and families in meeting goals (i.e., graduation) • Value student attendance • Values opportunities to support student in different areas of their life • Value student safety • School social workers are special people • Belief that school psychologist is an advocate for students • Values having the ability to work with students • Values being able to help students get the services they are entitled to • Value making a difference (don’t feel like we are) • Value time with students • Belief that families are going through many different things and need access to resources • Value social work • Belief that children bring joy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to adjust to meet student needs • Value adaptability (3) • Values personal growth • Openness to change – look at things with a growth mindset • Value process • Ability to be responsive to last minute changes • Value the ability to give adequate time and attention to sites • Belief that multitasking and creative scheduling will help meet more student needs • Belief that school nurses have to triage medical issues to ensure the most pressing needs are met • Value flexibility (3) • Belief that you jump in and help where needed (2) • Belief that a school nurse must be flexible to accomplish many tasks in one day • Belief that the job is expansive and everchanging • Belief that staff with longevity must be flexible (2) • Belief that changing schools keeps it interesting • Belief that school psychologists must be flexible and be able to handle multiple responsibilities • Value social skills groups • Value having time to do the important parts of the job • Belief that there is not enough time for responsibilities • Belief that the workload is excessive • Value organization • Belief that consistency is good for students • Values being a resource for students and staff • Values openness to change • Values work/task diversity

Expertise	Respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning patience is an essential quality of the more mature SSW • Humble – a continued love for learning • Believe in showing new SSW the way • Longevity increases the ability to help and guide • Listening to understand • Much more to the job than meets the eye- school nursing is an expertise • Value learning and growth • Value lifelong learning (6) • Belief that larger systems are difficult to navigate without expertise • Belief that losing veterans is a big loss to the district • Belief that expertise can be in different areas • Belief that new professionals do not value expertise like they should • Belief that using the term expert may inhibit learning and is arrogant • Belief that work experiences increase expertise • Belief that expertise should be based on knowledge not longevity • Value diverse experiences and knowledge to support each other • Value a strong knowledge base to help triage disease states • Value individual expertise in different areas of nursing • Value expertise (3) • Value mentoring (5) • Value intellectual stimulation • Belief that longevity increases one’s ability to triage work tasks • Belief that even experts need guidance • Belief that there are multiple benefits from taking an intern • Belief that mentoring requires expertise • Belief that tenured school nurses should support new nurses • Values student safety and providing new ideas • Values mental health supports • Value training (2) • Belief that experience increases ability to stay calm, confidence and setting boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value respect and feeling appreciated (2) • Value being provided an adequate workspace (4) • Value getting timely responses to email and questions • Belief that a lack of role understanding leads to poor work space • Belief that admin must understand the role of all itinerants and how they work together when offering scheduling/space suggestions • Belief that admin have different levels of understanding of the role • Belief that men may be treated differently in school nursing • There is a respect for longevity • Belief that being an itinerant can be challenging when others in the school setting have strong relationships • Belief that once staff know what you can do, they will utilize you • Belief that school nurse administration will support when necessary • Belief that admin do not understand or respect the school nurse role in many schools. • Belief that new school nurses are placed in schools where more tenured school nurses do not want to work • Belief that school nurse training and expertise should be respected and it is often not • Value having my time used effectively • Belief that school psychologist job has become more clerical and these tasks do not use the job skills and expertise of trained people • Belief that job satisfaction decreases with micromanagement, dictating, and an exertion of power and authority by school leaders • Value inclusion and belonging (3) • Value people getting to know me on a personal level • Belief that an itinerant position is challenging when you are forgotten • Value being utilized • Belief that the space you are provided is based on how you are value • Values sites where respect and utilization are high

