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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP
STYLES AND THE IMPACT ON TEACHER BURNOUT

by

Diana Marie De La Rosa, M.Ed.

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Diana Marie De La Rosa

APPROVED BY

Kent Divoll, Ed.D., Chair

Michelle Peters, Ed.D., Committee Member

Jennifer Grace, Ed.D., Committee Member

Evelyn Castro, Ed.D., Committee Member

RECEIVED/APPROVED BY THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION:

Terry Shepherd, Ed.D., Associate Dean

Joan Pedro, Ed.D., Dean

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my maternal grandmother, Magdalena Solorio Canchola de Carranza. She was a frightened but determined young girl when she fled her native state of Michoacán to travel north to the United States to find a better life with her equally young husband, Gumersindo. Together, they toiled the fields of their adopted country, all for the sake of providing for their growing family. My abuela valued their hard work as she preciously squirreled away each coin into socks. Illiterate and with significant hearing loss brought on by lack of medical care due to poverty, and lack of opportunity, my grandmother persevered. With her diligent spirit and tenacity, my abuela defied the odds. Eventually Magdalena and my grandfather saved enough to buy properties along neighboring sides of the Laredo, Texas border. Their homes on both side of the border often became the gathering places for each of their eight married daughters and large families.

When faced with life's adversities, I have only to look up to my grandmother as an example of work ethic and diligence. Knowing of the challenges that she overcame, I could not contemplate anything less than to persevere given that I have had so many more opportunities. My achievements in finishing marathons and completing this dissertation pale in comparison to the cold winters and hot summers she endured while working in those fields. She was a strong woman who raised strong daughters and because of her, I will strive to meet or exceed the standard my abuela laid for me. To my three daughters, Georgia, Maya, and Ariana, you are proof that the cycle of strong women continues!

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Secondly, I wish to thank every teacher along the path of my career. Only those of us who have experienced the challenges in our classrooms can understand the level of commitment, perseverance, and resilience it takes to keep going back. Teaching is a tough job with few rewards, so we hang on to that ideal thought; we are making a difference every day for every child! Teachers, you have been my inspiration for my research. I could not retire knowing that something needs to be done to bring attention to the crisis of teacher burnout and retention in education. Thank you, teachers. May you hear these words more often, especially from those whose lives you touch.

Lastly, I thank my three daughters, Georgia, Maya, and Ariana. You inspire me to do better and be better. I am proud of you and each of your successes. Each of you has uncovered the power within you!

ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP
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Diana Marie De La Rosa
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2023

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kent Divoll

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership styles and teacher burnout. The study included a review of data collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES) from a purposeful sample of teachers from one large urban Title I high school in a southeast Texas school district. A purposeful sample of nine teachers were interviewed for the purpose of providing a more in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the principal's leadership style and their experiences with burnout. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson's product moment correlations (r), while qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process. Quantitative data analyzed the five transformational leadership attributes and the three factors of burnout. Quantitative analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant correlations to the principal's transformational qualities and teacher burnout factors of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The

qualitative analysis revealed that teachers perceived the principal as highly transformational, supporting the quantitative data, while the burnout experiences were significant for emotional exhaustion among the participants indicating that teachers are overextended in their job responsibilities. The qualitative responses of the participants further revealed that school leaders and districts need formal professional development plans to help teachers build capacity as well as to manage stress and burnout.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

America's strength in the global economy and as a developed country is highly dependent upon the education system and the responsibility to produce an educated citizenry. Teachers are critical in the struggle to maximize student learning yet, teacher stress is an ongoing critical issue for educators that is taking its toll as droves of teachers exit the profession due to burnout. Furthermore, research suggests that teacher stress and burnout could be linked to professional dissatisfaction thereby impacting teacher retention (Brasfield et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2019; McCarthy et al., 2014). In addition, among public K-12 school principals, there is a struggle to address the most salient factor that is critical to achieving academic goals: retention of effective teachers.

Invariably, the quality of the teaching staff has been found to be the determining factor contributing to school success (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Research supports a positive correlation between quality teachers and students' academic and social-emotional development (Rucinski et al., 2017). Moreover, studies suggest that the quality of the principal's leadership style is a strong predictor of teachers' intentions to continue in the same school (Bateh & Heyliger, 2014; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). If school principals know the formula lies in hiring the best and brightest teachers, then the obvious strategy is to induct a strong teaching force. The problem, however, is that fewer highly effective teachers are willing to commit to a long career in education (Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Research Problem

Extensive research suggests that teachers can positively impact their students' academic achievement through effective instruction (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Scott et al., 2014). Teacher burnout has been linked to low teacher retention, especially in high poverty urban schools (Fusco, 2017; Van Overschelde et al.,

2017). According to data published in a study by the Learning Policy Institute, the cost to a district can exceed \$20,000 for every teacher that must be replaced (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The added cost is the negative impact that low teacher retention can have on student achievement and there is a greater impact on low achieving high poverty schools that serve larger minority populations (Podolsky et al., 2017). These schools typically serve students experiencing many disadvantages that inhibit learning (Adnot et al., 2017; Podolsky et al., 2017). In addition to learning challenges, students are placed in classrooms taught by the least experienced teachers who are also least likely to remain in the profession (Podolsky et al, 2017). Prior studies link retention of effective teachers with positive school improvement (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

Teacher retention and teacher quality can profoundly impact student performance. Students' academic outcomes are positively affected when they are instructed by teachers with the experience and knowledge to implement effective teaching methodologies (Scott et al., 2014). The students that would most benefit from effective teachers due to performance gaps generally are students attending schools with high levels of poverty. These schools generally tend to have teachers with the fewest years of experience as a result of lower teacher retention rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Podolsky et al, 2017).

The role of school principals is equally complex and challenging in America's public schools. Although the scope of the typical principal's work is significant, recruiting and retaining effective teachers should be the most discernible of a principal's focus and attention. Studies suggest that teachers' perceptions of principals can affect their decisions to remain in a school or leave (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dahlkamp et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2019). Further studies proclaim that the principal, while essential in supporting novice teachers, is not always consistent with the expectations of mentoring and developing them in their profession (Walker &

Kutsyuruba, 2019). Establishing a pathway for principals to improve strategies for the retention of effective teachers is essential for school improvement.

The impact of the principal's leadership style can influence both teacher job satisfaction and student success (Baptiste, 2019). Research evidence suggests that there is a relationship between the principal's role as a leader and teacher job satisfaction (Bateh & Heyliger, 2014). The characteristics teachers seek in leaders, while multi-faceted, are relevant and necessary to the profession: consistency in policy enforcement, support in student discipline, communication and effective feedback, flexible teacher autonomy, teacher participation in decision-making, availability of school resources, and teacher mentors for novice teachers. (Ansley et al., 2019; Perrone et al., 2019).

Principals may possess the most advantageous position to influence teachers' perceptions of their work environment (Burkhauser, 2017). Studies find that a critical predictor of the teacher retention rate and job satisfaction within a school is largely determined by the quality of its leader (Bateh & Heylinger, 2014; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Baptiste, 2019; Hammond, 2018). Building a network of support includes the establishment of a positive school climate that will lead to greater job satisfaction, however, the most effective principals also influence the retention of the more effective teachers so that they strategically impact the retention rates of teachers who will likely contribute to school improvement (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018).

Burnout encountered in any career also determines job satisfaction. Burnout has been determined to be a factor in teacher retention (Brasfield et al., 2019). The study will examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher burnout. The relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout will be analyzed as research suggests this relationship impacts teacher retention (Baptiste, 2019). Factors that promote burnout are attributed to poor interpersonal relationships conveyed through gossip and job disengagement. Alternatively, collaborative relationships can result in improved work experiences (Ansley et al., 2019). Addressing and minimizing levels of

teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction requires purposeful strategies. Research suggests evidence that there is a link between burnout and teacher retention as job dissatisfaction is listed as a primary factor for teachers leaving a school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Farmer, 2020). Job demands and the availability or lack of resources to achieve work goals can be influenced by the responses from both the principal and colleagues (Farmer, 2020; Harmsen et al., 2018).

Significance of the Study

Teacher burnout and low teacher retention can have detrimental effects on student achievement, school finances, and school morale (Ansley et al., 2019; Baptiste, 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017). School accountability and student performance rest on the effectiveness of teachers and their experience (Young, 2018). The success of schools is dependent on effective teachers who can provide positive learning opportunities; it is, therefore, critical that teachers commit to long careers in the profession. Ingersoll et al. (2016) suggest that teacher turnover affects school accountability, especially for low-performing schools and it is these schools that struggle with teacher retention. Understanding the link between teachers' stress and principals' leadership styles presents an opportunity to minimize teacher burnout and maximize retention.

This study will provide districts and principals with information and strategies to help address teacher burnout and thereby, maximize teacher retention. Additionally, it will delineate avenues to help establish a network of support for teachers defined by administrative support, improved school organization, and a professional work culture that can be influenced by principals. Many studies have been conducted on teacher retention but further research was needed to establish the connection between teachers' burnout and principals' leadership styles.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school leadership and teacher burnout. Research questions guiding this study were:

1. Is there a relationship between a teacher's perception of principal leadership style and teacher burnout?
2. How do high school teachers at a title I school define burnout?
3. In what way(s) do principals' actions influence a teacher's experiences of burnout?
4. How do teachers perceive the principal's support in professional development?

Definitions of Key Terms

Burnout: The extent to which an educator experiences emotional exhaustion, senses an inequity between their job demands, and their ability to manage those demands (Schaufeli et al., 2010)

Passive Avoidant Leadership: Leaders who fail to take responsibility in leading their organization and manage by exception when they engage followers only when they need to be corrected or laissez-faire where leadership is deficient (Derue et al., 2011).

School Principals: A term that can encompass such positions as superintendent, assistant superintendent(s), principal, assistant principal or other individuals in leadership positions supervising teachers (Top Education Degrees, 2018).

Teacher Retention: The ability to maintain teachers who are currently employed on a particular campus (Boyd et al., 2011)

Transformational leadership: Engenders higher levels of commitment, trust, and loyalty in their followers that may lead to performance beyond expectations (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Transactional leadership: Roles and task demands are delineated and leaders contribute either positive or negative rewards to their followers (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Conclusion

This chapter describes an overview of the need for the study, significance of the issue, the research purpose and questions as well as key definitions that pertain to this study. It is intended that this study will provide guidance to educators, teachers, and principals, to determine the relationship between teacher burnout and principal leadership styles. The goal is to determine the factors that can be discerned in challenging school leaders to consider leadership style and its impact on burnout. The next chapter will examine the literature that is relevant to a teacher's network of support, including collaboration amongst teachers, school leader effectiveness, availability of resources and job demands as it relates to teachers' stress and as a consequence, burnout.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hiring qualified teachers who are experienced, committed, and willing to address the needs of students in high-poverty, urban schools has become a challenge for school districts and their principals. The severity of low teacher retention is greatest in schools that have high-poverty demographics (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Schools that fall short of meeting accountability standards, thus needing the greatest improvement, have lower rates of teacher retention. (Courtney, 2019). These schools also tend to have populations of students of color, who are limited in English, and who experience a lack of academic progress (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout. To address these areas, the literature review focused on the following constructs and their effect on job satisfaction as it impacts teacher retention: (a) teacher burnout and (b) principal leadership styles.

Teacher Burnout

Burnout and stress result in low job satisfaction in the teaching profession which often leads to suboptimal physical health and psychological well-being (Brasfield et al., 2019). Researchers define burnout and teacher stress as negative experiences like anger, anxiety, frustration, or depression that are a product of the work (Camacho et al., 2018). Based on the research, there are many contributing factors to teacher burnout and stress: demanding workload, lack of administrative support, excessive paperwork, minimal collaboration, and feelings of loneliness and isolation (Cancio et al., 2018). Burnout is a critical issue in terms of teacher effectiveness, engagement, and motivation (Thomas et al., 2019). Teacher burnout is complex in terms of the stressors, the need for administrative support, the impact on retention, teacher quality, and effectiveness (Harmsen et al., 2018; Haydon & Leko, 2018).

Impact on Teacher Retention

Too often, districts are experiencing shortages of teachers and the reasons cited are high stress and job dissatisfaction with factors stemming from working conditions (Ansley et al., 2019). This research centered on surveys that addressed the working conditions and work experiences of teachers. Results suggested that teachers are likely to remain in their schools if working conditions are satisfactory and the school climate is positive, whereas retention is low within schools with poor working conditions.

Beginning teachers were the focus of several studies along with the impact of stress on retention (Fitchett et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2018). The consensus of the studies reflected that teacher burnout symptoms were reflected both in teacher dissatisfaction with work which led to decisions to leave their jobs. Additional research indicates there is a possible relationship between low teacher retention and burnout (Perrone et al., 2019). The authors assert that employees who burn out find work unfulfilling and meaningless leaving them exhausted and feeling ineffective. The outcome results in poor performance or a decision to abandon teaching (Adnot et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2019). Essentially, the research implies that burnout might be a predictor that leads to teachers leaving the profession. Using survey data, the researchers analyzed administrative climate and its correlation to teacher burnout and the educator's decision to leave teaching. The results showed evidence that higher burnout scores coincided with lower teacher retention (Perrone et al., 2019).

Impact of School Accountability on Teacher Burnout

School accountability is prominently playing a role in the levels of stress experienced by teachers and principals (Saeki et al., 2018). There is pressure from federal, local, and state governments as well as the public to hold teachers and principals accountable for student performance while concurrently imposing mandates regarding teacher evaluations (Ingersoll et al., 2016). Logically, for students to make academic performance gains, they need knowledgeable and experienced teachers who are

committed to their students and who are determined to be effective based on evaluations of their performance.

