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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE
AND TEACHER RETENTION IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE AND
TEACHER RETENTION IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

By

Erika Walker

A Dissertation Approved on

April 10, 2024

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DEDICATION

Dedicating this to you is a mere whisper of my gratitude.

This dissertation is dedicated to all the people who have touched my life and have given me the strength and drive to finish. To my husband, Keary and my children Keary and Samantha, that sacrificed so much in order for me to earn this degree. Thank you for your love, support, and understanding. To my parents, Darlene Wilcoxson and Colonel Fuqua, who have loved, supported, and encouraged me in both my educational and personal endeavors. I owe my family eternal gratitude for giving me the opportunity to chase my dreams.

To all of my friends: the fact that you are still my friends after all this says everything! Thank you for your support and I Love Y'all! To everyone who told me to "stay the course," thank you for always believing in me. Completing a degree and project of this magnitude requires supportive people in one's life. I am blessed to have a loving, understanding, patient, and caring support team. Without their full support, I could not have completed this work.

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE

AND TEACHER RETENTION IN TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

Erika Walker

April 10, 2024

School districts across the United States are grappling to fill, and to keep, their classrooms operating with qualified teachers, especially in Title 1 certified schools. To ensure a quality education for the millions of students in the nation in the coming years, educational leaders and government officials need to evaluate what can be done to increase the number of teachers staying in their positions. Schools must be better equipped to understand teachers' sense of belonging and teacher retain and how principal impact contributes to high turnover rates. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine teachers' perception on principal impact on school culture and teacher retention in Title 1 certified schools. The study helped unveil the contributing factors and lived experiences of teachers who chose to stay or leave a teaching position. Because of this, broad solutions are proposed to address the shortages, and they do not target the specific needs of states, districts, and schools. This study focused specifically on Title 1 certified schools in Kentucky. The interviews conducted with 12 elementary teachers created significant statements about teachers' sense of belonging and teacher retention. The composite description revealed five themes about how participants experienced teachers' sense of belonging and teacher retention. This study adds a greater understanding about how and why teachers are leaving their

positions at such alarming rates, particularly in Title 1 certified elementary schools in

Kentucky.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

What does an effective principal look like?

If he/she follows a formulaic approach, will he/she be an effective principal?

There are many different factors that contribute to principal effectiveness such as experience, gifts and talents, staff, school demographics, support of stakeholders (Chan, 2019). Current research points to a myriad of contributing factors regarding teacher retention, and teacher job dissatisfaction including increased accountability, heavy workloads, low salary, and perceived lack of principal support (Metlife Survey, 2020; NEA, 2019). Subsequently, these feelings of teacher job dissatisfaction have led to increased levels of teacher attrition across the United States, and, interestingly, principal leadership and support has been cited as influencing factors (Ingersoll, 2003). As a result of these feelings of job dissatisfaction, teachers within the profession have begun to leave, and teacher job satisfaction in relation to principal leadership is identified as the reason more often than not (Ingersoll, 2003)

The role of the school principal has transformed from one of a building manager who enforces compliance to a visionary instructional coach who acts as an agent of change (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Surveys and studies of teacher perceptions indicated that supportive school leadership is a primary factor affecting teacher retention (Hirsch et al., 2008; Hirsch, et al., 2010). Samuels (2011) believed that "highly effective principals and good teachers are mentioned in the same breath as essential ingredients for improving

schools" (p.14). When teachers have a high level of trust in their school's leader and believe they have a voice in school decisions, the retention rate is higher than in schools where trust between the teacher and the principal is minimal (Player et al., 2017). Research reveals that education leaders matter to organizational and student outcomes, exercising influence in several indirect ways (Bastian & Henry, 2015; Grissom et al., 2015; Louis et al., 2010). These include hiring and supporting teachers in their schools in efforts to ensure quality instruction, satisfied staff members, and reduced teacher attrition. Also having processes and procedures for creating a positive school culture is a vehicle for principals to motivate teachers and students (Louis, et al. & Educational Research, 2010).

Principals have a wide range of responsibilities in their schools, including but not limited to overseeing the curriculum, managing budgets, ensuring growth in student achievement, community involvement and teacher retention. The need for a principal to create a positive school culture is imperative because there are many issues that teachers face daily that make teaching less than desirable. School principals play an important role in the day-to-day operations of their schools. Since a building principal is integral to setting standards and creating culture, it is extremely important that the leader in this role considers leadership style and recognizes the importance of teacher perception on his or her effectiveness. Academic research shows that principals and other school leaders are second only to teachers in terms of the impact they have on children during school hours (Hallinger, 2005). Principals who demonstrate a commitment to their teachers create teachers who demonstrate a commitment to their schools (Dou et al, 2017). On the other hand, when principals do not support teachers, teachers leave the profession and students

suffer (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). It is particularly harmful to the success of students in schools with large populations of low-performing and minority students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Attracting and retaining committed, effective teachers is critical to the academic success of all schools, including high-poverty schools across the nation (Stoko, Ingram, & Beaty-O'Ferrall, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Title 1 certified schools are facing a staffing crisis. Teacher retention rates in the United States pose a problem in all schools, but particularly in high-poverty, high-minority schools, with turnover rates in Title I schools 50% higher than rates in non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). According to Freedman and Appleman (2008), our nation's public schools and their students are in dire need of a durable and committed corps of teachers, teachers who are willing to stay in education long enough to make a difference in the conditions of those schools, and most importantly, in student achievement. (p.1) This applied to Title 1 certified schools, as well.

Schools are not just in need of teachers who qualify for the job, but also require those who are passionate and care enough to make a difference in a student's life regardless of the issues Title 1 schools face. Teacher retention within urban settings may be one of the most prominent concerns for a school district (Warrick, 2018). Through an extensive review of the literature on teacher retention, a gap was found in the research when understanding the perceptions of local school principals as to why there are consistently high rates of teacher retention within Title 1 settings (Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Liebowitz & Poter, 2019). The role of the

principal is to provide an environment that promotes good working conditions, supports growth, and motivates for job satisfaction. The proposed study will seek to fill the void in understanding teacher perception of principal impact on teacher retention and school culture.

The rising percentage of teacher turnover in Title 1 schools push districts to closely examine school leadership behaviors and their influence on maintaining a stable workforce (Grissom, 2011). It is the school principal's responsibility to ensure that a positive school culture is created to establish and develop a culture of collaboration, risk taking, care, trust, beliefs, and values that support students, teachers, and parents (Daly, 2009; Fullan, 2009; Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). Principals are expected to lead relevant work based on the unique culture and values within their schools which means there is a greater emphasis on building relationships with all school stakeholders (Sergiovanni, 2000). The notion that leadership requires a certain personality type must be set aside, according to Kouzes and Posner (2006). They believe that the more people pointed to a specific set of character traits, or a certain personality required for successful leadership, the more they were able to relinquish their responsibility to become better leaders; however, Kouzes and Posner (2006) stated, "leadership is an observable set of skills and abilities that are useful whether one is in the executive suite or on the front line…" (p.118). It is not easy to define leadership, but we often know good leadership when we see it. Teachers, students, and parents look to principals to provide a school culture whose values, beliefs, and traditions stand for student excellence in academic, behavior, and safety (Akinola, 2012).