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value teaching instructors who can then train others (cycle of learning) • Values having many important roles in the district • Belief that part of the school nurse role is to be innovative • Value screening team • A belief that being in the role for some time increase the understanding of what a school nurse can do • Belief that longevity increases knowledge • Belief that you may not even truly recognize your level expertise • A belief that more tenured school nurses can orient, train, and mold new nurses • Belief that work has become clerical and value still using the trained skillset • Belief that longevity increases knowledge and where to get information • Belief that tenured school nurses can support and advise new school nurses (3) • Value compliance and people to follow district policy • Value the knowledge that school nurses have – can save a life • Belief that longevity leads to better decision-making and ability to work through challenging situations • Belief that tenured school psychologists can think deeply about student needs in a different way • Belief that longevity increases one’s ability to do their job and create connections • Belief that you have to take time to enjoy the job • Belief that laws and rules change and professionals need to stay up-to-date and work as a team to share information • Value self-reflection • Do not value senseless paperwork or process • Value using expertise to help students • Belief that expertise is helpful in unusual circumstances • Belief that longevity increases efficiency • Values being a resource during a national disaster • Value work integrity • Belief that psychologist trained in various specialty areas can be great school psychologists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the school psychologist job has become mostly testing for special education (2) • Belief that some suggestions are not valued or listened to • Belief that there are high levels of role confusion • Belief that some sites do not want to use the school psych appropriately • Belief that admin should not overstep – should leave decision to teams • Belief that there is a limit to disrespect • Belief that early experiences can shape a new school psychologist • Values equity in decision-making • Values a positive reputation • Values an understanding of the admin role • Belief that admin have a significant impact on work • Belief that downtown does not adequately address poor school admin behavior • Belief that school psychologist does not fit perfectly in any dept – fall in between Student Services and Special Education • Belief that being directed to do things without being able to use any professional judgment is not positive • Belief that respect is earned • Belief that leaders who act inappropriately or cannot effectively lead staff should be held accountable • Values the ability to use personal judgment • Values a good reputation and wanting to create a good reputation for the position • Belief that admin can significantly impact work environment (3) • Values supportive admin • Values having a strong relationship with admin • Values people understanding the role • Belief that being district-based can be challenge • Belief that some administrators believe that school nurses are glorified clinic assistants • Values a supportive supervisor • Belief that an empathetic supervisor is important • Value supportive administrators who acknowledge people • Value admin that take care of their people • Value admin that are down to earth
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that longevity increases an employee’s comfort level with offering supports • Belief that longevity increases the strategies in one’s toolbox • Belief that school nurses have a lot of skills beyond the clinic • Belief that school nurses are the only source of health care for some students • Values persistence to ensure student needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that schools are different in their culture, inclusion, and how welcoming they are
<p style="text-align: center;">Connections</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Communication</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value relationships (3) • Value networking and partnering with other professionals (5) • Value teaming and others expertise • Value community relationships • Value interpersonal connections • Value collaboration • Belief that we can connect by learning about others • Value a team approach to working through challenging situations • Belief that persistence and teamwork can result in positive outcome for students • Belief that COVID has had long-term impacts on public education • Value collaboration and shared expertise • Values a sense of belonging • Belief that belonging results in string connections with the organization and increased job performance • Value multidisciplinary teams to find solutions • Belief that school nurses should not be siloed • Belief that it takes a village • Belief that school nursing takes a special person with a positive attitude and an ability to get along with others • Value opportunities for school nurses to get together • Value a work family • Value boundaries with students • Value teamwork (3) • Belief that different people can support the school social worker role • Belief that the home needs to be involved for long-term change • Values colleagues (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value listening skills and open-mindedness • Belief that communication is key (2) • Value communication and data-based decisions • Value face-to-face communication • Belief that itinerants have to navigate different personalities (2) • Value candid conversations with the principal • Belief that longevity increases one’s comfort level with having difficult conversations • Belief that parents needs to be a part of mental health supports and difficult conversations need to take place • Value communication and being included in student plans • Value input on work assignments • Belief that longevity increases a professional’s comfort with speaking up when needed • Value speaking up based on data • Value direct communication • Values strong communication • Value talking through decisions • Belief that if you are thinking about leaving, you should talk through your decision with a trusted colleague or admin • Value perspective-taking • Values problem-solving conversations • Value trust between school and the family • Belief that some families are scared to access health care outside of the school (not legal citizens)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that the school psych group is getting stronger • Belief that school psychs is a great dept. • Value work identity and time with professionals in the same field • Value supportive colleagues • Belief that support is a team effort • Belief that people seek help from those they are comfortable with • Values a supportive culture • Values inclusion (3) • Values the work family 	
<p>Hygiene/Motivation</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value community (2) • Value family (5) • Values WLB (3) • Value social work over money • Belief that you should be good at your job but it should not be your life • Belief that the district was the best option • Belief that social work can be emotionally draining • Belief that self-care is important • Belief that everyone should have a back-up plan • Belief that the public school system has a lot of hoops to jump through • Belief that veterans should have better pay and benefits • Value working directly for a school system (not a hospital that contracts with a school system) • Value having options and the possibility of change in the future (4) • Belief that people have individual circumstances • Meaningful job outweighs financial gain • Belief that veterans train new staff but aren't compensated • Value comfort and job stability • Belief that new people move around a lot • Value loyalty • Value convenience (2) • Values a strong person-environment fit • Belief that you should focus on the positive • Values a positive outlook • Belief that only others can control their behavior • Belief that you have to hold onto the "wins" which can be few and far between 	