Research by Ingersoll et al. (2016), suggests that the pressure of school accountability itself is impacting teacher retention. The push to improve school performance as a result of federal mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the revised version that was enacted in 2016, Every Student Succeeds Act, educators essentially carry the burden of the responsibility for accountability (Ingersoll et al., 2016). According to this research, the impact is especially experienced in lower-performing schools due to increased sanctions (Ingersoll et al., 2016). Implementation of school reforms to alleviate poor school performance has the unintended effect of decreasing teacher retention as a result of increased stress. The research evidence in this study suggests that giving teachers resources, tools, and increased control over instructional decisions can have a positive effect on increasing teacher retention (Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Test-based accountability policies, however, allow for minimum flexibility over instructional decisions. Studies on test accountability and teacher evaluation policies reflect that these policies have a negative influence on teachers, school climate, and stress. (Anderson et al., 2019; Gonzalez et al., 2017; Koedel et al., 2017; Saeki et al., 2017; Santoro, 2019). The studies suggested that teachers are compelled to follow policies while disregarding a moral obligation to meet students' needs (Santoro, 2019). Race to the Top, a federal grant competition designed to encourage the adoption of common academic standards, has furthered the mandates at the local level to teach with a focus on test-based accountability with student performance standards as a condition for evaluating teacher performance (Saeki et al., 2018). While the intent was to increase the rigor of teacher evaluations, studies suggest evidence of a relationship between performance ratings, job satisfaction, and teacher stress (Koedel et al., 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2017). Additionally, further studies indicate that the teacher evaluation process has

increased unhealthy competition amongst teachers, inconsistencies in administrator evaluations, and increased stress (Harris et al., 2019; Ingersoll et al., 2016; Haydon et al., 2018).

Impact of Stress on Teacher Effectiveness

While the intent of the teacher evaluation process is targeted upon school reform and improved student outcomes, studies cite that stress can be related to teacher performance quality (Ansley et al., 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). In one study, Wong et al. (2017) surveyed special education teachers to assess burnout levels. Based on the results, evidence indicated that there was a correlation between burnout and stress on teaching quality. Directly related, according to the study, were the student outcomes. Indirectly, there were indications that teachers who experienced burnout were more likely to leave their jobs which led to a less stable teaching force.

The link between teacher retention and stress is further explored by Farmer (2020). High expectations placed upon teachers compromise their mental state as teacher perceptions are found to influence their outlook on their working conditions (Harmsen et al., 2018). Teachers who experience a more positive work environment also reported greater job satisfaction. Stress was cited as the main contributor to job dissatisfaction, illness, and a desire to leave teaching as a profession (Harris et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2019).

The elements of a teacher's work life that can have detrimental effects on teacher retention are the focus of Wong et al. study (2017). Additionally, there were correlations between stress and its link to teacher quality and student engagement. The critical point of this study which centered on Maslach and Leiter's (1999) work on teacher burnout is that burnout has the potential to decrease teacher quality and thereby lower student engagement in the learning process (Wong et al., 2017).

Working Conditions and Teacher Support

Many factors exist that are driving teachers out of the profession and influence their willingness to commit to jobs in schools that serve students who are most in need (Ansley et al., 2019). The study by Ansley, et al. (2019) focused on schools with mostly at-risk students where there is a critical need for increasing teacher retention. The evidence indicates that high stress and job dissatisfaction with poor working conditions are directly related to low teacher retention. Through a series of surveys, the researcher compared teacher demographics and teaching experience to factors that affect working conditions: school leadership, workplace relationships, and job design (Ansley et al., 2019). The findings of the research imply that beginning teachers are in need of additional support and teacher retention can be significantly improved when positive working relationships exist in the workplace (Ansley et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2019). Effective communication, a positive school climate, and mutual encouragement correlated to greater teacher retention (Ansley et al., 2019; Reitman & Karge, 2019).

While ample research suggests that most teachers leave within the first five years of their teaching careers, one study surveyed experienced teachers who had invested time and energy into becoming effective in their careers (Glazer, 2017). Their reasons for leaving the profession give insight into those factors that contribute to teacher retention. The most salient reason for this group of committed educators was the lack of agreement between their philosophy and purpose and what was required of them by the school's administration (Glazer, 2017). The loss of authority in terms of what they felt was effective in their practice and what was mandated, drove them to exit out of their chosen profession (Glazer, 2017). The sample group of this study included teachers with at least three years of experience. The researchers employed semi-structured interviews to produce narratives that were then coded as to reasons for leaving the teaching profession. Teachers cited dissonance with teaching practices and teachers' loss of authority as

reasons for exiting their careers despite their investment in multiple years of teaching (Glazer, 2017).

Collegial support is fundamental to reducing teacher burnout and in turn, increasing teacher retention (Thomas et al., 2019). Schools can capitalize on this by building a network of professional, emotional, and social collaboration amongst beginning and experienced teachers (Suriano et al., 2018). This case study highlighted the practices at one elementary campus that reported prior low teacher retention rates. The school leaders employed practices specifically focused on beginning teachers. For new teachers, this is a critical period as research suggests that during the first five years, one out of five teachers leave the profession in secondary schools and, one out of seven, exit from elementary schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Harris et al., 2019).

This school implemented the New Teacher Program. The program design included monthly meetings, a book study, individual meetings with the school leadership, and instructional coaching (Suriano et al., 2018). The content of the monthly meetings included both items that kept teachers abreast of school events and pertained to developing instructional expertise. The one-on-one meetings with the administration occurred bi-monthly and were short but focused on professional practice. Experienced teachers were recruited to mentor beginning teachers with assistance given in classroom management, modeling lessons, and setting up professional development plans. The teachers were given autonomy in identifying their areas of needed support to add to the professional development plan. While positively impacting novice teachers in improving teacher retention, this action plan in this study revealed that it positively impacted job satisfaction for veteran teachers (Geiger, & Pivovarova, 2018). Key in all of the elements of this school's action plan was the effort made towards building relationships amongst teachers and with school leadership, namely, the principal.

Both leaders and experienced teachers provided a network of support for beginning teachers that included frequent meetings with school leaders. Beginning teachers and experienced teachers entered into mentorship opportunities. Professional development was differentiated and rendered with input from teachers. The results yielded a significant increase in teacher retention for the school that employed the additional support in this case study (Suriano et al., 2018).

Teachers' motivation and what it takes to foster teamwork were analyzed in another study researching specific actions that early career teachers expect from their colleagues to foster teamwork to build a network of support (Neto et al., 2018). Most of the listed behaviors for colleagues were categorized under attitudes and work ethic. New teachers expect a positive attitude, open-mindedness, punctuality, and responsibility. Along with this, they need their colleagues to refrain from negative behaviors that undermine teamwork such as gossiping (Neto et al., 2018).

Much of the research on teacher retention establishes that educators face many challenges: lack of parental support, disciplinary issues, and increased testing for accountability purposes (Glazer, 2017; Hayden et al., 2018; Neto et al., 2018; Perrone et al., 2019; Suriano et al., 2018). Failure to address these factors can easily develop a culture of negativity. One study turned the tide by implementing a program to target optimism amongst the school community. Through training for both administrators and teachers, everyone began by highlighting accomplishments and their impact on the students' achievement. The Optimism Project documented these highlights through charting, sharing, and communicating the positive actions of staff (Johnson et al., 2019). Results established positive responses from administrators and teachers, thereby emphasizing that finding meaning and making a difference is a significant factor in job satisfaction that can have the potential to improve teacher retention (Johnson et al., 2019).

Role of the Principal

Next to teachers, principals play a vital role in the effective functionality of schools (Atasoy, 2020; Baptiste, 2019; Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom & Bartenen, 2018). Extensive research has linked principal leadership style, teacher self-efficacy, and school climate as inter-related components (Goktas, 2021; Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Sever & Atik, 2021; Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018; Stein et al., 2016; Van der Vyer et al., 2020). The premise of this research indicates principals' behavior as reflected by leadership style can impact teacher effectiveness, perceptions, and school climate (Hammond, 2018; Menon & Lefteri, 2021).

One particular study investigated whether schools with more effective principals showed evidence of improving the retention of effective teachers. The premise is that effective principals should strategically target retention by focusing on the most effective teachers. An effective school leader can positively impact teacher retention by identifying effective teachers or those who show potential for growth (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). The principals' practices in this study also resulted in a more positive school climate as well as greater job satisfaction (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

The study analyzed principals' capacity for identifying high and low teacher performers through teacher effectiveness measures using observation scores (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Survey questions using teacher responses determined principal effectiveness. Further principal effectiveness measures from an administrator appraisal tool were used to rate principal effectiveness. The analysis examined the extent to which principal effectiveness was associated with higher or lower teacher retention rates among high and low-performing teachers. Results yielded that highly effective teachers seek to remain in schools with highly effective principals. Teachers with low-performance ratings are likely to leave a school (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

Finding and retaining the most effective teachers while building a positive school culture is essential; the resulting outcome would be improved student achievement

(Johnson et al., 2019; Young, 2018). Teachers want principals to set clear goals so that they, along with the team can work collaboratively and they expect an engaged principal who exemplifies the expressed vision (Neto et al., 2018). Effective school principals provide time for teamwork collaboration as well as the lessons that go along with facilitating teamwork. Teachers need principals who actively listen and express trust in their ability and potential (Neto et al., 2018).

Principal Leadership Styles

Drawing from Burns' (1978) pioneering and seminal study on leadership, Bass and Avolio have written extensively about leadership styles and leader effectiveness within various types of organizations (Avolio & Bass, 2001; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass, 1999). The authors distinguish between three types of leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2001, p. 2). The transformational leader is characterized by one who acts as a role model to others as they inspire and motivate those in their realm. This type of leader promotes a supportive climate while seeing others as individuals and generates respect and admiration from followers (Avolio & Bass, 2001).

Transactional leadership is dependent on rewards or disciplinary measures contingent on the follower's behavior or performance (Avolio & Bass, 2001). While this style of leadership can prove effective to a lesser level than transactional leadership, it is highly dependent on whether the leader remains active in monitoring others to ensure that standards are observed or is more passive, awaiting opportunities to detect deviations from the standard (Avolio & Bass, 2001). Bass (1999) contends that more than two decades of research show evidence that transactional leadership which is contingent on rewards for those within the organization continues to trail behind the traits found in transformational leadership.

The least effective style of leadership is laissez-faire also coined as passive avoidant (Avolio & Bass, 2001). The laissez-faire leader essentially fails to act, transact,

or lead. Based on Avolio and Bass (2001), leaders generally display a range of all three of these styles, a premise of full-range leadership. The model of a Full Range of Leadership contends that every leader will exhibit each of the styles in differing amounts (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to some of the research by these authors, leaders can become more effective through training that develops the traits of a transformational leader.

Principals' Impact on School Climate and Teacher Self-Efficacy

School climate which encompasses staff collegiality, goal setting and agreement, workload, resource availability, and teacher autonomy has been cited as a factor that can be influenced by the principal (Brion, 2021; Burkhauser, 2016; Menon & Lefteri, 2021). In a study of 27 high schools, statistically significant results were referenced in conjunction with principal leadership style, teacher self-efficacy, and school climate. Through the use of questionnaires to measure principal leadership styles, school climate, and teacher self-efficacy, results indicated that principals affect school climate which more indirectly impacts teacher self-efficacy. The results of the study propose that behaviors exhibited by principals can strongly influence the teachers' work environment; principal behaviors regarding participatory decision-making and moral perspective were most prevalent in determining school climate (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017).

Several studies have focused on teacher self-efficacy and the link to transformational leadership (Menon & Leftari, 2021; Stein et al., 2016). The consensus of these studies is that a principal's leadership style impacts teacher self-efficacy by inhibiting or encouraging positive change and a collaborative embrace of the mission (Ansley et al., 2019; Baptiste, 2019; Boyd, 2011; Burkhauser, 2017; Menon & Leftari, 2021; Stein et al., 2016). Additionally, transformational leadership was positively linked to improved educational outcomes (Atasoy, 2020; Baptiste, 2019; Damanik & Aldridge, 2017; Goktas, 2021; Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018).

Summary of Findings

Teacher retention rates are negatively impacting the state of education, especially in schools serving students in high-poverty urban areas (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The difficulties teachers face in today's classrooms present overwhelming challenges that lead them to leave these schools and sometimes leave the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Harris et al, 2019; Ingersoll et al., 2016; Olsen & Huang, 2018; Ramos & Hughes, 2020; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Principal leadership styles and the relationship to school climate, teacher self-efficacy, and school outcomes have been the focus of many studies; alternatively, principal leadership styles and the relationship to teacher burnout in K-12 schools require further study to effectively begin addressing the issue of teacher retention.

With increased accountability standards across the nation's schools, the focus is on the teacher to produce results through improved student achievement. Effective and experienced teachers are the solution to closing student achievement gaps (Ingersoll et al., 2016). By finding solutions to increase teacher retention, students' opportunities for success are positively impacted.

The challenge to improving teacher retention is multi-faceted and requires a review of the factors affecting teacher burnout. Teacher burnout is often cited as a reason for leaving the profession or at least moving from one school to another with fewer demographic challenges (Goldring et al., 2014). Schools with a network of support are best adapted to a positive work environment that helps teachers cope with the demands of teaching.

Essential to cultivating an environment that is conducive to retaining teachers is an effective school principal (Baptiste, 2019; Bukko et al., 2021; Burkhauser, 2017; Dahlcamp et al., 2017; Damanik & Aldridge, 2017; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Principals with the capacity to facilitate teamwork, express a clear mission and convey trust are successful in reducing teacher burnout (Neto et al., 2018). When principals see

the relationship between building positive school culture and reducing teacher burnout, they can establish school stability and ensure success for students through effective and experienced teachers. Prior research provides analysis of leadership styles and school climate or leadership style and organizational outcomes. This research study aimed to focus on the relationship between principal leadership style from teachers' perspectives and the relationship to teachers' burnout. The relationship between teacher burnout and principal leadership style requires further study in the realm of K-12 schools.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership theory is defined by Burns (1978) as a style of leading others so that the collective group is inspired and focused on the mission while working towards the outcomes. Though not dichotomous from transformational leadership, Burns (1978) states that transactional leadership “occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (Burns 1978, p. 19). In his seminal book on leadership (Burns 1978), the author contends that leadership is defined as a relationship between the leader and the follower gauged by differing levels of motivation and power.