Teacher attrition is a growing issue that plagues schools across America (Grissom, 2011). There are several factors that contribute to the increase in teacher attrition. These may include lack of parent support, low performance on state assessments, and a lack of strong leadership. Among the strongest predictors of teacher turnover are working conditions related to administrative support, quality professional development, instructional leadership, collegial relationships, and school culture (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011). For teachers in high-poverty public schools, the reasons given for the dissatisfaction underlying their turnover are not surprising. Of those who depart due to job dissatisfaction, one-fourth or more report each of the following five reasons: low salaries; a lack of support from the administration; student discipline problems; lack of student motivation; and lack of influence over decision making Ingersoll (2001). It is critical to keep high quality teachers in order to improve student achievement. Grissom (2011) suggests that the teachers who work in schools with large numbers of poor students and students of color feel less satisfied and are more likely to leave their position, meaning the turnover is concentrated in the very schools that would benefit most from a stable staff of experienced teachers.

Teachers' perceptions of the importance of certain principal behaviors and the presence of these behaviors in schools have an effect on a school district's ability to retain their teaching staff (Riggs, 2013). Teacher retention rates in the United States are a problem, but particularly in high-poverty and high-minority schools, with turnover rates in Title I schools 50% higher than rates in non-Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019) Schools are not just in need of teachers who qualify for the job, but

also require those who are passionate and care enough to make a difference in a student's life regardless of the issues with which Title 1 schools faced.

Teachers are the backbone of schools and school districts are searching for creative solutions to reduce high teacher turnover rates yet the problem of retaining quality teachers in schools continues, especially in high-minority, high-poverty schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015).   Their value cannot be underestimated and yet each year there are far too many teachers leaving the profession. In the United States, eight percent of teachers leave the profession every year (Darling &Hammond, 2016). "Only when we understand the factors that contribute to the growing shortage of high-quality teachers can we design policy interventions and better guide institutional decisions to find the "missing teachers" (Garcia & Weiss, 2019, p.11).

On March 19, 2020, Covid shut down schools across the United States and added to the teacher shortage. Education changed for everyone students, staff, parents and for the community, students spent months online. Teachers and students remained at home for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year (Kentucky Department of Education, 2020). The pandemic kicked off the largest drop in education employment ever. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are currently 567, 000 fewer educators in America's public schools today than there were before the pandemic.

School processes particularly career and working conditions, staff collegiality, administrative support, positive student behavior, and teacher empowerment as positively associated with teacher retention. (Shen et al., 2012). By nurturing an environment focused on learning, principals can support both high levels of student success and high teacher retention. (Protheroe, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify

how teachers perceive principal impact on school culture and determine the influence of that culture on teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools.

With a better understanding of the principal impact on their schools through examining the perspective of the teachers, principals could be more likely to retain teachers who have the potential to improve student achievement. The principal can make a difference in how successful a school becomes. The principal's role of chief operating officer plays an important role in making the school atmosphere conducive to student learning and teacher retention. Researchers have shown that experienced teachers yield higher student achievement (Fullan et al., 2016; Kraft et al., 2016). Therefore, if this district can retain resilient teachers with experience despite the challenges they face, the potential for student achievement is high. This study serves as an original contribution to teacher retention.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify how teachers perceive principal impact on school culture and their influence on teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools. School culture and teacher retention is a growing issue that plagues Title 1 schools across America. Positive school climate and positive school culture have continually been connected throughout research with high academic achievement, high graduation rates, positive opportunities that enhance students' personal development, and increased teacher satisfaction and retention (Kane, 2016). The study addresses ways principals impact and foster teacher retention and school culture. The context of this study was Title 1 certified elementary schools in Kentucky school districts, with a purposive sample of educators serving as the participants in this study.

For the purposes of this study, turnover is defined as a teacher leaving the position to which they were assigned, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, regardless of the reason (e.g., retirement, school migration). According to Grissom (2011), school working conditions explain both teacher turnover and teacher satisfaction, and principal effectiveness has a significant impact on teacher retention, especially in disadvantaged schools. About one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years, and these rates increase to approximately 50% higher in higher poverty schools (Hanusek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001) more up to date citing).

There were two research questions guiding this study:

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals with promoting a teacher sense of belonging through their actions?

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of the ways that the data could potentially impact leadership in Title I certified elementary schools in the future by setting the stage for cultivating positive culture and sustaining teacher retention. With culture and teacher retention being an important responsibility of the school leader, it is a critical outcome of the leader to influence the school environment. The potential findings might lead to positive social change by preparing Title 1 school principals from improved school organization, culture, and working environments that support better recruitment, training, and retention of teachers. The study will lead to more attention to empowering teachers to

stay in Title 1 schools with leaders who exhibit positive culture and higher student achievement.

Principal leadership is one of the most important factors in the success of a school (Branch et al., 2012; Chenoweth & Theokas, 2013: Davis et al., 2017, Olezewski et al., 2012; Wallace Foundation, 2013). A school with a successful leader and a positive culture is more likely to produce higher student results and greater teacher job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2015; Newman et al., 2014; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Education leaders are moving toward consensus that traditional professional development training and one day in-service sessions are not adequately preparing principals to lead learning organizations. Seventy percent of principals indicate their responsibilities have changed dramatically over the past 5 years, and 75% report the job has become too complex (Alvoid & Black, 2014).

Educators recognize some principals are more effective than other principals. Principals have been told they must be effective instructional leaders, yet exactly what that means has remained vague (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Waters believes if instructional leadership matters, it could be empirically defined, and effective leaders would know not only what to do, but how, when, and why to do it. Principal behaviors directly affect teacher job satisfaction and commitment (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Research suggests that school leadership is one of the most influential factors in the establishment of the caliber of a school (Lewis, Asberry, DeJarnett, & King, 2016). School leaders must develop and expand their leadership repertoires especially because a leadership style that is effective in one setting may not be as effective in another setting (Hallinger, 2003).

Further research is required to determine how principals decide to acclimate their leadership habits, and how aspiring leaders can best learn to do so (Klar & Brewer, 2013). While leadership style and school climate have been studied extensively, there is a gap in establishing ways in which principals, teachers and schools can experience success based on leadership attributes that teachers perceive as desirable for improving the overall school including positive climate and student achievement.