- Value a schedule that supports WLB
- Belief that you can enjoy your job and still experience burnout
- Believes you should surround yourself with positive people
- Belief that the organization is good
- Belief that is important to engage in a thoughtful process before making a job change
- Value time-off
- Belief that work is not balanced (testing-heavy)
- Belief that work climate is important
- Belief that there are some cons to a large system
- Belief that you can have longevity and feel stuck
- Belief that happiness outweighs security
- Belief that other work settings may offer increased satisfaction and a greater sense of purpose
- Belief that money shouldn't drive every decision
- Belief that money doesn't equal job satisfaction
- Value work-life balance (2)
- Belief that a work-life balance is hard to maintain
- Value my pension (2)
- Value opportunities to have different jobs within the state pension system
- Belief that one can keep working in some capacity after retirement
- Value familiarity (4)
- Value a high comfort level with work expectations
- Belief that it can be challenging for itinerants to have the same opportunities/benefits as other colleagues
- Belief that the clinic is a great place to work (even in different capacities)
- Value school schedule
- Belief that the caseloads are high
- Belief that school nursing helps with a work-life balance
- Value input into work assignments
- Values equity in work assignments
- Values public education
- Values a work schedule that is good for family

- Belief that private practice is fiscally inconsistent
- Values community and family
- Belief that you can do your best work and still not meet all work expectations
- Value work boundaries
- Value autonomy, self-direction (3)
- Belief that you have to be self-motivated
- Value equity
- Belief that there are currently inequities in work (pay, distance work)
- Value equity in experience credit and salary
- Value opportunities to use skills in different areas
- Belief that a part-time job can fill a community agency bucket
- Value closure at the end of the year
- Value working in a site that is aligned with personal philosophy
- Belief that school psychologists are pulled too thin to do the parts of their job they enjoy
- Belief that getting new clothes for the school year makes you feel young
- Belief that a new school year brings hope
- Belief that some mental health work is more of a band aid
- Belief that caseload is much higher in the district
- Belief that SW caseloads are much higher than in the past
- Value state retirement
- Belief that people may not really know how good it is in the district given the work calendar
- Belief that SW get paid a higher rate than SW in the field
- Belief that COVID has impacted the SSW position
- Value the importance of compartmentalization so that an issue at one site does not affect all
- Belief that time is wasted on overly (unnecessarily) vocal parents
- Value strong leadership
- Value systems decisions that are aligned with personal philosophy
- Value personal safety
- Belief that state-level decisions impact the job
- Value consistency

- Belief that some district issues are a systems failure
- Values strong department leadership
- Belief that new psychs and interns are at a disadvantage due to COVID
- Values public education (2)
- Values convenience
- Values comfort
- Values family input
- Values the ability to complete work with an appropriate caseload
- Values consistency (even when serving multiple schools)
- Values the resources that are available to school psychs in the public school system
- Belief that leadership can impact your job satisfaction
- Values career changes into an itinerant position in public education
- Values movement and the opportunity to change their environment
- Value the option to keep working (not ready to retire)

Theory	Code	Noted in Transcription
Human Capital Theory	HC	70
Self-Determination Theory	SDT	19
Person-Environment Fit	PEF	27
Person- Job Fit	PJF	29
Person-Organization Fit	POF	38
Social Exchange Theory	SET	46
Work as Calling	WC	32
Job Embeddedness Theory	JE	24
Job-Demands Resources	JDR	49
Conservation of Resources	CR	17
Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment	KSE	32
Psychological Empowerment Theory	PET	9
Locke's Range of Affect	LRA	24
Equity Theory	ET	21
Herzenberg's Two-Factor Theory	HTF	Motivation: 22 Hygiene: 43 Total: 65
Meyer and Allen's Three Component Model	TCM	Affective: 20 Normative: 3 Continuance: 2 Total: 25