Transformational leaders are typified by characteristics “denoted as the 4 I’s of transformational leadership. These four factors include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (Bass & Avolio, 1993 p. 117). Transformational leaders are purposeful in articulating and leading with a vision and empowering others to take responsibility to achieve in meeting that vision (Avolio & Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Metz et al., 2019). Whereas transformational leaders in K-12 schools would motivate teachers to work towards an established vision that aligns with student achievement and school improvement, transactional leaders would rely on directives while teachers would be expected to comply with an expectation of extrinsic rewards.

According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leadership (TL) provides a lens for both predictors and effects of a leader's behavior whereby leaders' actions can be gauged on a continuum from transactional to more desirable transformational actions. A TL leader propels others to perform and reach goals beyond their intended expectations thus giving followers a sense of personal and professional satisfaction; conversely, transactional leadership is contingent on rewards or corrective action (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Laissez-faire leadership, by definition, is inactive leadership and characterized by the avoidance or shirking of leadership responsibilities, according to research on this leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Sternberg, 2013).

The TL theoretical framework, according to Bass and Riggio (2006) consists of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and, individualized consideration. As the leader of a school, a principal's actions are influential in forming the perceptions of those they lead. As such, transformational leaders exhibit idealized influence when they serve as role models for their followers by exhibiting persistence and a sense of collective mission (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Principals exhibit inspirational motivation when they engage others to commit to a shared vision and to work towards organizational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In schools where staff are encouraged to be creative and are included in the decision-making process to address problems, principals are adept at intellectual stimulation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Principals who emphasize their role as a mentor or coach, practice individualized consideration. According to Bass & Riggio (2006), the transformational leader focuses on the individual's needs for achievement and growth.

Bass and Riggio (2006) suggest that TL leaders, through idealized influence, can inspire confidence as opposed to fear and panic, thereby reducing stress amongst followers. In contrast, more coercive transactional leadership through corrective actions may induce stress, anger, and lowered self-esteem (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership theory and its augmented relationship with transactional

leadership provide a lens to analyze the relationship between leaders and followers. While other studies have cited a relationship between transformational leadership and a positive school climate (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017), the relationship between teacher burnout and leadership style requires further study in the realm of K-12 schools. This study sought to gauge the principal's leadership style on the continuum of transformational leadership and the relationship to teacher burnout.

Conclusion

The literature outlined a framework to find the relationship between factors that contribute to teacher burnout and the relationship between school leadership on teachers' burnout. The following chapter will define the methodology that was followed during the study and defines the parameters of the study. The methodological aspects of this dissertation are detailed to include the operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sampling selection, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations for this study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout. This mixed-methods study included a collection of survey and interview data from a purposeful sample of high school teachers in a large urban school in southeast Texas. Quantitative data, collected from teachers using the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI-ES) and the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ-5X), were analyzed using simple linear regression. Data from the survey responses were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while an inductive coding process was used to look for themes that emerged from the teacher participants' interviews. This chapter will present an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sampling selection, instrumentation to be used, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethical consideration, and the research design limitations of the study.

Overview of the Research Problem

The factors that affect teacher burnout are multi-faceted: testing and accountability pressures, lack of administrative support, dissatisfaction with teaching as a career, dissatisfaction with working conditions, and lack of resources, to name a few (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Stressors encountered in any career can determine job satisfaction. Burnout has been determined to be a factor that influences teacher retention (Brasfield et al., 2019). Teacher burnout affects teacher retention and consequently impacts student achievement (Perrone et al., 2019). Prior studies link retention of effective teachers with positive school improvement (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

The role of school principals is equally complex and challenging in America's public schools. Further studies proclaim that the administrator, while essential in supporting novice teachers, is not always consistent with the expectations of mentoring and developing teachers in their profession (Walker & Kutsyuruba, 2019). Establishing a pathway for school leaders to improve strategies for the retention of effective teachers by reducing burnout is essential for school improvement (Baptiste, 2019). The impact of the principal in adopting strategies that support teacher development and nurture a supportive environment can reflect differences in the level of teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and, retention. The role the principal plays in this relationship is often quoted in research as the primary determinant factor in teacher job satisfaction (Ansley et al., 2019; Perrone et al., 2019). As teachers are critical to student performance, school leaders may need to develop awareness and employ strategies that reduce teacher burnout and stress.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The study consisted of the following constructs: (a) teacher burnout and (b) leadership style. Teacher burnout is defined as the extent to which an educator experiences emotional exhaustion, and senses an inequity between their job demands, and their ability to manage those demands (Schaufeli et al., 2009). This construct was measured using the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI-ES). For the purposes of this study, leadership style was defined as the full range model, ranging from charismatic and inspirational leaders to passive avoidant (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Based on research by Burns, Bass, and Avolio (1978, 1993), transformational leadership motivates and engages followers, propelling them to do more. The transformational leader seeks to inspire others to achieve goals that align with a vision to improve the organization. Alternatively, transactional leadership also seeks to improve the organization but the leader achieves the means by appealing to an individual's personal desires, thereby subscribing to a transactional exchange of favor for a favor. The passive-avoidant leader delays decisions, withholding accountability for self and others, thereby neglecting the achievement of

goals for the organization. Leadership style was categorized into these three styles of leadership: (a) transformational, (b) transactional, or (c) passive avoidant. Leadership style was characterized by a score attained on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout. Research questions guiding this study were:

1. Is there a relationship between a teacher's perception of principal leadership style and teacher burnout?
2. How do high school teachers at a Title I school define burnout?
3. In what way(s) do principals' actions influence a teacher's experiences of burnout?
4. How do teachers perceive the principal's support in professional development?

Research Design

For this study, the researcher used a sequential mixed-methods design to investigate the perceptions of teachers to examine the relationship between their burnout and their principal's leadership style. This design consisted of two phases: first, a quantitative phase, and second, a qualitative phase. The advantage of having implemented this design is that it allowed for a more thorough an in-depth exploration of the quantitative results by following up with a qualitative phase. A purposeful sample of high school teachers from one school in a large southeast Texas school district was solicited to complete the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI-ES) which assessed teacher burnout and the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ-5X) assessed their perception of their principals' leadership style. In addition, interview sessions were conducted with teacher participants to provide a deeper analysis of how teachers perceived the principal's leadership style and their degree of teacher burnout.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson’s product-moment correlations (r), while qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of teachers in one high school in Southeast Texas. This is a comprehensive title I high school in a large urban district. (TEA, 2023). Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 provide the staff and teacher data obtained from the 2022 Texas Academic Performance Report. The campus has 171 total staff members with 148 comprising teachers. The school has a representation of majority 45.9% male teachers and 54.1% female teachers with a majority of white teachers (32.9%), followed by Hispanic (26.8%), African American (25.0%), Asian (13.4%), Pacific Islander (0.0%), American Indian (0.7%), and Two or More Races (1.3%).

Table 3.1

Campus Staffing Data

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Professional Staff		
Teachers	148	86.5
Campus Administration	2.5	1.5
Professional Support	16.7	9.8

Table 3.2*Campus Teacher Demographic Data*

	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	68	45.9
Female	80	54.1
2. Race/Ethnicity		
African American	37	25
Hispanic	40	26.8
White	49	32.9
American Indian	1	0.7
Asian	19	13.4
Pacific Islander	0	0.0
Two or more races	2	1.3

A purposeful sample of the high school teachers in the participating campus was solicited to participate in this study. The school is a comprehensive campus serving ninth through twelfth grade. The campus is led by one principal and an additional 2 campus administrators. Teachers' experience varies from beginning teachers to those with over 20 years of experience. Table 3.2 provides the teacher campus data regarding experience obtained from the 2022 Texas Academic Performance Report. Inexperienced teachers, those with one to five years of experience account for 30.4.0% followed by those with six to 10 years of experience (19.9%), and then the total of 11 years of experience to over 30 years of experience making up a total of 46.3%. Overall, the campus has an enrollment of 2,404 students with 1,909 students identified as at-risk, 826 as Emergent Bilingual, 215 students with disabilities, and 2,237 identified as economically disadvantaged. For the

purpose of this study, a purposeful sample of high school teachers in grades 9-12 across all subject areas from this campus was solicited to participate.

Table 3.3

Teachers by Years of Experience

	Frequency (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Beginning Teachers (0 years)	5	3.4
1-5 Years Experience	45	30.4
6-10 Years Experience	30	19.9
11-20 Years Experience	41	27.7
Over 20 Years Experience	22	18.6
Teacher Total (<i>n</i>)	5	100.0

Participant Selection

The high school teachers were extended the opportunity to participate in the quantitative portion of this research study with a purposeful sample of teachers chosen to participate in the qualitative portion of this research study. The sample of teachers selected to participate in the interview were based on the burnout risk factors which identify teachers within high, mid, and low levels of burnout. Three teachers within each level of burnout risk was selected for interviews. Teachers were solicited to complete two surveys for the purpose of measuring burnout using the MBI and one for obtaining data on teacher perception of the principal's leadership style using the MLQ-5X.

Instrumentation

Maslach Burnout Inventory

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator's Survey* (MBI-ES) was developed by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (2016) as an adaptation of the original Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) for use with educators. Development of

the MBI-ES assessed its psychometric properties to ensure they were comparable to the MBI-HSS. A cross-validation study examined the construct validity of the MBI for teachers using principal factor analysis (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). The results for teachers were similar to those obtained from surveys of helping professionals in general. MBI-ES is a pre-existing validated survey that measures three dimensions of burnout: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishments (see Appendix A).

The original items were designed to measure aspects of burnout syndrome. Its development was based on exploratory research involving interviews and surveys to gather information regarding the attitudes and feelings that are typical of burned-out employees. Further research indicated a high correlation between the dimensions of frequency and intensity of the feelings and attitudes that characterize burnout. The survey includes 22 items that are presented in the form of statements. The responses were scored and divided into three subscales per MBI scoring procedures. Calculated scores for each subscale were classified as low, moderate, or high.

The participants answered statements of job-related feelings on an 8-point Likert scale (*0 = never, 1 = a few times a year or less, 2 = once a month or less, 3 = a few times a month, 4 = once a week, 6 = every day*) to indicate how often the participant had that feeling. The three measurements of burnout were calculated on an ordinal scale as burnout is theorized to occur on a continuum from high to low degrees of the experienced feeling. The MBI-ES assessed three main aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. The Emotional Exhaustion scale measured feelings of being emotionally exhausted by the job responsibilities leading to tiredness and fatigue. The Depersonalization scale measured negative attitudes towards students which lead to disconnectedness and psychological withdrawal from students. The Personal Accomplishment scale measured feelings of competence and achievement. The three areas resulted in a scale score. Burnout is regarded as being present to some

degree in all workers (Maslach et al., 2010). The reliability of the three MBI-ES scales indicates reliability and stability over time. Cronbach alpha estimate has been reported of .90 for Emotional Exhaustion, .76 for Depersonalization, and .76 for Personal Accomplishment (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981); .88, .74, and .72, respectively (Gold, 1984).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ-5X), developed by Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio (2004) is a pre-existing validated survey that measures a range of leadership and effectiveness behaviors to identify characteristics of each style of leadership (see Appendix B). The MLQ-5X was used in nearly 300 research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses around the world between 1997 and 2004. Prior research has shown that leadership and behaviors are strongly linked with both individual and organizational success (Bass & Avolio, 1993,1999). The researchers, during 25 years of study, were able to reliably differentiate highly effective from ineffective leaders in various organizations such as military, government, educational, manufacturing, technology, church, correctional hospital, and volunteer organizations (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The survey indicates leadership styles measured by the following six factors and their operational definitions:

Charisma/Inspirational – Provides followers with a clear sense of purpose that is energizing; a role model for ethical conduct which builds identification with the leader and his/her articulated vision.

Intellectual Stimulation – Gets followers to question the tried and true ways of solving problems; encourages them to question the methods they use to improve upon them.

Individualized Consideration – Focuses on understanding the needs of each follower and works continuously to get them to develop to their full potential.

Contingent Reward – Clarifies what is expected from followers and what they will receive if they meet expected levels of performance.

Active Management-by-Exception – Focuses on monitoring task execution for any problems that might arise and correcting those problems to maintain current performance levels.

Passive Avoidant – Tends to react only after problems have become serious to take corrective action and may avoid making any decisions at all. (Bass & Avolio, 2004, p. 53)

The MLQ underwent a comprehensive validation study to develop refinements which resulted in the MLQ-5X in response to criticisms of the MLQ. Reliabilities for the total items and for each leadership factor scale ranged from .74 to .94. The reliability from this study indicated that the MLQ-5X met the standard cut-offs for consistency in measuring each of the leadership factors of the survey (Bass & Avolio, 1999).

The MLQ-5X is composed of 45 descriptive statements. Participants were asked to respond to these statements using a five-point Likert scale (*0 = not at all, 1 = once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, 4 = frequently if not always*). Individual scores resulted in measures of their perceptions of the principal. Composite scores ranged from 0 to 180. The score from lowest to highest placed the participants' perceptions of the principal on a continuum from passive or avoidant leader to transformational leader.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative

Prior to data collection, the researcher gained approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's (UHCL) Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and the school district in which the study took place. Next, the selected district teachers were contacted via email with information regarding the purpose of the study and the process for collecting surveys via receipt of a survey cover letter. The researcher disseminated the cover letter and surveys through an electronic link using Mindgarden, the surveys'

publisher. The purpose of the study, voluntary participation, the timeframe for completing the surveys, as well as ethical and confidentiality considerations were communicated to teachers through the cover letter.