Theoretical Underpinnings and the Selection of Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a phenomenological framework to conduct interviews and collect narratives from teachers that experience the shared phenomena of their building level principal's leadership. McMillan and Wergin (2010) define phenomenology as a research approach that "describes and interprets the experience of people in order to understand the essence of the experience as perceived by those studied" and the "participant perspectives are focus of the researchers focuses "on people's experience from their perspective" and "meanings people attach to the activities and events in their world" (pg. 72)

The researcher examined the study encompassing a phenomenological approach, which allowed the researcher to explore principal impact on school culture and teacher retention. Phenomenology aims to understand the meaning of individual lived experience within the world (Neubauer, 2019). Welman and Kruger (1999) state "the phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved," (p. 189). Engaging in phenomenological research allows the scholar interaction in human experiences and interpretations (Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenology origins trace back to historic German

philosophers Immanuel Kant and Georg Wihelm Friedrich Hegel. Since the 1980's, the

science and educational research transformation occurred with a shift from measuring,

controlling and predicting to describing, exploring, and making sense of phenomenon.

The process of the qualitative research centers around emerging questions and

procedures, data collected in the participant's setting, data analysis including identifying

particular or general themes, and overall, making meaning of the data (Creswell, 2018).

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Attrition: when a teacher leaves the teaching profession entirely, either to take another

job outside of teaching, for personal reasons such as child rearing, health problems,

family, moves, and retirement (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006).

Climate: refers to the feelings and attitudes that are produced by a school's environment.

It includes the physical, social and academic dimensions of a school (Loukas, 2007).

Culture: A consistent set of patterns, norms, and values that people follow for

communicating, thinking, and acting (Watkins, 2012).

Elementary Principal: The lead administrator responsible for overseeing the day-to-day

actions at school site including teaching and learning, student behavior, before and after

school activities, school finance, parent communication, and any other service necessary

for the school to run (Hallinger, 2005; Kafa, 2009; Ukick & Bowers, 2013). This term is

used interchangeably with school leaders.

ESSA: is the nation's main education law for all public schools where the purpose is to

provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality

education and to close educational gaps (ESSA, 2015).

Hard-to-Staff Schools: are schools primarily high-poverty, inner city schools or rural schools who have difficulty finding and retaining teachers as a result of their location in a low socio-economic area. Typically, these schools have high rates of teacher turnover which makes it difficult for the schools to maintain a strong organization in support of student learning (VDOE, 2011).

Leadership: The ability to motivate and influence others to create change (Kotter, 2011; Maxwell, 2011).

Professional Development: is instructionally focused activities that promote teachers' use of data, effective teaching strategies and collaboration (Sanzo & Clayton, 2011).

Teacher Retention: is the act of teachers remaining in teaching at their current school (Ingersoll, 2011).

TELL Survey: the teacher, empowering, leading and learning- TELL survey is an anonymous, likert-scale assessment given to every teacher in the state of Kentucky on a two-year basis.

Title I Certified School: A label that signifies that the school receives federal funding from the Every Student Succeeds Act due to educating low-income students (Every Child Succeeds Act, 2015; Miller, 2015). Schools in which children from low-income families make up at least 40 percent of enrollment are eligible to use funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.

Turnover: refers to the migration of teachers between schools or districts and the attrition of teachers from the profession (Ingersoll & Perda, 2009).

Urban Schools: are schools located in large central cities and the communities they serve are often characterized by high percentages of low socio-economic and high minority students (Massey, Warrington, & Holmes, 2014).

Organization of the Study

I organized the study as follows: Chapter 1 includes the introduction, purpose, statement of research questions, rationale for the study, scope of the study, definition of terms, methods, data sources, and organizational summary of this study. Chapter 2 begins with a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth description of the qualitative case study methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings of my study.   Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of my study, and offers implications for policy, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, I explore how teachers perceive principal impact on school culture and teacher retention in Title 1certified elementary schools. I sought to understand how principals impact culture and teacher retention in title 1 certified elementary schools

There are 2 research questions guiding this study. These are as follows:

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals with promoting a teacher sense of belonging through their actions?

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

In this chapter, I provide a comprehensive review of the relevant literature to provide some historical context of principal characteristics that influence teacher retention, school culture and teacher perception. I begin the literature review with principal characteristics. I then review the extent of literature on teacher retention. I then focus on the extent of research that explores school culture. The chapter ends with a summary that captures the predominant themes of the extent of research in terms of finding and methods used to arrive at these findings. Most notably, I end this summary with a clear warrant from the research literature, justifying the need for this study.

A Brief Historical Primer of Principal Characteristics

The United States has historically recognized the importance of educating school aged children. This recognition has led to the continuing evolution of the education

process. Early in America's history, schools had single teachers or master teachers who responded to their community or school boards about what is happening in the classroom (Kafka, 2009). In the 1800's when schools began to grow, classes were split, and the principal teacher's role began to emerge (Karfka, 2009; Lashway, 1999). Principal teachers still conducted a regular class but also had administrative responsibilities such as assigning classes, discipline, and maintaining the building (Karfka, 2009). As time went on, the instructional part of the principal teacher's role was eliminated and the principal became a full administrator (Karfka, 2009). These leaders had very little training and the role was not recognized as a distinct profession.

Principal training did not begin until the early 1900's. During this time, principals also had a significant amount of autonomy and independence to run their schools, but they were expected to create the best educational results and do it with efficiency (Karfka, 2009). Principals were also expected to spend time in classrooms and evaluate teachers. They were given authority to hire and fire teachers (Karfka, 2009). By the end of the 19th century, the principal was seen as an authority role, and the managers of the school site (Wallace Foundation, 2013). The role of the principal became very prestigious.

The Title 1 pillar is one of the oldest and largest federally funded programs still in place from President Johnson's presidency (Clark, 2019). The official statement of purpose for Title 1 according to the law is:

> The purpose of this title is to ensure all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p.1)

This main purpose of Title I is to help fund schools so that they better support underprivileged children. Money is given to schools that qualify to help those sites bridge the gap caused by financial inequity (Clark, 2019). All these ideas have been put into place to ensure the purpose of the Title 1 funding is met.

Through different eras and presidencies, this act changed. In 2001, President George W. Bush created No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Hunt Institute, 2016). Bush's presidential campaign slogan and his belief was our public schools and their mission to build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America (Allen 2004). No Child Left Behind was intended to fix shortcomings of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Hunt, 2016). According to Allen, No Child Left Behind echoes this sentiment in its title- Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged-and stated purpose to "ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

The priorities of our nation's education system changed with increased academic standards and assessment accountability as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB represented a significant step forward for our schools in accountability particularly with students on their academic progress or lack thereof regarding subset demographics such as race, income, zip code, disability, home language or background. A principal's success is now based on test scores and the pressure to be high performing is immense (Wallace Foundation 2013). Through this updated and adopted act, the states were required to adopt academic standards for reading, math, and

science (Hunt, 2016). These standards were established and annually state tested. As a condition of receiving federal funding, to establish standards and assessments in reading, mathematics, and science for grades 3-8 as annual testing in reading and math began in 2005 and 2006 school year and in science 2007. NCLB seeks to ensure that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging state academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement [thereby] closing the achievement gap between high-and low-performing children, especially the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers (Kane 2003).