The survey responses were collected over a six-week period. The teachers were notified of the survey via email at the beginning of the data collection period. Follow-up emails and survey links were sent to teachers during both the first two weeks and again during weeks three through six of the data collection period. Upon receipt of the survey responses, the data was entered into the quantitative research software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis.

All data has been secured in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer and in the researcher's office within a locked room cabinet at all times. At the culmination of the study, the data will be maintained by the researcher for five years, which is the time required by CPHS and district guidelines. The researcher will destroy the contents of the file once the deadline is expired.

Qualitative

A purposeful sample of nine teachers was solicited to participate in the interview. Based on the MBI-ES, three teachers were selected with a score that fell within each of the burnout risk factors which identify teachers within high, mid, and low levels of burnout. Following the first survey, MLQ-5X, the teachers were interviewed on their perceptions of the principal's leadership style and the influence on their stress and burnout levels. The teacher participants had the opportunity to discuss the relationship between the teacher and principal and the effect it had on their burnout. Teacher perceptions of the principal's leadership at the campus were further examined using an individual interview protocol that was designed with open-ended questions. The interview results were examined using a semi-structured format.

The interview included a total of 9 questions with clarifying questions as appropriate. A minimum of three teachers within burnout risk factors which identify

teachers within high, mid, and low levels of burnout were interviewed via zoom based on teacher preference. All interviews were recorded then transcribed using Word dictation. Participants received a copy of the transcription to review for accuracy of their statements. Questions for teachers included the following:

What is your definition of burnout? How would you describe burnout?

Let's talk about the demands you have as a teacher. Which of these demands causes you to feel burnout?

What factors of teaching do you believe contribute toward burnout tendencies? Can you cite specific examples of work challenges that provoke burnout?

Describe how your experiences of burnout have affected you as a teacher.

The interviews were scheduled at the teacher's convenience at a location or format of mutual agreement between the teacher and the researcher. The participant responses were audio recorded using an iPhone app and transcribed by the researcher using Microsoft Word. All data collected was stored in the computer hard drive and on an external drive. Both of these devices are password protected and housed in the researcher's private home office. The data will be stored in a locked location for five years, after which time the data will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Following data collection, the data were downloaded from Excel into IBM SPSS for further analysis. For the purpose of answering research question one, data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson's product-moment-correlations (r). The coefficient of determination (r^2) was calculated to determine effect sizes or the amount of variation in the dependent variable that could be attributed to the independent variable. The independent variable, leadership style, is a continuous variable representing the degree to which the principal's leadership style is transformational, transactional, or

passive-avoidant. The dependent variable, teacher burnout, is a continuous variable. Statistical significance was measured using a p-value of 0.05 for this study.

Qualitative

Data obtained from the teacher interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Upon completion of the transcription of interview recordings, an inductive coding process was used to analyze the emergent themes in the qualitative data. To answer questions two through four, individual interview data was analyzed for emergent themes and was coded to identify patterns and themes. Participant responses were recorded and transcribed to ensure that all of the teachers' responses were analyzed during the coding process. The researcher organized the data by establishing themes or categories that emerged from the responses. After the transcripts were reviewed, a color code system of the transcripts was used to identify the emergent themes. Themes and categories were established by looking for redundancy in the responses. The themes were used to make connections between teachers' perceptions and the relationship to the principals' leadership style and behaviors. Once the themes were established, the researcher displayed them on a chart as part of the data reduction phase. The findings were documented and conclusions were drawn reflecting the data collected.

Qualitative Validity

During the collection of qualitative data, trustworthiness was paramount to enhance reliability and validity (Hays & Singh, 2012). The qualitative analysis process included validation by using triangulation of the individual teacher interview responses. Based on research by Patton,(2002), triangulation includes the cross reference of multiple methods and multiple perceptions to check for consistencies among participant responses. For this study, data triangulation was established by seeking multiple participants and by collecting data through multiple methods: surveys and individual interviews. The questions for the interviews were developed with the assistance of a qualified and unbiased peer researcher. In an educational setting, the researcher must seek to

understand in context to guide the work. This process requires one to be flexible within the environment thereby building trust and rapport to elicit meaning and understanding from participants' responses to ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012).

To increase validity, data obtained from the interviews was subject to participant review by having teachers review the transcripts to enhance the accuracy of the responses as well as the researcher's interpretation of the data. The questions for teachers were peer-reviewed by experienced educators to ensure the questions reflected the required data for each research question. The peer reviews served the purpose of obtaining feedback and trustworthiness related to questions posed to teachers about their perceived leadership style of the principal and the effects on teacher burnout. To increase accuracy and validity, the researcher used the triangulation method by identifying the different perspectives of the participants once responses were color coded by themes. Second, the data was collected from interviews and the review of the recorded interviews. The questions for the interviews were presented in a coherent and logical order to maximize responses. The interview questions sought to gather data about the participants' perception of the key constructs. Interview questions were presented in the same manner and order to give participants ample opportunity to respond. Last, transcriptions of the recorded interviews were completed and then reviewed twice by the researcher for accuracy. The process allowed the researcher sufficient data to create an understanding of the constructs under study.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

Before the collection of any data, the researcher gained approval from the UHCL's CPHS and the school district in which the study took place. Once permission was obtained, teachers were provided with a survey cover letter stating the purpose of the study, whereby participation was voluntary with the identities of the participants kept completely confidential. Confidentiality of survey data is being maintained and

individuals participating in interviews have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Various strategies have been utilized to remain neutral and objective throughout the data analysis process, including review of the transcriptions by participants, triangulation of the data, and peer review of the interview questions. The data collected has remained secure in a locked room that serves as the researcher's office. The researcher will maintain the data for five years as required by CPHS and school district guidelines. After the deadline has passed the researcher will destroy and delete all data files associated with the study.

Research Design Limitations

The research design will consist of several limitations that could compromise external and internal validity. First, given that this study has gathered stress and burnout data from teachers, honesty has been dependent on how comfortable the teachers felt in responding to the survey. Second, the validity of the survey could be jeopardized if the teachers did not honestly answer the questions. Third, dependent on personal honesty was the teachers' comfort level in responding to perceptions of the principal's leadership style. Fourth, the focus of this research study was based on teacher stress and burnout. The current situation with educators having been key players battling a global pandemic has exponentially challenged teachers' stress levels and also greatly decreased teacher retention as many teachers have been faced with choices between their personal health and continuation in the profession. Last, teachers' time is limited and has hindered the completion of the surveys and interviews resulting in giving the teachers extended time for survey completion with multiple pleas and reminders to participants.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher burnout and principals' leadership style. This chapter sought to identify the correlations amongst the constructs. In order to better understand the principal leadership style and the relationship to teacher burnout, both the quantitative and qualitative findings have

been essential to the study. In Chapter IV, surveys, interview responses, and retention data are analyzed and discussed in further detail.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout. This chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis of this study. Specifically, this study explored the relationship of teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership style and the teachers' burnout. The chapter initiates with the demographics of the participants followed by the results of the data analysis for each of the four questions and concludes with a summary of the findings.

Participant Demographics

Data from both surveys were collected from 101 teacher participants in one high school in a large urban school district in southeast Texas. During the spring semester of 2022, the researcher sent the MBI-ES and the MLQ-5X electronically to 167 teachers in grades 9-12. Of the 167 participants, 121 completed the MLQ-FX, and 101 completed the MBI-ES, leaving a total of 101 qualified participants for this study. Table 4.1 represents the number of participants selected for this study by gender and race/ethnicity. Female participants comprised the majority of the participants with 71.1% ($n = 59$) while male participants represented 28.9% ($n = 42$). Forty-seven percent ($n = 47$) of the participants identified as White while Hispanics represented 27%, Asian/Pacific Islanders 14% ($n = 14$), and African American 13% ($n = 13$).

For the qualitative study of this research, nine teachers were selected based on burnout scores with ranges in the low, mid, or high range. Table 4.2 reflects the gender and race/ethnicity of the interview participants. Female participants comprised the majority of the participants with 66.5% ($n = 6$) while male participants represented 33.5% ($n = 3$). Forty-four percent ($n = 4$) of the participants identified as White, while Hispanics represented 34% ($n = 3$), Asian 11% ($n = 1$), and African American 11% ($n = 1$).

Table 4.1*Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Survey Participants (%)*

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	42	28.9
	Female	59	71.1
2. Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	47	47
	Hispanic	27	27
	Asian/Pacific	14	14
	Islander		
	African American	13	13

Table 4.2*Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Interview Participants (%)*

		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	Male	3	33.5
	Female	6	66.5
2. Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	4	44
	Hispanic	3	34
	Asian	1	11
	African American	1	11

Research Question One

Research question one, *Is there a relationship between a teacher's perception of leadership style and burnout?*, was measured using Pearson's product-moment

correlations (r) to examine whether a relationship existed between the teachers' perceptions of their leader's five transformational qualities (idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) and burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) on the MBI-ES. Each characteristic of transformational leadership was included as the independent variable and each characteristic of burnout was included as the dependent variable. All variables were of continuous measurement. Table 4.3 depicts the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of Transformational Qualities and Burnout

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Transformational Qualities				
Idealized Attributes (IA)	2.00	4.00	3.26	0.55
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	1.50	4.00	3.28	.52
Idealized Behaviors (IB)	1.00	4.00	3.23	.69
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	.00	4.00	2.98	.85
Individual Consideration (IC)	.25	4.00	2.46	.94
2. Burnout				
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	5.00	51.00	23.20	6.31
Depersonalization (DP)	.00	11.00	4.42	2.88
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	24.00	48.00	38.65	5.30

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients (r) were computed for each of the five transformational factors and the three teacher burnout factors. Of the 15 correlations, none were found to be statistically significant. Table 4.4 presents the summary of the correlations. These findings indicated that although teachers' perceptions of the principal ranged towards more transformational qualities, there was no statistically significant correlations to teacher burnout factors of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment and the principal's transformational qualities.

Table 4.4*Correlations Between Transformational Qualities and Burnout Factors*

Transformational Quality and Teacher Burnout	Pearson's r	p-value
Idealized Attributes and Emotional Exhaustion	.071	.480
Idealized Attributes and Depersonalization	.071	.481
Idealized Attributes and Personal Accomplishment	.000	.999
Inspirational Motivation and Emotional Exhaustion	.089	.376
Inspirational Motivation and Depersonalization	.053	.600
Inspirational Motivation and Personal Accomplishment	.043	.667
Idealized Behaviors and Emotional Exhaustion	.044	.661
Idealized Behaviors and Depersonalization	.022	.826
Idealized Behaviors and Personal Accomplishment	.085	.399
Intellectual Stimulation and Emotional Exhaustion	-.001	.991
Intellectual Stimulation and Depersonalization	.045	.654
Intellectual Stimulation and Personal Accomplishment	.071	.483
Individual Consideration and Emotional Exhaustion	.003	.974
Individual Consideration and Depersonalization	.061	.542
Individual Consideration and Personal Accomplishment	-.041	.682

*Statistically Significant ($p < .05$)

Research Question Two

Research question two, *How do high school teachers at a Title I school define burnout*, was addressed by using a qualitative inductive coding process. In an effort to gain a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of their experiences with burnout and the effects on the teachers' emotional well-being, nine teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. The selected teachers ranged on the burnout scores from low, mid, to high burnout. Maslach et al. (2018) define burnout on the emotional exhaustion scale as 17 or higher. The median score on the MBI-ES for the group of participants was 23.20. On the scale for depersonalization, the authors define burnout as 7 or higher. The median score for the participants was 4.42. On the scale for personal accomplishment, the authors define high burnout as 38 or lower. For the participants, the median score was 38.65. Of the nine, four were Caucasian, three were Hispanic, one was African American, and one was Asian. Six were female and three were male. The emergent themes and subthemes of the respondents' comments are provided including direct quotes. Table 4.5 represents the participants' identification code for anonymity and their range of burnout scores (low, mid, high).

Table 4.5*Participants' identification code, gender, race, and burnout range*

Teacher Code	Gender	Race	Burnout Range
Teacher A	Female	Hispanic	High
Teacher B	Male	Asian	High
Teacher C	Male	White	High
Teacher D	Female	African American	Mid
Teacher E	Female	Hispanic	Mid
Teacher F	Male	Hispanic	Mid
Teacher G	Female	White	Low
Teacher H	Female	White	Low
Teacher I	Female	White	Low

Teachers' Experiences with Burnout

Exhaustion and Overwhelming Expectations

Feelings of exhaustion and overwhelming expectations were cited often by participants in each of the burnout ranges. Teacher A noted, "The expectations of the teachers is still very high. We don't have the time to do the work and are having that balance battle." Essentially, Teacher A expressed that the source of her stress stemmed from being overwhelmed by a multitude of tasks while trying to address and prioritize these responsibilities. Exhaustion from putting in the time to complete tasks and the knowledge that more was still left to be done left teachers less confident of fulfilling the expectations placed upon them.

Teacher B said, "I'm exhausted. Every single day." Physical and mental exhaustion was a common experience noted by all of the participants in the study. This aligns to the higher median score for emotional exhaustion on the MBI-ES. Teacher C

described burnout as “physically tired, fatigued, not excited to be at work, every day, in and out. It then spreads to the rest of your life.” The mental fatigue experienced in the school setting affected teachers’ lives outside of the workplace. Low energy due to exhaustion left them unable to perform daily personal tasks. Teacher D further explained that burnout left her with “no energy when at home. Can’t cook, can’t walk, so I lay in bed but I can’t sleep. I can never have deep sleep because I keep thinking about school.” The exhaustion experienced at work impacted the teachers’ energy levels at home, leaving them unable to perform necessary daily tasks such as cooking healthy meals or exercising.

Coupled with exhaustion and unable to carry on with the responsibilities of daily life, eight of the nine participants cited difficulties with sleep, which likely further decreased their personal and professional productivity. Regarding sleep deprivation, Teacher B commented, “At this point in my career, I need less troublesome nights. I have sleepless nights. The exhaustion, I don’t want to come to school in the morning. Doesn’t go away but it’s game time when I get here.” Incredibly, others like this teacher attempted to persevere in the face of sleep deprivation and exhaustion, such as Teacher F who added, “I just do the best I can, even though I’m not able to sleep. I’m thinking about things. I get up. Trying to finish in the middle of the night.”

The effects of feeling exhausted and overwhelmed take their toll on teachers’ well-being as well as their desire to remain in the teaching profession. Teacher F defined burnout as “feeling overwhelmed. I’m wanting to look actively at a change of career, maybe another school.” Teacher retention is critical to student achievement and school success however, the effects of burnout negatively impact teachers so that too many are opting to leave the teaching profession such as this teacher who is considering a career change due to the experiences with burnout.

Contributing to teachers’ burnout, are the testing standards that consequently place the burden of accountability directly on teachers and dependent on the students’

performance on these assessments. Teacher G cited, “I always wanted to be a perfectionist but now my energy level is so low and the mental tiredness!” Additionally, Teacher H explained:

My definition of burnout is emotional exhaustion, so just when you can’t anymore. I am a person that likes to do well. I like to be successful so when I’m teaching a group of students and they’re impossible, humanly impossible, I can’t leave feeling successful. They can’t achieve a level of proficiency on a state test, it’s my fault.

Teachers are tasked with evidence of preparation of their students which is the result of state accountability standards. Besides the work load on teachers, assessment standards are taking a toll on teacher burnout. Teacher C further elaborated:

The pressure of standardized testing is a system that we must respond to but none of us can succeed. It is designed for us to fail so Republicans can get rid of public education. We had to rewrite everything to focus on testing. We always have to attend meetings that use our free time so more work can be piled on top of what we are already doing. We just keep drowning.

School accountability has been cited in research as a factor in the levels of stress experienced by teachers and principals (Saeki et al., 2018). The pressure to hold teachers and principals accountable for student performance is a significant cause of burnout (Ingersoll et al., 2016). The emphasis placed on students’ performance is placing yet additional stress on teachers leading to even higher levels of burnout.

Teachers who prove to be effective do not reap the rewards through improved working conditions or reduced workload. Teachers in this category expressed that good performance led to an increased or more challenging work load. As an example, Teacher B said:

Burnout makes you more anxious ‘cause you have a lot and here comes another one. I became good at it, working with challenging kids. Last year, I had 25 inclusion

kids, this year, 39. That is why if you are doing a good job, they reward you with more to the mountain of work. I feel punished for being a good teacher.

By proving adeptness at working with students who required special education interventions, this teacher was in effect, punished by being assigned almost twice the number of students requiring these services.

Teacher H added:

I feel like everything is kinda stacked against me, you know. So, I take on a ninth grade inclusion class. I look like an ineffective teacher because their scores are low on the STAAR. Last year, I had a class of 16. They all passed the STAAR. But I had another class of 36 students. Seems like a scheduling issue. And need to find a way to acknowledge. Seems like the system doesn't work like it should.

The condition of feeling exhausted and overwhelmed in the school setting was common amongst the participants as a result of work load, high expectations due to accountability standards, and lack of autonomy to factors that affected their teaching roles.

Effects of Burnout on Health and Teacher Self-Efficacy

As to the effects of their experiences with burnout, teachers described symptoms which affected their personal health.

Teacher B expressed, "Teaching makes you more anxious cause you have a lot. Here comes another one (referring to additional tasks). Could be just an email or ARD meeting." This teacher expressed anxiety as a symptom contributing to burnout due to additional tasks, with increasing responsibilities from one school year to the next. She added, "Every year becomes more exhausting than the year before."

Good health habits seemed to be sacrificed due to burnout experiences. Teacher D said, "I'm just stressed out and I lose older habits like eating healthier or exercising, good sleep, relaxing." This teacher recognized the need to incorporate better health habits but

noted that her recovery period happened in the summer months. “I’m just tired all the time but more energized in the summer so I recover then.”

With higher burnout, some teachers found it necessary to seek mental health care as a means to handle high burnout symptoms. Teacher A said,

I’m struggling with my health. Help the teachers learn mindfulness and meditation techniques. I’m also in therapy. I started seeing a therapist to help me cope with the anxiety about everything that’s going on with my job.

Even teachers experiencing lower burnout scores expressed that they suffered with mental health issues. Teacher G added, “Because of the high stress, I’m not eating well. It’s brought on depression.” Although some did not acknowledge seeking healthcare to address burnout symptoms, they recognized that it was a toll on personal health. Teacher H said, “I’m sick and I’m so sad all the time.”

Adding to their diminishing health, teacher efficacy also suffered due to stress and burnout. Teacher C stated:

I am not eating or sleeping well. I don’t feel as effective. Everything takes lots of effort. I end up making poor eating decisions like fast food. I’m so exhausted, I end up in front of the TV. Dealing with depression. I wake up during the middle of the night.

The effect of teacher burnout and stress can be related to teacher performance quality and teacher self-efficacy (Ansley et al., 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). The feelings of exhaustion and lack of sleep left teachers feeling unable to adequately fulfill their job responsibilities due to low energy and the effort required to be an effective teacher.

When describing the effects of burnout, Teacher I conveyed:

I have trouble sleeping and relaxing. I’m still good. I don’t claim to be the best but I am the best cheerleader. I get involved. I work on getting buy in from kids. But I am less tolerant and have less patience.

The teachers' descriptions and comments emphasized their experience with the symptoms of burnout. The teachers noted instances that met the definitions of emotional exhaustion to a greater scale but also in degrees of depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. Teacher G summed it up best, "You feel like I'm not as proficient as I would expect to be, doing the best but not good enough." The participants recognized that the symptoms of burnout left them unable to keep up with the workload of teaching, thereby, significantly reducing their efficacy.

Burnout and Job Satisfaction

The effects of burnout on job satisfaction were often cited by participants. Teacher G expressed, "Burnout is when you don't feel like giving your best. I'm dragging out of bed to get to school." The need for a positive work environment can influence job satisfaction and minimize teacher burnout (Ansley et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2019). The lack of job satisfaction diminishes the motivation to perform well and to fulfill job responsibilities. Teacher H stated:

I burnout because I'm working really hard in a situation where I feel like everything is stacked against me. I teach an inclusion class and it makes me look like an ineffective teacher because their scores are low on the STAAR. The people who are teaching these classes are not being rewarded.

Personal accomplishment is a key factor in maintaining a positive outlook in the work environment. The pressures of accountability standards however, are a factor in making teachers feel less effective, leaving them dissatisfied with the working conditions.

In referring to his role in English as a Second Language instruction, Teacher B commented:

In 2012, I was asked to teach ESL kids. I became good at it. About two years ago, they gave me retesters. Those retesters are challenging kids. After that, I got inclusion. Last year, I got 25, now 39 kids. That is why if you get good at something, they reward

you with more. It's really a lot. Burnout is always there. I'm not rewarded. I feel punished for being a good teacher.

The teachers in this Title I high school were tasked with the academic progress of students who were identified as at risk and grouped under special populations such as special education, emergent bilinguals, or low socio-economic. Their adeptness at teaching these special populations led to increased additional responsibilities in teaching these students. Being tasked with these groups was perceived as punishment rather than reward for teacher efficacy.

In expressing dissatisfaction with the teaching career, Teacher I said, "I receive no joy because the tasks exceed the job satisfaction level." The effects of burnout are found to influence teacher outlook on their working conditions and job satisfaction (Harmsen et al., 2018). The burnout experienced by teachers diminished their job satisfaction level. Teacher F stated:

I feel very cynical and feel that nothing is possible. I disappear when I burnout and I don't do any work at home. I'm actively looking at a change of career, a different profession. It's less about students and more about the system that is in place. You feel that you are less and less and it takes away the fun and the reason you wanted to do this."

The quotations and reasons that teachers stated regarding burnout are an indication that teaching is overwhelmingly emotionally exhausting and therefore, impacts job satisfaction. The symptoms regarding burnout and reasons for job dissatisfaction that teachers shared are supported by other research as to why teachers are leaving the profession (Harris et al., 2019; McCarthy, 2019).

Given the precarious nature of the teacher retention issue, teacher burnout even when measures are in the lower end of the spectrum, still impact teacher morale, culture, and the emotional well-being of teachers. The findings thus far, indicate that teacher burnout is prevalent and the effects are taking a toll on teachers' efficacy and emotional and mental health.

Research Question Three

Research question three, *In what way(s) do principals' actions influence a teacher's experiences with burnout?*, was answered by using a qualitative inductive coding process. In an effort to gain a better understanding of how principals' behavior influenced teacher burnout, nine teachers participated in interviews concerning this issue. The emergent themes are as follows, including some of the respondents' comments.

Influence of Principals' Behavior on Burnout

Principal's Awareness of Burnout

To begin addressing this issue, respondents first were asked to reflect on the principal's awareness of their experience with burnout. All of the participants' perceptions of the principal's awareness effort were generally positive. Teacher C noted:

He was aware of what could contribute to our stress but blind as to burnout on himself. He put in some long hours. For teacher appreciation, he walked around and hand delivered a muffin and a children's book called, "Love". Another time, kids were prank calling me. He called to check on me and came to my room to check on me.

The teacher's response aligns to the quantitative findings of this study which found no significant relationship between the leadership style of the principal and teacher burnout. Teacher C's burnout range was high although she regarded the principal with positive attributes.

Teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership style fell in the higher range of transformational attributes. The premise of research indicates principals' behavior as reflected by leadership style can impact teacher effectiveness, perceptions, and school climate (Hammond, 2018; Menon & Lefteri, 2021). The teachers' perceptions of the principal as one who exhibited transformational attributes, however, did not align to high burnout measures amongst faculty members.

Teacher I stated:

He had a way about him. He has a calming presence, quietly authoritative. He has a way of not saying a whole lot but taking care of business. He helped me as a teacher. He had a sense of calm and assurance so you feel like he helped you in managing your stress and burnout.

Principal's practices according to research does result in a more positive school climate as well as greater job satisfaction (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). This study focused on the relationship of the principal's leadership style on teacher burnout. The principal was attributed with helping to minimize teachers' stress by engaging with teachers in positive ways. While participants attributed transformational qualities to the principal's leadership style, the study found higher burnout scores amongst the faculty of this high school, especially in emotional exhaustion.

Although not always given credit for awareness of teacher burnout levels, the principal was still perceived to place genuine effort to assist teachers. Teacher F commented, "He was not aware of the stress I was under but if anything, good people person. If I came up to him, he would have tried to assist. Just so much going on, did not want to bother him." Although this teacher felt that the principal did not empathize with their experiences of burnout, it was acknowledged that there was an expectation of a positive response from the principal.

In the case of the participants with the highest burnout scores, Teacher A felt that the principal was mostly unaware of the stress level teachers were experiencing. Although listening to concerns, he was perceived as unable to provide tools to reduce burnout. "He is also facing challenges. He listens but the tools he has to give are few if any." In the case of this teacher, the perception was that the principal listened to concerns but did not provide the level of support needed to overcome the challenges.

Similarly, Teacher B who experienced high burnout, commented,

"Admins are always aware [of burnout] but have been away from the classroom or been away for many years. They know but don't understand." This teacher, while

concurring that the principal was aware of the teacher's experiences with burnout, was unable to provide guidance due to lack of teaching practice and skill.

This teacher was observant of the principal and other school leaders who set expectations for instructional delivery yet, did not meet those expectations in practice. The teachers expressing high burnout held expectations of the principal to have the capacity to model the vision and expectations for instructional delivery.

Attributes that Define a Transformational Principal

Transformational leaders are characterized as those who act as a role model to others as they inspire and motivate those in their realm. This type of leader promotes a supportive climate while seeing others as individuals and generates respect and admiration from followers (Avolio & Bass, 2001). The teachers within all three burnout ranges rated the principal high in transformational attributes. The themes for interactions with the principal fell into five categories: communication, building relationships, compassion, and trust.

Communication

The principal's communication was perceived by teachers in positive terms. The attributes associated with positive communication from the principal encompassed various qualities. Teacher B reflected that he trusted the principal by saying, "What I like about him, he is very honest. Always trying to keep us informed about what is happening. The perception of him being honest was a big relief. It helped alleviate stress."

Additionally, the principal was perceived as being a good listener, another important dimension of good communication. Teacher C stated, "He made everyone feel they had a voice. In meetings, to his detriment he would listen to all those complaints." The principal provided opportunities for teachers to voice concerns, thereby, allowing them to have a voice and feel a sense of collaboration.

Being present and approachable to stakeholders is a key role of a good communicator. Teacher D noted, "He is very open and transparent. He is always smiling

and talking to students.” Similarly, Teacher H added, “If you need to, you can talk to him.” To be perceived as one who inspires and motivates others while being considerate of each individual, the principal must engage and connect with those whom he leads. These qualities were recognized in this leader through effective communication skills.

Bass and Riggio’s (2006) research states that transformational leaders create clearly communicated expectations that inspire and stimulate followers. The leader reassures others that problems can be overcome. By being visible, engaging, and inspiring trust, the principal was perceived as a good communicator and thereby, a transformational leader.

Building Relationships

Building relationships was perceived often as another strength of this principal as a means to motivate and stimulate others. The principal actively engaged personally with individual participants who recognized these behaviors as a genuine effort to build a relationship between teacher and leader. Teacher B stated, “He visits me once or twice a year to chat one on one. It helps alleviate stress.” This participant recognized that the principal’s behavior to visit, albeit, only minimally, served to reduce stress.