NCLB's requirements became increasing unworkable for schools and educators. Congress passed The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to replace NCLB. ESSA moved in the opposite direction, it seeks to pare back the federal role in K-12 education. In 2010 Obama's administration along with educators create ESSA. ESSA requires states to staff each classroom with an effective teacher and each school with an effective leader. Under ESSA, "School leadership is explicitly acknowledged as a valid target of educational-improvement activities across the titles" (Herman et al. , 2017, p.4). The accomplishment of a school and even whether or not it achieves its goals can be determined by principal effectiveness (Tanveer, 2005). Since a building principal is the most important employee in a school building with regards to setting standards and creating culture, it is extremely important that the leader in this role considers leadership style and recognizes the importance of teacher's perceptions on his or her effectiveness.

The principal of a building is pivotal in creating an effective school as he or she is the leader who will set the tone and direction of the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, 2000). A variety of factors may influence the way a principal leads his or her school building.

The evolving issues with teacher retention through-out our school systems have caused vast concerns across the nation (Joriessen, 2003). Although the challenges are to maintain teachers who are qualified, the issue is acute in urban, Title 1 school settings that suffer from a lack of qualified instructors (Quartz, 2003). This challenge is intensified in schools serving large populations of low-income students of color where teachers leave at an increased rate of approximately 50% (Ingersoll, 2001). Some studies suggest a number of teachers in Title 1schools are challenged by the differences in social identity, racial/ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and culture from their students which may lead to job dissatisfaction, lessened commitment, and increased turnover (Shernoff, 2011). According to Shernoff, the work overload, intense behavioral and academic student needs, and inadequate parental support in urban schools produce high levels of occupational stress for teachers.

Leadership

Leadership is the ability to influence others and create change (Kotter, 2011; Maxwell, 2011). Leadership is often confused with management and it is important to note that these words do not mean the same thing (Kotter, 2011; Maxwell, 2011). Management focuses on planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, and provides control while Leadership focuses on setting the direction, aligning people, and providing motivation (Kotter, 2011). Early research results indicated educational leaders must be

aware of the strategies to help retain teachers and use their leadership and support as tools to improve teacher retention (Chang, 2019). Leadership deals with the different dynamics that people bring to the table and helps them to create change and grow (Maxwell, 2011). Principals must create settings that promote strong relationships, trust, positive school climate, and administrative support. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. It must be conceded there are several factors which impact teacher retention (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Anyone in an organization or school setting is capable of being a leader even if they are not in an administrative position (Kotter, 2011; Maxwell, 2011).

The principal of a building is pivotal to creating an effective school, as he or she is the leader who will set the tone and direction for the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000a, 2000b). Federal legislation seeks to support principals due to the importance of their role in schools. "In the Race to the Top grant, the U.S. Department of Education awarded points for proposals to improve principals as a notable part of the way to win hundreds of millions of dollars" (Sear, 2010, p4). "Education is extremely complex, and so is school leadership" (Whitaker, 2003, p1). "Policymakers have discovered that teachers, tests, and textbooks can't produce results without highly effective principals to facilitate, model and lead" (McEwan, 2003, p.3)

A principal's leadership effectiveness is the quality of his leadership performance perceived by the school population in general and faculty members (Azhar, 2015). Principals influence their staff and students: their perceptions change based on whether or not the staff and students perceive their leaders' actions as competent (Grobler, 2012). The idea of the power of a principal's influence can be quite intimidating especially since the direct influence on teachers immediately allows for the indirect, but impactful,

influence on students (Herbert, 2011) As Chief Education Officer (CEO) of the institution, it is expected that the principal must assume the role of Chief Managerial Leader of the school. Driven by the demands of high-performance expectations, accountability standards, legislative dictates for qualified personnel, having to deal with a changing and demanding workforce, as well as developing and executing strategic plans, increased pressure in on principals (Geijsel Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003; Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2008).

 It is evident from literature that many researchers concur that principals "wear many hats" in their schools (Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2008; Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001; Starr & White, 2008). Based on the findings of Hallinger (2005), instructional leaders focus their attention in seven critical areas: (a) creating the school's vision, (b) developing a culture and climate of high expectations of staff and students, (c) monitoring the curriculum and student learning outcomes, (d) organizing staff development, (e) maintaining a visible presence, (f) developing positive interpersonal relationships, and (g) modeling the shared values of the school. Instructional leadership is viewed as a set of behaviors and actions conducted by the school principal to effect change and improvement in both the organization and the staff which they lead (Hallinger, 2005 & Rigby, 2014).

The Seven Critical Areas

Creating the School's Vision

Establishing a vision allows the school leader to build an environment where the faculty shares responsibility, the same beliefs and the same values (Strahan, Carlone &

Horn, 2004; Drago-Severson, 2012). Vision should provide an outline of focus that goes beyond test scores but still integrates accountability at all levels (Supovitz, 2015). A principal who can bring the faculty and staff together, articulate a vision and reinforce that vision until others are inspired to embrace it achieves leadership success thereby allowing the students to achieve greater academic fulfillment (Hebert, 2011; Mosley, Boscardin, & Wells, 2014). Effective principals are those who operate to identify, establish, and supervise the shared mission and vision of the school with members of the community (Lambert, 2002). Having a clear vision of what the school is trying to accomplish and defining the entire school community. Leithwoood and Riehl (2003) state that at the core of most definitions of leadership are two major functions: (a) providing direction, and (b) influencing culture. The ability of the leader to establish an organizational vision, to motivate and inspire others to embrace this vision, and go on to achieve these goals is possible if solid relationships are formed (Guthrie and Read, 1991). The bottom line is that effective principals share a vision (Adkins and Coleman, 2010), and are authentic in doing so (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002). Without vision, the organization has no direction; and individuals are left to do what they feel is right, requiring them to constantly check with supervisors for reassurance of their decisions (Kotter, 1996).

Monitoring Curriculum and Student Learning Outcomes

Success should not be based solely on performance testing, but on student learning (Adkins-Coleman, 2010). Collective efficacy exists when principals serve as instructional leaders and work to develop teachers' gifts and talents (Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci & Cagatay, 2012), which is easily understood, but not always easy to accomplish

(Reeves, 2010). This is especially true when the principal serves as an instructional leader (Toll, 2010; Stone, 2009). The instructional leader of the 80's was presented as an effective top-down, task oriented manager who was focused on curriculum and instruction rather than buildings and budgets (Lashway, 2002). Effective change in classrooms comes about through a conscious focus on instructional leadership by the principal (Fink & Resnick, 2001). The responsibilities for the expectations of student success continue to increase with each day. If student achievement is to improve in schools that practice of instructional leadership must also improve. Principals must be true instructional leaders. A principal who can bring the faculty and staff together, articulate a vision and reinforce that vision until others are inspired to embrace it achieves leadership success thereby allowing the students to achieve greater academic fulfillment (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Herbert, 2011; Mosley, Boscardin, & Wells, 2014). Because principals must monitor student and teacher progress toward the school vision, mission, and goals. Principals must lead collaborative, continual efforts to improve teaching and learning with their schools. Principals should and must know what is going on in the classrooms and converse with teachers about instruction.

Staff Development

The days for the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. No longer can one administrator serve as the instructional leader for the entire school without the substantial participation from the staff (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Principals are expected to develop leadership in others, in order to foster a collaborative approach and positive learning culture (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Principals who have increased student achievement almost

always support staff development (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Firestone & Wilson, 1989).   These principals also provide opportunities for in-school, group learning sessions and off-site workshops (Catano 2008). Teachers, like students, need continual professional development opportunities to improve their pedagogical skills to enable students to reach their academic potential (Bailey & Jakicic, 2019, & Guskey, 2002).

Based on the theory that "if people don't improve, programs never will," Wagner (2006) and other experts share the view that principals who collaborate with staff in seeking to understand and assess school culture, achieve direction for both the instructional and professional development of the school (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2008; Gurr et al, 2006). Because principals are not directly involved with instruction, their role consists more of monitoring student progress through teacher contact, supervising teachers, and managing school curriculum and staff development (Meyer, Scott, and Deal, 1983). Principals should be primarily instructional leaders and lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center (Stricherz, 2001). According to the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), teachers are the most important contributors to a child's academic success (SCORE, 2011).

Visible Presence

Influential school leaders are highly visible to stakeholders. The principal as the school leader should be visible: before, during and after school. As the school leader, students, staff and parents feel better when the principal is seen in the school and school functions. The leader attends community and school functions, walks the halls daily, spends time in classrooms, and interacts with students often (Cotton, 2003; Marzano et

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al., 2005). Whitaker et al. (2009) suggest in their book Leadership by Walking Around

that being out and highly visible in the school environment provides a leader with

"opportunities to support, reward, and acknowledge students and teachers in their

environment." When it comes to principals, words are lovely; but actions are what count.

From the teacher's perspective, the principal that leads is the principal that is seen.

Visibility provides the opportunity for an administrator to gather information about

student achievement. Daily walk-throughs can allow administrators time to engage in

authentic real time moments of student learning (Snoke 2020). These actions support

instructional goals, build and maintain relationships, and help the principal stay

connected with the progress of students and teachers (Louis et al., 2010).

Developing Positive Interpersonal Relationships

Principals influence their staff and students; their perceptions change based on

whether or not the staff and students perceive their leaders' actions as competent

(Grobler, 2012), and as someone who embraces the power of the relationships among the

students and adults in the building (O'Malley, Meagan, Voight, Renshaw & Eklund,

2015). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) assert school leaders play an important role in

establishing successful school culture when they help to establish more positive

relationships between educators and students, and their families and communities, and

when these relationships are built on trust, deep familiarity, and genuine appreciation.

Kouzes and Posner (2010) believed "before you can lead, you have to believe that you

can have a positive impact on others" (p.xxii).

Modeling Shared Values of the School

The idea of the power of a principal's influence can be quite intimidating especially since the direct influence on teachers immediately allows for the indirect, but impact, influence on students (Hebert, 2011). Leadership is being considered more as a collaborative team process or bottom-up follower-based process as well as a more typical hierarchical, top-down influence. (Block McLaughlin, 2004; Dengler, 2007; Kotter, 2001). Principals are expected to develop leadership in others, in order to foster a collaborative approach and positive learning culture (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Leaders focus on leading and developing people for successful change, on the other hand, managers focus primarily on planning, developing capacity, and problem solving.

Developing a Culture and Climate

School culture is a complex and dynamic aspect of the school experience and can be difficult to describe. The concept of researching school culture can be dated back to Willard Waller's 1932 book The Sociology of Teaching and Wilber Brookover's 1979 book School Social Systems and Student Achievement: Schools Can Make a Difference. Waller (1932) and Brookover (1979) both noted that individual 26 schools have a culture that is uniquely their own. Both illuminated that schools are complex entities, each having a set of rituals, folkways, values, norms, expectations, beliefs, and symbols that have been cultivated, nurtured, or neglected over many years. Some researchers have suggested that a school's climate or environment is one aspect of the multifaceted culture of a school (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2016). School culture is the set of beliefs and values which provide a foundation for everything that takes place in a school (Fullan, 2007), and these beliefs, values, and traditions make each school unique (Cogaltay & Karadag,

2016) A school's culture is very simply and generally defined as "the way we do things around here" (Muhammad, 2009, p.19; Peterson & Deal, 1998), and a school's climate or environment refers to "the way we feel around here (Muhammad, 2009). Having a process and procedure for creating a positive school climate is a vehicle for principals to motivate teachers and students (Louis, Wahlstrom, Leithwood, Anderson & Educational Research, 2010; Nor & Roslan, 2009). Deal and Peterson were quoted in their explanation of school culture as:

> This invisible, taken-for-granted flow of beliefs and assumptions gives meaning to what people say and do. It shapes how they interpret hundreds of daily transactions. The deeper structure of life in organizations is reflected and transmitted through symbolic language and expressive action. Culture consists of the stable, underlying social meaning that shape beliefs and behavior over time (2016, p.7).

Organizational culture is an important element to unify various company cultures in the corporate group structure (Kenny, 2012). Creating and maintaining an effective organizational culture is important to improve performance and productivity (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). School culture has a significant impact on the effectiveness of a school and can affect all school stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, superintendents, school boards of directors, and community members. Fullan stated the importance of a leader developing a school focus in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2003).

Collaborative culture, which by definition have close relationships are indeed powerful, but unless they are focusing on the right things, they may end up being

powerfully wrong. Moral purpose, good ideas, focusing on results, and obtaining the views of dissenters are essential, because they mean that the organization is focusing on the right things. Leadership, once again, comes to the fore. The role of the leaders is to ensure that the organization develops relationships that help produce desirable results (Fullan, 2003, p. 68).