Even planned events such as teacher appreciation, provided an avenue for teachers to feel valued and recognized by the principal. Teacher C recognized this event:

This Friday, I saw him at training and went to say “Hi” and he gave me a big hug. Very good man. For teacher appreciation, he delivered a muffin. He made me feel seen. It didn’t change anything but made me feel we were on the same team.

Relatedly, the principal found opportunities to give teachers recognition and show gratitude throughout the school year. Teacher D added, “At Christmas time, he visited every teacher and gave us a book. Because of him, the stress is less.” These occasions provided teachers some relief from their daily experiences with burnout based on the participants responses stating that it alleviated stress.

The ability to connect personally with others was attributed and recognized by the participants in the study. Both Teacher E and Teacher F stated, “He is a good people person.” To build relationships with his followers, this principal recognized the need to be genuine in his efforts to relate to others as a school leader. Perhaps Teacher G best summarized the principal’s efforts when he commented, “Dr. [principal] is encouraging. He gave snacks to teachers. The support and positive relationship with your principal is a big factor. My relationship with him helped out a lot.” Building relationships provides an avenue for the leader to be recognized as one who exhibits the attributes of a transformational leader.

Compassion

Compassion was another common characterization of the principal, in his interactions with teachers. Individual consideration is an attribute of a transformational principal. Participants cited occasions that reflected the principal’s compassion and consideration through individual interactions. Teacher C described an incident whereby the principal offered support following a stressful event. “Kids were prank calling me. The officer told him and he came to check on me.” That the principal took the time to consider the teacher’s well-being by visiting out of concern was a considerate act of compassion that was acknowledged by the teacher.

Other participants, while not reporting specific incidents, recounted the willingness of the principal to readily offer help. Teacher F reported, “If I came to him, he would have tried to assist. I did not want to bother him. He was always trying to help.” Acknowledging the importance of this particular attribute, Teacher G stated, “Respect and support from the principal lessens stress.” Clearly, participants in this study recognized the individual consideration that the principal gave to followers through caring and compassionate behaviors. Thus, transformational leaders pay attention to their followers’ needs and personal development while being considerate by showing support (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Trust

Lastly, trust was an attribute that was cited to describe the principal's leadership style. Effective leaders are respected and trusted. Followers will count on them and trust them to do the right thing. Participants in the study cited trust in reflections of their leader. Teacher D recounted, "I trust that if I had gone to him, he would have helped. Having him as a principal, makes me have less stress." Teacher G offered that the trust the principal exhibited in others had a two-fold effect by stimulating and motivating others to do better. "He gives trust and that person will do their best. He is quietly authoritative. He is good at addressing things without being intimidating."

Given the vulnerability that is placed on individuals under stress and the effects of burnout, trust in leadership is a critical factor. The responses regarding behaviors exhibited by the principal that impacted stress and burnout, Teacher D reflected, "He was an anchor for lots of teachers to feel safer. If I had a serious problem, he would have helped." Teachers' perception of the principal's behavior and interactions strongly influence the teachers' work environment (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). As evidenced by teacher reflections of their principal's behaviors, this leader was trusted to support, and to help, teachers as well as to motivate followers to expend effort because of the trust given others.

Research Question Four

Research question four, *How do teachers perceive the principal's support in professional development?*, was answered by using a qualitative inductive coding process. The emergent themes varied on the spectrum from perceived individualized professional development opportunities to perceptions of no professional development provided. The following are some of the respondents' comments.

Perceived Individualized Professional Development

Of the nine teachers who participated in the interviews, there was one instance of targeted professional development outside of the school setting. The teacher detailed that

the principal had fully supported his participation in opportunities for training to become a certified examiner in International Baccalaureate. Teacher C stated, “I was able to become an IB teacher. He could have said “no” but instead supported that. I’m looking into becoming an examiner, to calibrate with others.” Although this participant exhibited high burnout, the teacher recognized that this transformational principal exemplified the qualities of one who supports personal development of followers and pays attention to individual’s needs for achievement and growth. According to authors of the MLQ-5X, (Bass & Riggio, 2006), “the leader spends time teaching and coaching” (p. 7). The individually considerate leader individualizes needs for achievement and professional development by acting as mentor or coach.

Out of the nine respondents, five perceived that the principal helped to develop their efficacy by less direct means to meet their needs. In regards to professional development that the principal facilitated, Teacher D stated, “He supports all teachers and during meetings, I can give opinions. He helps teachers reasonably. He doesn’t spend time on unnecessary things. He puts teachers first.” This participant felt that the need for building individual professional capacity was met with minimal intervention. A common complaint of teacher burnout was the requirement to attend frequent meetings for the purpose of building teacher capacity. By attending to the “less is more” strategy, the principal earned positive acknowledgement.

The principal further individualized professional development by modeling and coaching. Teacher F gave an example of this effort:

He interviewed me and he gave me tips of what he did. I try to relate lesson to students. Bring lesson to their interests. I saw him as a teacher who cares and how you have to build relationships with students.

The quotations in this category reflected that the teachers experienced formal and informal professional development opportunities. The majority of the participant group generally expressed satisfaction in having their needs met for professional growth.

Lack of Support in Professional Development

Three of the nine respondents reflected more negativity in their responses about the principal's support in their professional development. The responses reflected both lack of support for building teacher capacity as well as the need for this professional development.

Teacher A commented when asked to describe how the principal had supported their growth and development, "Not really, not personally. Teachers need to be supported." The participant felt that professional development had not been provided yet necessary to build teacher capacity. Additionally, Teacher H stated, "I didn't feel like that was his job and I don't think he did anything regarding my growth and capacity." Although not placing the responsibility on the principal to provide the necessary professional development opportunities, the teacher expressed the lack of opportunity to build on efficacy.

In contrast, Teacher B placed the responsibility and the expectation that the principal should provide and model effective teaching to followers by reflecting on teacher development sessions offered during the start of the school year:

Administrators have been away from the classroom for many years. They know but don't understand. Every year at the beginning, we have two weeks of PD. Admins appraise us, but for two weeks, we are the students and they are the teachers and they are pretty bad at it. They forget how to be a teacher. They don't know how to be a teacher anymore. They are trying to tell us what to do but they themselves can't do it.

Whether the principal serves as coach or mentor directly, significant research has established that teachers need resource availability as a means of building their capacity and it is a factor that can be influenced by the principal (Brion, 2021; Burkhauser, 2016; Menon & Lefteri, 2021).

The teachers asserted the need for building capacity and professional development. Teacher B added, "Teachers need to be supported. Administrators take

students' side and chastise the teacher in front of kids." Teacher A further added, "He's not capable, he doesn't have the knowledge base that he needs to know what he can and can't do to help us." These expressions convey that there is a need for more individualized and targeted professional development amongst the staff of this high school.

The implications from the respondents' responses in this category indicate that principals may need to provide more opportunities for teachers to seek professional development to meet their needs. Additionally, the teachers' perception of the principal as highly transformational did not significantly impact their experiences with burnout. The findings based on the participants responses from the interviews reflect that teachers are experiencing significant effects of burnout yet, perceptions of the school leader are categorized as highly transformational. This further supports the quantitative findings that there was no significant relationship between teacher burnout levels and principals' leadership styles.

Summary of Findings

This chapter provided the analysis of the quantitative data collected from two surveys: The MLQ-5X and the MBI-ES. The survey data addressed question one. A qualitative analysis of nine teacher interviews provided findings for questions two, three, and four. Overall, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data reflect that there is not a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership attributes and teacher burnout. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that teachers are experiencing high burnout and recognize its presence and effects. High burnout for this study was evident in the median scores which fell in the high burnout range of the MBI-ES. The outcomes from this study suggest a need to better prepare teachers with skills and coping mechanisms to handle burnout and a recognition by school leaders for the need to review the workload of teachers.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher burnout and low teacher retention can have detrimental effects on student achievement, thereby, undermining the success of schools as it relates to school accountability (Ansley et al., 2019; Baptiste, 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Ingersoll et al. (2016) also suggest that low teacher retention affects school accountability, especially in low-performing schools as it is these schools that face greater struggles with retaining effective teachers. Efforts to better understand the link between principal leadership style and teacher burnout present an opportunity to minimize teacher burnout and maximize the retention of teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school leadership style and teacher burnout. Four questions were explored for this study. The following four questions guided the research for this study:

Is there a relationship between a teacher's perception of principal leadership style and teacher burnout?

How do high school teachers at a Title I school define burnout?

In what way(s) do principals' actions influence a teacher's experiences of burnout?

How do teachers perceive the principal's support in professional development?

Teaching as a profession has been ranked as one of the most stress-inducing careers with data indicating that a significant number of teachers experience low job satisfaction (Brasfield et al., 2019). Consequently, low job satisfaction as an outcome of burnout has resulted in low teacher retention (Harmsen et al., 2018). Research supports that there is a strong correlation between the quality of the teaching staff and students' academic growth (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Grissom & Barntanen, 2019). Relatedly, research has linked teacher job satisfaction and student success to principal leadership

styles (Baptiste, 2019). Little research exists on teacher burnout and the link to principals' leadership styles. Considerable research exists on burnout in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2018) however, few studies have addressed teacher burnout in K-12 public schools.

Research on transformational leadership styles of school principals has focused on school climate, student academic achievement, and self-efficacy, however, there has been scarce research to give educators a better understanding of the role that principals play in mitigating the factors that lead to teacher burnout. According to Babb and Gesler (2021), the transformational leader exhibits skills that can propel followers to a higher level of motivation, higher competency, higher self-efficacy, and higher job satisfaction thereby increasing their level of personal accomplishment. Yet, questions remain in regard to principals' awareness of teacher burnout, the effect of principals' leadership style on burnout, and approaches that school leaders can take to provide a better network of support to teachers in a highly stressful profession.

Summary of the Study

The principal and teachers from a Title I high school in a large urban district in southeast Texas participated in this study. The teachers were solicited to complete two surveys: the MLQ-5X and the MBI-ES. The MLQ-5X measured the teachers' perception of the leadership attributes of the principal while the MBI-ES measured burnout. This study used frequencies, percentages, and Pearson's product-moment correlations (r) to investigate the relationship between (a) transformational leadership and teacher burnout, and (b) the teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership style. In addition, nine teachers with burnout scores in the low, mid, and high range participated in semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data were analyzed using an inductive coding process and were used to enhance the understanding of the teachers' perceptions of the principal and the relationship to burnout.

The teachers were individually interviewed for the qualitative portion of this study. All interviews were conducted outside of the school day to increase the comfort and setting of the participants. During the interview, participants responded to a set of open-ended questions to encourage dialogue with the interviewer (see Appendix E). The data from the interview were coded to establish any existing themes emerging from the participants' responses. This chapter elaborates on a summary of the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

This study was based on the theoretical framework of transformational leadership theory which has been defined by Burns (1978) as a style of leading others so that the collective group is inspired and focused on the mission while working towards goals. The author further contends that leadership is defined as a relationship between a leader and the followers with underlying levels of motivation and power. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders impel others to perform beyond expectations, thus giving followers a sense of personal and professional achievement and satisfaction. As such, this was a study that examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of leadership style and the relationship to teacher burnout.

Research Question One

While transformational leadership has the potential to inspire and motivate others (Bass & Riggio, 2006), teacher burnout is a result of varied and complex factors. Based on research, there are many contributing factors to teacher burnout and stress: a challenging workload, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and minimal collaboration (Cancio et al., 2018). Prior research has established a relationship between school climate and principal leadership (Goktas, 2021; Menon & Lefteri, 2021; Sever & Atik, 2021; Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018; Stein et al., 2016; Van der Vyer et al., 2020). Based on the quantitative portion of this study, there was no significant relationship between a principal's leadership style and teacher burnout. The principal of

this high school was perceived as highly transformational however, teacher burnout scores were significantly high for emotional exhaustion and in the burnout range for personal accomplishment. Maslach et al., (2018) define burnout on the emotional exhaustion scale as 17 or higher. The mean score for the group of participants was 23.20. On the scale for depersonalization, the authors define burnout as 7 or higher. The mean score for the participants was 4.42. On the scale for personal accomplishment, the authors define high burnout as 38 or lower. For the participants, the mean score was 38.65. Based on the quantitative data, there were no statistically significant correlations between teacher burnout factors of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment and the principal's transformational qualities. While no direct relationship was established between the leadership style of the principal and teacher burnout among the faculty in this study, the hypothesis cannot be dismissed. The demographics of the school community encompass the realm of issues which have been a factor in low teacher retention due to burnout. This high school reflects the difficulties experienced by teachers whereby the severity of the issues is greatest in schools that have high poverty demographics (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Schools like this typically fall short of meeting accountability standards, thus needing the greatest improvement, and have lower rates of teacher retention due to teacher burnout (Courtney, 2019). The high school has a population of students of color, who are limited in English, and who experience a lack of academic progress. Prior research has established that schools like this have a tendency to encounter low teacher retention, teacher stress, and burnout (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). These factors, outside of the principal's leadership style, are all contributors to teacher stress and burnout. Further research is needed to compare a larger sample of principal leadership styles and teacher burnout levels of the respective faculties to establish if indeed, there is any relationship between the two constructs.

Teachers identified the leader as exhibiting idealized attributes of transformational leadership, while the burnout levels suggest that the findings are consistent with research by Cancio et al., 2018 and Ingersoll et al. (2016) which have cited increased workload pressures for student achievement, difficulties with student behavior, and lack of teacher autonomy as factors that result in high levels of teacher stress and burnout. The causes of burnout stem from a variety of factors and although the teacher perceptions of the principal were positive, the survey on teacher burnout indicated high levels of emotional exhaustion. Accountability standards, high poverty demographics, and complex school reforms are impacting teacher burnout (Camacho et al., 2018; Cancio et al., 2018; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Harmsen et al., 2018; Haydon & Leko, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2016). This study focused on one high school and the teachers within this high school. Perhaps a larger sample of schools led by principals with differing leadership styles would provide a better understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and teacher burnout.

Research Question Two

A purposeful sample of nine teachers was asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions. The purpose was to identify teachers' experiences with burnout and its effects. The qualitative analysis of the participants' responses identified two key themes when defining experiences with burnout: (a) exhaustion and overwhelming expectations, and (b) effects on health and teacher self-efficacy. Findings by Maslach et al. (2018) and Camacho et al. (2018) assert that educators experience burnout symptoms when tiredness and fatigue drain their emotional energy. The participants' responses were consistent with the previous research as well as the quantitative data of this study.

Feelings of exhaustion and overwhelming expectations due to a multitude of tasks were cited by all of the participants. The participants cited that physical and mental exhaustion left them with low energy which decreased their personal and professional productivity. As a result of the experiences with tiredness, the participants often felt

overwhelmed by the job responsibilities. Additionally, the mental and physical fatigue sacrificed their physical and mental health. Teachers reported that the high demands and workload in relation to resources and time left them with feelings of being overwhelmed. The teachers' perceptions that job responsibilities were mismatched with the available resources resulted in symptoms that they defined as burnout. The descriptors teachers cited confirm studies that categorize aspects of teacher burnout (Ansley et al., 2019; Brasfield et al., 2019; Cancio et al., 2018). Consistent with this prior research, teachers mentioned being unable to meet work demands within the work day, the pressures of student performance on standardized testing, and student discipline (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Camacho et al., 2018; Cancio et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2018; Haydon & Leko, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2016).

Teachers noted the impact that burnout had on their mental health: depression, anxiety, insomnia, and sadness. Teachers cited a lack of motivation to meet job responsibilities or to take initiative for self-care such as healthy meal preparation and exercise. Three of the nine participants revealed that they had sought professional mental health care for depression or anxiety. Recent research has focused on the need for teacher self-care due to the major stressors in the teaching profession (Bailey & Weiner, 2021; Gregersen et al., 2021). The findings of this study suggest that teachers must become more resolute in managing stress. Divoll (2021), Divoll and Ribeiro (2021, 2022) and Ribeiro and Divoll (2021, 2022) provide helpful strategies that can help manage stress thereby, increasing teacher effectiveness as well as enhancing personal fulfillment. Strategies that include meditation, building a circle of social connections, and other mindfulness techniques should be part of a professional development repertoire to help thwart the crisis of burnout in the teaching profession.

Teachers cited various sources that triggered burnout; accountability standards and the pressure of students' performance were often mentioned as one cause of this exhaustion which in turn, resulted in lowered teacher self-efficacy. Common experiences

were stress that was placed on their teacher performance quality and decreased motivation. Participants often felt that the accountability standards were utilized to gauge their performance and efficacy. Generally, the symptoms of burnout left teachers unable to keep up with their teaching responsibilities and therefore, lowered their efficacy and job satisfaction as a result of the pressure of accountability standards.

Another source of burnout was the system of placement of special populations of students. Teachers who demonstrated effective performance by working with special education or emergent bilingual students felt that rather than recognition, larger classes were assigned to them. In addition, teachers felt that working with these special populations of students made it more difficult to show academic growth. Similarly, findings by Divoll et al. 2018 suggest that ESL teachers experience lack of teacher training specific to the needs of their students, feelings of isolation from other team members, and lack of administrative support.

The participants' responses reveal findings that have implications for providing teachers with coping mechanisms to counteract the effects of burnout. Collegiality and building a network of professional, emotional, and social collaboration among teachers can positively impact teacher working conditions (Suriano et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2019). Professional development is critical to strengthen teachers' abilities to manage stress and thereby, avoid burnout. Divoll and Ribeiro (2021, 2022) advocate that teachers need the training to help combat stress and the authors delineate specific strategies that can help teachers counteract stress through improved classroom management techniques. Given the results of studies like this which ascertain that teachers are experiencing significantly high levels of stress, school leaders must be purposeful in creating a professional development plan to give teachers the necessary training and resources to cope with the challenges of classroom management and other areas that are sources of stress and burnout.

The teachers' experiences with burnout are consistent with findings by Maslach et al. (2018) who define burnout syndrome as feelings of being emotionally exhausted and overwhelmed by work responsibilities. It is a tired and fatigued feeling that leads to a drain on energy levels. The effects of these symptoms can lead to decreased performance and engagement with students which aligns with the teachers' perceptions that their teaching quality was diminished as a result of stress and burnout (Maslach et al., 2018). The symptoms of burnout that teachers shared are found to influence teacher outlook on their working conditions and job satisfaction (Harmsen et al., 2018). Teacher burnout was clearly evident among the faculty of this high school and the experiences and causes aligned with previous research on the topic of burnout. Maslach et al. (2018), identify burnout on the MBI-ES scale of emotional exhaustion as 17 or higher. The mean score for the teachers surveyed was 23.20. The mean for depersonalization was below the range of burnout (4.42), and the mean score for personal accomplishment was 38.65 which is slightly above an indication of burnout.

The current findings in this portion of the study can inform district leaders to better support teachers by equipping them with the necessary skills to cope with the job demands as well as the social and emotional toll on teachers' mental health. The network of support should include professional development, and resources for social and emotional well-being such as therapy and support groups. The benefits would offset the cost of low teacher retention due to teacher burnout and would positively benefit students through enhanced teacher efficacy. According to Divoll and Ribeiro (2021), increasing teacher retention would positively impact school climate, student achievement, and staff collegiality.

Research Question Three

The principal's actions as they related to the influence on burnout that teachers experienced, were the focus of this portion of the study. The sample of nine teachers was asked to respond to open-ended questions to analyze how the principal influenced their

experiences with burnout. The qualitative analysis of the participants' responses identified two key themes when describing the principal's influence: (a) the principal's awareness of burnout, and (b) attributes that define a transformational principal. The participants further cited specific attributes of the transformational principal: (a) communication, (b) building relationships, (c) compassion, and (d) trust. Prior research has linked principals' leadership behaviors to teachers' emotional healing and self-empowerment and furthermore, suggests that transformational behaviors are essential to the beliefs that teachers hold regarding their self-efficacy (Hammond, 2018; Menon & Lefteri, 2021). The themes identified from the participants' responses align with other research which found that establishing a close relationship through open and collaborative communication with the principal can have a positive effect on teachers' feelings of efficacy and other motivational factors (Sever & Atik, 2021; Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018; Stein et al., 2016). Research has also established that principals whose behaviors are perceived as transformational by teachers positively impact teacher well-being, thereby decreasing stress levels (Van der Vyer et al, 2020).

The teachers' perceptions of the principal's awareness regarding teacher burnout were generally positive. The findings thereby, aligned to the quantitative findings of this study which found no significant relationship between the transformational leadership style of the principal and teacher burnout. Teachers at this school generally displayed high measures of burnout, especially in the construct of emotional exhaustion, yet perceived the principal's leadership style as transformational. As an example, one particular teacher with a high range of burnout regarded the principal with positive transformational attributes. The principal was attributed to helping to minimize teacher stress by engaging in a positive manner with stakeholders. The principal was perceived as exhibiting genuine effort to assist teachers.

In defining the behaviors of the principal, the participants' responses fell into four themes regarding interactions: (a) communication, (b) building relationships, (c)

compassion, and (d) trust. The principal was credited with keeping others informed and this was cited as helpful in alleviating stress. This aligns with findings by Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, (2018) that collaborative communication is an essential skill of the transformational principal. The communication was described as reciprocal so that teachers felt they had a voice while interacting with a leader whom they considered approachable. Communication as a tool can be critical to enhance the ability of the leader to engage and connect with followers. Bass and Riggio (2006) state in their research on transformational leadership that clearly communicated expectations can serve to inspire, stimulate, and motivate teachers under stress. Through visibility and personal interactions, the principal was perceived as possessing effective communication skills. The effects of the principal's leadership style are possibly reflected in the burnout measures of the faculty. The mean for emotional exhaustion ranked significantly high to indicate burnout (more than 5 points on the burnout scale) while the mean for depersonalization fell close to three points below the level indicating burnout. For personal accomplishment, the mean was slightly over the scale to indicate burnout. Although the quantitative findings reflected no significant relationship between the constructs of burnout and leadership style, the qualitative analysis reflects that teacher perceptions of the principal's charismatic skills likely reduced the feelings of stress in teachers thereby keeping the burnout ranges for personal accomplishment above the scale for burnout. These findings align to research that charismatic and transformational leaders can positively impact teacher perceptions and reduce stress among followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Training for principals that focuses on acquiring a transformational leadership skillset is critical to help minimize the levels of teacher burnout and thereby increase teacher retention.

Frequent and positive interactions led this principal to build positive relationships as a means to motivate and inspire others. By engaging personally and individually, the participants cited these opportunities as genuine efforts that helped to alleviate stress.

Planned events such as special occasions like teacher appreciation and holiday visits to give teacher recognition and show gratitude provided teachers with some relief from their daily experiences with burnout. The ability of the principal to build relationships with the faculty is consistent with the teachers' responses on the survey whereby the ratings were highly transformational for this principal. The maximum score for idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, idealized behaviors, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration was 4.0 with a minimum of 0. The mean for each attribute was as follows: idealized attributes were 3.26, inspirational motivation was 3.28, idealized behaviors were 3.23, intellectual stimulation was 2.98, and individual consideration was 2.46. The results indicate that teachers attributed a charismatic and transformational skillset to the principal, and the responses to the qualitative study indicate that stress was minimized as a result of these attributes.

Besides visibility, the principal was credited with a willingness to help others. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), a leader who exhibits individual consideration, an attribute of a transformational leader, pays attention to their followers' needs and personal development while being considerate. The teachers recognized this trait through personal interactions and concern in times of individual teachers' needs. By capitalizing on providing emotional support and individual consideration, the principal was fundamental in positively influencing teachers' perceptions thereby reducing stress.

Another common trait attributed to the principal was trust. This trait was reciprocal as teachers cited that the trust was placed upon them to try their best to fulfill their responsibilities. The principal was in turn, trusted so that teachers felt that he was available to support and help when needed. The teachers' perceptions regarding communication, building relationships, compassion, and trust are consistent with research by Damanik and Aldridge (2017), which states that the principal's behavior and interactions strongly influence the teachers' work environment. In the case of this high school, the principal's behaviors were perceived by teachers to have an impact on

relieving the faculty's experiences with burnout and the responses align with the lower burnout scores in personal accomplishment and depersonalization as well as the transformational attributes of the principal per the MLQ-5X.

Research Question Four

How teachers perceived the principal's support of their professional development was the focus of this portion of the study. The sample of nine teachers was asked to respond to open-ended questions to analyze how they felt the principal helped to support them through professional development. The qualitative analysis of the participants' responses identified two key themes when describing their perceptions: (a) perceived individualized professional development, and (b) lack of professional development. One group of participants expressed that the professional development they engaged in met their individual needs while the second group expressed a lack of adequate professional development. Teachers have different needs in terms of professional development so that it is essential for leaders to establish a plan for professional development that is relevant to the needs of teachers based on their levels of experience and the students whom they serve. Furthermore, the complexities of teaching require that professional development include a focus on social and emotional resources for teachers. Research has established that providing emotional and professional support for teachers is essential to job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy (Thomas, et al., 2019). Responses reflected that two-thirds of the teachers expressed satisfaction with the level of support in professional development.

The responses for this portion of the study fell into two basic categories; support either was existent and appropriate or did not occur to meet the individual needs of the teacher. For teachers who perceived that their professional development needs had been met, the responses recognized that the principal exemplified the qualities of a leader who supports the personal development of the staff and pays attention to the individual needs for growth and development. Bass and Riggio (2006) contend that the transformational

leader expends time to teach and coach followers. According to the participants, the principal spent time individually with teachers to coach and mentor them. When necessary, the transformational leader is a mentor and coach to help develop efficacy. Teachers cited instances of formal and informal professional development but generally concurred that the actions aligned with personal needs.

One-third of the respondents expressed that the principal neither provided professional development support nor met their individual needs for professional development. All three of these respondents concurred that support was necessary. The perceptions of these teachers revealed that their needs for professional development went unmet due to the principal's inability to model strategies for effective teaching. Research has established that teachers need resource availability as a means to build their professional capacity and this is leveraged by the principal (Brion, 2021; Burkhauser, 2016; Menon & Lefteri, 2021). The findings in this section of the study indicate that the principal may need to address a more formal and thorough approach to provide opportunities for individual professional development to support all teachers. Professional development to address classroom management can alleviate problematic issues for teachers: aggression in teacher response to student behaviors and stress due to the inability to manage student behavior (Divoll, 2022; Divoll & Ribeiro, 2021, 2022; Gregerson et al., 2020). Principals and school districts need to recognize the professional needs of teachers for the purpose of developing resilience to burnout while developing the capacity to overcome the challenges of teaching. Building teachers' knowledge of students' brain development, the impact of stress on the brain, and managing stress have the potential to improve teachers' well-being and positively affect students (Divoll & Ribeiro, 2021, 2022).

In general, emotional exhaustion is prevalent among the teachers of the high school where the study was conducted. While the principal was perceived as possessing a transformational style of leadership, and the teachers cited his behaviors as helpful in

diminishing stress, other factors impacted their working conditions to increase their levels of burnout. These factors stemmed from the diversity of students experiencing learning gaps, lack of time to perform job responsibilities, and accountability standards imposed by mandated testing. The burnout levels in the realm of emotional exhaustion that teachers experienced had negative consequences on their motivation, their perceived efficacy, and on their mental and physical health. A plan of professional development that includes coping strategies to optimize mental health and that helps teachers manage other stressors such as student behavior and motivation, can be beneficial in minimizing the emotional exhaustion levels of this faculty.