The differences in school culture between successful schools and unsuccessful schools, there is evidence that successful schools have a more positive culture and climate when positively influenced by school leadership (Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013). A positive school culture can contribute positively to teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, and student achievement while a negative school culture can have the opposite effect (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2016; McKinney et al., 2015). Deal and Peterson (2016) described two varying kinds of school culture. These two opposite types were stated as positive school culture and toxic school culture. Deal and Peterson listed characteristics of positive and toxic school refer to (Table 1). Positive school cultures were explained as collaborative with a shared commitment by all stakeholders to success including celebrations and a general feeling of happiness. Alternately, a toxic school culture was characterized as having a lack of hope and unity with a general sense of sadness.

Table 1
Characteristics of Positive and Toxic School Culture

Positive School Culture	Toxic School Culture
Create meaningful parent involvement	A focus on self interest

Celebrate personal achievement and good behavior	Divisive subcultures
Establish school norms that build values	Hostile and destructive interactions
Set consistent discipline	A presence of villain behavior for staff
Model behaviors you want to see in your school	Distrust and retaliation as a result of disagreement
Engage students in ways that benefit them	An environment of secrecy
Create rituals and traditions that benefit staff and students	Students viewed as problematic
Encourage innovation in the classroom	Feelings of apathy
Professional development for teachers	Lack of positive celebrations
Maintain the physical environment of the school	Uncaring teachers with poor instructional skills
Keep tabs on the school's culture, and make adjustments when necessary	Negativity on personal social media outlets

Peterson and Deal (1998) describe the elements of positive school culture as the "underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges" (p.28). Culture influences everything that goes on in schools: how staff dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the practice of instruction, and the emphasis given to student and faculty learning.

One example of an element of positive school culture that supports professional development is Ganado Primary School in Ganado, Ariz. Located in one of the poorest

counties in America in the Four Corners area of the Southwest, Ganado did not always

have a strong professional community. Everyone in the school is viewed as a learner:

staff, students, principal, community members. Opportunities for learning abound. For

example, all teachers have support to be trained in a reading intervention program called

CLIP (Collaborative Literacy Intervention Project). CLIP is a research based reading

intervention focused on foundation skills. After the training, teachers are invited to

regular curriculum conversations to discuss new ideas and share experiences. School

culture has a strong impact on the effectiveness of a school for both teachers and

students; a positive school culture can positively influence school effectiveness while a

negative school culture has the opposite effect (Teasley, 2017)

On the other hand, a negative school culture can significantly contribute to the

lack of school effectiveness. Negative cultures can seriously impair staff development.

Negative values, hostile relations, and pessimistic stories were shown by Teasley (2017)

to deplete the school culture. One example of an element of toxic school culture at a high

school, disgruntled staff came to faculty meetings ready to attack new ideas, criticize

those teachers concerned about student achievement, and make fun of any staff who

volunteered to go to conferences or workshops. Negative staff had effectively

sabotaged any attempts at collegial improvement.

Deal and Peterson also identified several pathways that can lead to both positive

and toxic school culture.

Table 2

Pathways that Lead to Positive and Toxic School Culture

Positive Pathways to School Culture	Toxic Pathways to School Culture

Atmosphere that promotes exploration and the fun of learning	Discontinuing cultural customs that were once important and present in the school
Allow students to be an active participant rather than a passive observer	Limiting or preventing opportunities for staff members to interact and participate in positive relationship building activities
Have clear core values and mission	Ending treasured traditions
Hold assemblies aimed at creating togetherness, teamwork and school pride	Discontinuing the use of established school symbols
Regularly and publicly recognize student achievements and positive behavior	No longer sharing memories and events from school history
Address any source of toxicity	Becoming discouraged from outside criticism
Acknowledge different learning styles and create an inclusive environment	High principal turnover
Enlist parents' support	Narrow focus mainly related to test scores
	Abandonment of school's central mission

Here is what one high school teacher had to share with us: "I worked under the same principal for 13 years and he never once said my name. I moved to a new school and my new principal greets me by name with a smile every single day from day one" (Deal & Peterson 1999). Double standards for staff members create division. "I got in trouble for taking my class outside to play kickball in the field instead of doing math once. Meanwhile, there are a couple of other teachers who take their classes out at least once a week without consequence," a 5th-grade teacher observed. Different rules for different teachers is a sure sign of a toxic environment (Deal & Peterson 1999). School

culture is related to providing a sense of identity, promoting achievement, and creating distinct ways of doing things that helps to shape standards (Teasley, 2017).

John Maxwell, a businessman, author, and motivational speaker, found that paying attention to the culture and climate of any organization is the only way to achieve success in that organization; as a matter of fact, failing to attend to the climate and culture can be tragic. The National School Climate Council (2014) defines school climate by characterizing school life and determining the quality of the school atmosphere. The term instructional leader refers to anything the principal does to impact teaching and learning at the school site. (Grissom 2019). The council offers the inclusion of the following dimensions in determining school climate: rules and norms, physical security, social-emotional security, support for learning, social and civic learning, respect for diversity, social support for adults, social support for students, school connectedness and engagement, physical surroundings, and leadership. Each dimension includes major indicators with which to measure the school's climate ("School Climate", 2014).

Researchers agree culture and leadership are inextricably linked (Block, 2003). (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Deal & Kennedy, 1999; Senge, 1990) agree that culture is an essential component of school life and is a key role of principals. Many principals struggle to sustain positive school culture at their schools (Beaudoin & Taylor, 2004, Engels, Hotton Devos, Bouckenooghe, & Aelterman, 2008; Peterson, 2002). The research suggests that the struggle to maintain positive culture in schools is directly tied to the principals' leadership effectiveness Raymer (2006). Noted that as the principal enters the situation, the effective leader assesses the situation for the positive and

negative qualities of the setting and goes about making changes based on his or her leadership approach and interactions.

A principal's daily behavior plays a vital role in the environment of the school (Rowland, 2008). School leaders have a big responsibility in providing a climate and culture that promotes teaching and learning. A school principal brings experiences and practices intertwined with personal philosophies and values concerning the best way to impact a school culture.

The primary emphasis for the modern-day principal is student achievement and creating an environment that supports high quality instruction and learning. Grissom (2011) noted that good principals impact teacher retention by increasing intangible rewards such as staff recognition or positive school vision. Orderly work environments through high expectations for student behavior and established routines and procedures were several other factors that teachers rated principals as effective in disadvantaged schools.

Effective principals serve as guardians of teachers' instructional time, assist teachers with student discipline matters, allow teachers to develop discipline codes, and support teachers' authority and enforcing policy (Bivona, 2002). The idea of the power of a principal's influence can be quite intimidating especially since the direct influence on teachers immediately allows for the indirect, but impactful, influence on students (Herbert, 2011). Inconsistent behavior on the part of the principal and frequent failure to follow through on decisions contribute to teacher stress (Leithwood & McAdie, 2007). The main responsibility of the principal influences all aspects of the school environment.