Implications

Teacher burnout is adversely affecting school climate, student achievement, and teacher retention (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Camacho et al., 2018; Cancio et al., 2018; Harmsen et al., 2018; Haydon & Leko, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2016). Those negatively affected by low teacher retention as a result of teacher burnout are children of color who attend schools with low-socio economic demographics (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017). The results of this study have implications that can help target problem areas: teacher well-being and retention, principals' and teachers' professional development, and districts' awareness of the impact of accountability standards on teacher burnout. While this study did not find a significant relationship between teachers' burnout and the principal's transformational leadership, the teacher interviews as well as the teachers' perceptions of the principal as a transformational leader may have offset the level of burnout that teachers experienced, albeit in the higher range, for the staff of this high school. This study indicates that by addressing teacher burnout, there may be an opportunity to address teachers' mental health through professional development as well as teacher retention.

Implications for Teachers

Teaching is undoubtedly a stressful profession inducing burnout and resulting in low teacher retention. To minimize the effects of high stress and burnout, teachers must be intentional in seeking opportunities to build resilience. Researchers have identified strategies that can protect or regain teachers' mental wellness (Bailey & Weiner, 2021; Gregerson et al., 2021; Divoll & Ribeiro, 2021, 2022; Ribeiro & Divoll, 2020). Learning to manage stress can be beneficial to optimize professional efficacy, increase job satisfaction, and improve the learning environment to maximize student achievement.

Within the school system, teachers should have a voice to ensure that their social-emotional well-being is taken into consideration in the planning for professional development. Outside of the school setting, teachers should take personal responsibility for self-care. Strategies that can help include building a social network, meditation, practicing gratitude, and a general focus on taking care of self (Ribeiro & Divoll, 2020). By taking care of themselves, teachers can better cope with the challenges of the teaching profession.

Implications for Principals

Transformational leadership is a contributive element to school success. In the case of this study, the principal's transformational qualities were perceived as helpful to minimize teachers' stress. Logically, it can be assumed that systemic and routine procedures to ensure that principals attain a skillset to improve their leadership style should be included in a leadership development plan of action. Districts should include opportunities to address principals' development to become more transformational as leaders to minimize burnout among teachers.

Additionally, principals who wish to decrease teacher burnout, thereby increasing teacher retention, need training in the aspects of the social-emotional needs of teachers as well as strategies to help optimize the work environment. Furthermore, helping principals reduce stress by adding to their coping strategies can be a beneficial step in promoting

improved leadership and positively impacting teachers' mental health. Reducing stress for principals can lead to positive results for all stakeholders in the school setting (Divoll & Ribeiro, in press)

Implications for School Districts

A larger sample size of principals and schools could yield more concrete results to analyze the link between teacher burnout and leadership style. Increasing the sample pool of principals would allow for a comparison of leadership styles and their influence on teacher burnout, thus providing a greater understanding of the relationship between leadership style and burnout. The findings of this study are limited by the sample of one principal with one defined leadership style as perceived by the teachers. The methods of this study, however, could be replicated in other schools by district and school leaders interested in the relationship between leadership style and teacher burnout to better understand the crisis of teacher retention.

School districts could potentially use the study's findings to review their teacher professional development action plan through an analysis of teacher burnout. By determining the sources of burnout, targeted training could then address teachers' needs, and build their capacity to better manage stress and burnout. Through analyses of responses, districts can address staff development for teachers to develop strategies to manage burnout and principals to develop skills in improving the attributes of a transformational leader. Targeted professional development for principals to improve skills in building relationships among staff while individualizing teacher support and simultaneously building on strategies to control stress should become a priority goal to reduce burnout and increase teacher retention. Prior research advocates that the well-being of principals is critically important to school outcomes and their need to minimize stress should be a focus due to their influence on others in the school community (Divoll & Ribeiro, in press).

Recommendations for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research in this area of study is to increase the sample size of schools and perhaps include other school levels such as elementary and middle schools. Through this means, the researcher could compare and analyze the impact of various principals' leadership styles on teachers' burnout experiences within each school. Second, the process for the qualitative study would transition from individual interviews to focus groups for each school to better manage the number of participants. Third, the questions for the focus group would increase to gather more in-depth responses for analysis of the two instruments used to obtain more descriptive responses that address the teachers' experiences and needs in professional development opportunities. Lastly, the dissemination of surveys would be conducted in person and via hard copies as the electronic distribution required multiple attempts with significant incentives to gather the necessary responses from participants. By disseminating surveys during faculty meetings, PLC's, or professional development sessions, the researcher(s) could ensure a more timely and efficient collection of survey responses.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the principal's leadership style and teacher burnout. This mixed methods study included one quantitative question that required teachers to complete two surveys that measured perceptions of their leader's five transformational qualities (idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) through the MLQ-5X and their level of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) through the MBI-ES. A qualitative analysis followed using data from individual interviews of nine participants who had experienced burnout at the low, mid, and high levels.

The prevalence of burnout among teachers is supported by research (Brasfield et al., 2019; Camacho et al., 2018; Cancio, 2018). This study has shed light on the level of

burnout that is common amongst the faculty of one high school under the leadership of a principal who is perceived by teachers to possess highly transformational attributes. The quantitative portion of the study revealed that there is not a significant relationship between the principal's leadership style and the burnout levels of teachers. The qualitative portion of the study, however, did indicate that teachers' experiences and effects of burnout aligned with research by Maslach et al., (2018). Furthermore, teachers cited instances whereby the principal exhibited behaviors that aligned with transformational leadership qualities (Burns, 1978; Riggio, 2006). Teachers acknowledged that the principal's behaviors were noteworthy in minimizing burnout. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teachers face overwhelming demands due to workload, the pressures of standardized testing, classroom management issues and lack of professional development resources. The study also concluded that a principal's transformational leadership style can help reduce the level of burnout among teachers. To address the issue of burnout and thereby increase teacher retention, school districts and campus leaders must focus on professional development for both teachers and principals. The findings identified in this study can impact how schools and districts raise awareness of burnout and build capacity to manage the stress that is prevalent among the teaching workforce. The MBI-ES survey identified high levels of stress among the faculty of a school that largely expressed positive regard toward the principal. Teachers expressed the toll that burnout took on their professional and personal lives. This information should be used as a guide for districts and schools to build awareness of teachers' mental health and plan avenues to address it. In addition, this study can propel districts to provide professional development for principals to help develop the qualities that can lead them to become more transformational through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. In addition, this study can serve as a springboard for further research on the consequences of burnout on the current state of our schools' teacher retention crisis.

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APPENDIX A:
TEACHER SURVEY COVER LETTER

Spring Semester, 2022

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Houston-Clear Lake and I am conducting a study examining the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher burnout. Your answers to these questions will assist me in understanding the relationship among these constructs.

This survey was developed to assist researchers in measuring the perceptions of teachers in regard to principal leadership styles and behavior. Please answer every question. This survey is entirely voluntary; however, answering all questions with a response will help make the survey data most useful. This is a short survey and should only take about 10-15 minutes. All answers will be kept confidential.

Since this survey is voluntary, you may stop participation in this study at any time. Also, you will not directly benefit from this survey, but it is providing valuable data for the K-12 principals.

Your willingness to participate in this study is greatly appreciated. By proceeding with this survey, it will be implied your consent to take part in this study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at

DelarosaD9447@uhcl.edu.

I appreciate your time to complete this survey!

Sincerely,
Diana De La Rosa, M. Ed.
Doctoral Candidate



DelarosaD9447@uhcl.edu

APPENDIX B:

MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY-EDUCATORS SURVEY SAMPLE

Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson & Richard L. Schwab

The purpose of this survey is to discover how educators view their job and the people with whom they work closely.

Instructions: On the following page are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, write the number “0” (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

How often: 0 =Never, 1= A few times a year or less, 2= Once a month or less, 3= A few times a month, 4= Once a week, 5= A few times a week, 6= Every day

Example: How often 0-6

Statement: 1. _____ I feel depressed at work.

If you never feel depressed at work, you would write the number “0” (zero) under the heading “How often.” If you rarely feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number “1.” If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week but not daily), you would write the number “5.”

MBI - Educators Survey - MBI-ES: Copyright ©1986 Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson & Richard L. Schwab. All rights reserved in all media. Published by Mind Garden, Inc., www.mindgarden.com

APPENDIX C:
QUESTIONNAIRE

For use by [REDACTED] only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on October 24, 2018 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Leader Form

My Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID #: _____

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word “others” may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Fairly often Frequently, if not always

01234

1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts 0 1 2 3 4
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate 0 1 2 3 4
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious 0 1 2 3 4
4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standard 0 1 2
- 34 5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise 0 1 2 3
- 4 6. I talk about my most important values and beliefs 0 1 2 3

4 7. I am absent when needed	0 1 2 3
4 8. I seek differing perspectives when solving problems	0 1 2 3
4	
9. I talk optimistically about the future	0 1 2 3 4
10. I instill pride in others for being associated with me	0 1 2 3 4
11. I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets	0 1 2 3 4
12. I wait for things to go wrong before taking action	0 1 2 3 4
13. I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	0 1 2 3 4
14. I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	0 1 2 3 4
15. I spend time teaching and coaching	0 1 2 3 4
16. I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved .	0 1 2 3 4
17. I show that I am a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."	0 1 2 3 4
18. I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group	0 1 2 3 4
19. I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group	0 1 2 3 4
20. I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action	0 1 2 3 4
21. I act in ways that build others' respect for me	0 1 2 3 4
22. I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures	0 1 2 3 4
23. I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	0 1 2 3 4
24. I keep track of all mistakes	0 1 2 3 4
25. I display a sense of power and confidence	0 1 2 3 4
26. I articulate a compelling vision of the future	0 1 2 3 4
27. I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards	0 1 2 3 4
28. I avoid making decisions	0 1 2 3 4
29. I consider individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others	0 1 2 3 4
30. I get others to look at problems from many different angles	0 1 2 3 4
31. I help others to develop their strengths	0 1 2 3 4

32. I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments	0 1 2 3 4
33. I delay responding to urgent questions	0 1 2 3 4
34. I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission	0 1 2 3 4
35. I express satisfaction when others meet expectations	0 1 2 3 4
36. I express confidence that goals will be achieved	0 1 2 3 4
37. I am effective in meeting others' job-related needs	0 1 2 3 4
38. I use methods of leadership that are satisfying	0 1 2 3 4
39. I get others to do more than they expected to do	0 1 2 3 4
40. I am effective in representing others to higher authority	0 1 2 3 4
41. I work with others in a satisfactory way	0 1 2 3 4
42. I heighten others' desire to succeed.....	0 1 2 3 4
43. I am effective in meeting organizational requirements	0 1 2 3 4
44. I increase others' willingness to try harder	0 1 2 3 4
45. I lead a group that is effective	0 1 2 3 4

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APPENDIX D:
INFORMED CONSENT: ADULT RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THE IMPACT ON TEACHER BURNOUT AND RETENTION

Principal Investigator(s): DIANA DE LA ROSA

Student Investigator(s): DIANA DE LA ROSA

Faculty Sponsor: MICHELLE PETERS

Purpose of the Study: to examine the relationship that a principal's leadership style may have on teacher burnout and the impact on retention

Procedures: teachers and principals will complete respective surveys. Interviews of selected teacher participants will be conducted. Data will be collected and data analyzed and examined for correlations.

Expected Duration: 6 WEEKS

Risks of Participation: there are no risks, however, if participants experience discomfort in completing surveys, they can stop at any time. Participants receive contact information in the cover letter.

{Many of the studies performed by UHCL faculty or students do not involve physical risk, but rather the possibility of psychological and/or emotional risks from participation. The principles that apply to studies that involve psychological risk or mental stress are similar to those that involve physical risk. Participants should be informed of any foreseeable risks or discomforts and provided contact information of professional agencies (e.g., a crisis hot line) if any treatment is needed.}

Benefits to the Subject

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) to better understand the relationship between leadership style, teacher burnout and teacher retention.

Confidentiality of Records

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the Principal Investigator or Faculty Sponsor for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

Compensation

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study. {For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained.}

Investigator's Right to Withdraw Participant

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

Contact Information for Questions or Problems

The investigator has offered to answer all of your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Principal Investigator, DIANA DE LA ROSA by telephone at 713-725-1028 or by email at DelarosaD9447@uhcl.edu

{Or, Student Researcher information}

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) by telephone at [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) or by email at [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) The Faculty Sponsor, [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) may be contacted by telephone at [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) or email at [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Identifiable Private Information *(if applicable)*

Identifiers might be removed from identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens and that, after such removal, the information or biospecimens could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subject or the legally authorized representative, if this might be a possibility

OR

Information or biospecimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Signatures

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or

granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principle Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name: Diana De La Rosa

Signature of Subject: Diana De La Rosa

Date: January 15, 2022

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title: Diana De La Rosa

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: Diana De La Rosa

Date: January 15, 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281.283.3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

(FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE #FWA00004068

APPENDIX E:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For this qualitative study, nine open-ended questions were used. Before questioning the participants, the researcher read the definition of burnout as listed in the research proposal.

1. What is your definition of burnout?
 - a. How would you describe burnout?
2. Let's talk about the demands you have as a teacher. Which of these demands cause you to feel burnout? Be specific.
3. What factors of teaching do you believe contribute toward burnout tendencies? Please cite specific examples of work challenges that provoke burnout.
4. How does burnout affect you? Personally? Professionally? Physically?
5. Please describe how your experiences of burnout have affected you as a teacher.
6. In your interactions with your principal is he or she aware of the factors that contribute to your burnout? Explain.
7. Do these interactions with your principal help you in managing your stress levels and burnout? Why or why not?
8. Have you experienced any difficulties due to your principal's handling of factors that contribute to your stress and burnout? How have you addressed these difficulties?
9. In what ways do you feel that your principal has supported you in your growth and development as a teacher?