Research has clearly shown that understanding the dynamics of a principal's impact on creating effective school culture is crucial because it reveals possible causes to

teachers leaving the profession quicker than universities can develop future teachers (Baptiste, 2019). An ineffective school principal may negatively impact the school culture and student outcomes (Marzano, 2003). In other words, the principals in low socio-economic school situations were less likely to embrace change and continued to maintain the status quo because they lacked the vision and leadership skills to improve and make changes in their school cultures (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Leitner, 1994). "Principals shape the culture and interpersonal dynamics of their school" therefore, "have the most leverage to create the conditions for cultural change" (Dondaldson, 2013, p.872). Notably, school culture can impact teacher morale in the workplace, which affects job satisfaction and well-being (Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem, & Verhaeghe, 2007; Shann, 1998; Smylie, 1999). For example, Peterson and Deal (2009) discovered that a school culture affects how teachers feel, think, and act. Therefore, it is important for school principals to understand and take the time to place emphasis in assessing, supporting, and creating a healthy school culture before they can expect to work with teachers, parents, and students to reap the rewards of having a positive school culture (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000; Fullan, 2014; Muhammad, 2009; Zmuda, 2004).

Teacher Retention

In our nation's high-poverty, high-minority, Title 1 schools, the importance of effective teachers is even greater. The National Education Association highlights that teacher attrition is a critical problem in the United States (McLaughlin, 2018). Effective teachers are necessary for student success (Stronge et al., 2007). Providing skilled teachers to all students has become a world-wide quest due to the growing shortages in the developing and industrialized worlds (Lindqvist & Nordanger 2016). Fewer people

are choosing to major in education at the university level and entering the profession, and those who enter the profession are sometimes leaving after only a few years (Lindgvist & Nordanger, 2016). Teacher retention is high in all schools but more of a concern for title 1 schools. Leithwood (2006) concluded that the principal's role in instructional leadership, organizational management, and teacher development significantly impacts the success of a school. The principal of a school is comparable to the CEO of a major business (Hollar, 2004).

As early as the 1960s, middle-class predominately white families moved out of America's cities and into suburban areas. As a result, Title 1 schools become predominantly populated by large numbers of minority students, mostly African American and Latino (Massy et al., 2014) With large populations of residents with limited economic resources, Title 1 schools were left to face multiple challenges with little support (Massey et al., 2014). According to Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2014), the mass exodus of teachers in urban schools is a result of "teachers systematically favoring higher-achieving, non-minority, non-low-income students",(p.337). High rates of teacher attrition from high poverty to more wealthier schools creating a challenge to attract and develop effective teachers in Title 1 schools and, as a result, disadvantaged students who attend these schools are typically taught by the least experienced teachers (Grissom, 2011). In fact, students in high-poverty schools are more likely than their peers in wealthier schools to be taught by less experienced teachers and impacted by inconsistent staffing from one year to the next (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

In a country with a growing number of Title 1 schools, it is imperative that district leaders follow the necessary steps to retain effective educators (Freedman & Appleman,

2009). Unclear of the challenges to retain educators, predominately in Title1 schools, it is essential leaders realize the important role of an administrator (Patterson, 2001). The challenges in Title 1 schools by far are the most problematic, exceeding those in rural and suburban Title 1 areas (Jacob, 2008). Educational leaders must make every effort to meet the needs of Title 1 teachers, encourage teachers' retention, and apply practical strategies that will keep them in the profession (Jacob, 2008). Schools in Title1 settings must make every effort to retain not only teachers but retain highly qualified teachers. Statistical data emphasized 30% thru 50% of educators who enter the profession exit due to never entering a classroom or leaving the job after a short period of teaching experiences (Smethem, 2007; Hughes, 2012).

What impact do principals have on teacher job satisfaction and retention? Despite the many technological advances in the 21st century classroom, effective teacher instruction continues to be the most essential influence on student learning compared to all other initiatives including technology, new programs, and other innovations. (Schmoker, 2011). Teacher retention and teachers remaining in the teaching profession can have a significant impact on school culture and school effectiveness (Dahlkamp et al. 2017). Kukla (2009) outlined three groups of teachers: leavers (those who decide to quit teaching), movers (those who decide to leave their current work location and go to another school), and stayers (those who decide to stay at their current work location). Teacher turnover has been an issue in Title 1 schools for years (Sachs 2004). Contributing to the teacher turnover problem, a record number of beginning teachers are leaving the profession shortly after their careers begin. Administrative support was found

to be one of the most important to "leavers" than "stayers" (Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, and Meisels, 2007).

These teachers, despite their lack of experience, are often assigned more challenging classes of students who are already struggling academically (Alliance for Excellent Education 2004). Burnout elements also include pressure from school leaders, concerns with student discipline, insufficient professional development, low pay, long working hours, and a wide array of teachers' responsibilities (Darling-Hammond, Furger, Shields, & Sutcher, 2016). The Teacher Follow Up Survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics found that teachers leave the profession for various reasons. The reasons include personal life reasons (37%), a different position (28%), school accountability/assessment policies (25%), discontent with teaching career (21%), frustration with the school administration (21%), too many classroom interruptions (18%), student behavior issues (17%), lack of support with student assessment (17%), absence of autonomy (14%), desire for higher salary (13%), not having a part in the creation of school policies (13%), the need to register in coursework to improve career opportunities (13%) dissatisfaction with their teaching assignment (12%), and commute (11%; Podolsky et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, in many high-poverty urban schools, teachers leave before they are able to adequately hone their teaching skills (Andrew and Donaldson 2009). Richard Ingersoll's research has shown that instructional expertise is vital to the success of all students, yet teacher turnover continues to plague schools, especially in high-poverty, high-minority urban areas (Ingersoll, 2001). Quality teachers are underrepresented in urban areas because new teachers leave the profession before gaining years of experience

and learning (Andrew and Donaldson 2009). The highest rates of teachers' attrition occur during the first 2 years of teaching, which is known as the survival period (Glazer, 2020). This problem is exacerbated in Title 1 schools, where the teacher attrition rate is 50% higher, 70% higher for schools serving students of color, and 80% higher for alternatively certified teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Within urban schools, as many as 70% of new teachers may leave their position within their first five years (Papay et al. 2015). Principals leading schools with a high minority population and a lower socioeconomic status are often perceived negatively due to the increased challenge of large gaps in student achievement (Klar and Brewer, 2013). Studies have found that constant teacher turnover produces a negative impact on the academic achievement of low-income, minority students as compared to their non-minority peers (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013).

A concentrated effort on teacher recruitment as a solution to staffing problems in high-poverty, high-minority schools has yielded little to no results and elevated teacher turnover rates continue to challenge schools serving our neediest students (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009). Despite the shift towards school improvement over the past few decades, our nation's Title 1 schools have continued to be associated with underperformance, high concentrations of minority and low socio-economics students, increased discipline issues, and high teacher attrition (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). Title 1 schools or districts based on their physical location in large, heavily populated cities across the United States, Title 1 schools are often defined as urban, because of the characteristics associated with the school and the people in them (Massey, et al.,2014). The failure of many Title 1 schools

to retain effective teachers to serve their disadvantaged populations continues to be one of the most persistent problems in U.S. public education (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). These schools typically enroll large populations of minority students, including students with special needs or identified as English Language Learners. In turn, our newest teachers are often placed in the hardest-to-staff schools situated in high-poverty, urban communities where one-third to one-half of teachers leave within their first five years (Barnes, Crowe, & Shaefer, 2007). If districts aim to accelerate sustained improvement in underperforming urban schools and retain quality teachers, they must have a far better understanding than is now evident of how principals lead change in schools (Johnson et al., 2014). Furthermore, the question remains whether effective principal leadership is enough to keep quality teachers in our high-minority, high-poverty, urban schools that face challenges of high student discipline, low academic achievement, and a lack of parental involvement.

Impact of COVID 19 on Teacher Retention

Not only do teachers matter to student outcomes and instructional efficacy, but their retention within organizations means the ongoing progression of instruction and school culture (Wynn et al., 2007). Teacher mobility and retention were already issues impacting schools nationally as well as internationally before Covid 19. With the outbreak of COVID-19, teacher retention became a bigger issue. Teachers were not prepared for the changes they faced including "significant changes to teachers' working conditions, for example, uncertainty and changing schooling formats, a new focus on remote learning, and new protocols for health and safety, as well as significant learning loss and the social and emotional needs of students" (Lachlan et al., 2020, p. 1).

The number of cases of teacher retention and early retirement increased because of the decision to open schools. Teachers feared for their safety and the lives of their family members and were not ready to return to the school building and remote instruction. Garcia and Weiss (2020) listed reasons teachers were leaving related to COVID-19. They included unsafe working 11 environments, lack of supports, stress associated with remote instruction and burnout. These reasons included senior teachers near retirement as well as teachers new to the field. "The combination of losing colleagues to COVID-19 and the intense personal stresses and demands the pandemic is exacting on virtually all teachers will likely drive out still more" (Garcia & Weiss, 2020 p. 2).

The teacher shortage was impacting the education field in a negative way. Garcia and Weiss (2019b) stated, "The teacher shortage constitutes a crisis because of its negative effects on students, teachers, and the education at large" (p. 1). A report from the National Center of Education Statistics (2016), stated that "8 percent of public-school teachers … left the profession between 2011–12 and 2012–13" (p. 1).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), reported that:

Since national data have been available, U.S. teacher attrition rates have ranged from 5.1% in 1992 to 8.4% in 2008, a difference of 3.3 percentage points. However, in a workforce of 3.8 million, this seemingly small amount adds about 125,000 to the annual demand for teachers. (p. 3)

Since the spring of 2020, teachers experienced the greatest disruption to the history of United States public education due to COVID-19. Ingersoll (2001) found that administrative support was a key factor in teachers' decision to leave teaching.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, connections to administrators were instrumental in teachers' perception of burnout, as more burnt-out teachers blamed school administrators for issues viewed as contributors to higher levels of burnout and stress (Brooks et al., 2022; McCarthy et al., 2022; Sokal et al., 2020; 2021; Westphal et al., 2022).

Research has also shown that schools with lower attrition rates and higher rates of teacher satisfaction often report having a highly effective administrator (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The nationwide problem of teacher retention/attrition is likewise reflected in the state of Kentucky.

It is beneficial to study leadership actions and leadership competencies when determining leader attributes necessary for successful turnaround in order to effectively sustain turnaround initiatives (Robinson et al., 2014). Attention to turnaround leader competencies assist in the selection of candidates who have the potential for turnaround leadership as well as support existing turnaround leaders' assessments of their strengths and weaknesses as related to turnaround leadership (Steiner, Hassel, & Hassel, 2008). A study of turnaround leader actions gives insight as to what effective leaders have done to achieve successful turnaround (Steiner, Hassel, & Hassel, 2008). Turnaround leaders must exhibit strong instructional leadership, be attentive to systems, possess the capacity to leverage the system to advocate and implement turnaround plans, and develop a series of quick wins on paths to improvement ("A learning point," 2010). 11 Turnaround competencies support effective leader actions such as identifying and focusing on early wins with big payoffs; breaking organizational norms or rules to implement strategies and gain early wins; and acting quickly in a fast cycle of trying new tactics, measuring results, discarding failed tactics, and doing more of what works (Steiner, Hassel, &

Hassel, 2008). Leithwood and Strauss (2010) determined core leadership practices that are necessary in school turnaround including direction setting, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program.

90/90/90 Schools

The term "90/90/90" is research done in high poverty schools that have soon high academic performance. The term "90/90/90" was originally coined by the author in 1995 based on observations in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where schools had been identified with the following characteristics: 90% or more of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch, 90% of more of the students were members of ethnic minority groups, and 90% or more of the students met the districts or state academic standards in reading or another area (Reeves, 2000). A report from the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence drives to answer two questions about high performing, high poverty schools in Kentucky: (1) "What common characteristics that seem to contribute to high student performance are shared by a set of high-performing, high poverty schools?" and (2) "What characteristics and practices differentiate a set of high-performing, high poverty schools with a small achievement gap from similar high-poverty schools that are neither high-performing nor have a small achievement gap?" (Kannapel & Clements, 2005). The Education Trust (1999) outlines five consistent findings that were true across these top performing high poverty schools: (1) Increased the instructional time for reading and math content in order to help their students meet standards, (2) District and/or state accountability systems that have consequences for teachers and administrators in schools, (3) Larger proportions of Title 1 dollars are spent on professional development, (4) Comprehensive systems in place to monitor student mastery of standards, which directs

educators to provide additional support for those not mastering standards, (5) Focus on efforts to involve parents on helping students meet state standards. In using state standards and monitoring systems, schools are able to track student progress data and essentially hone in on students with unmastered standards to provide the support necessary to become proficient (Education Trust, 1999). In addition, promoting parental involvement in proficiency of standards and holding adults accountable may impact student achievement.

The principal is a true facilitator of communication and collaboration, with the role of establishing a positive school community with professional learning communities within (Brown, 2016). In the case study by Brown (2016) the data revealed four types of support the principal provided to increase student achievement: (1) establishing a positive school community with professional learning communities in mind; (2) creating an efficient schedule with protected math and reading blocks; (3) budgeting with professional development in mind: and (4) making student achievement data drive instructional decision making and interventions. If these four supports are provided by school leadership, the potential for school success increases tremendously (Brown, 2016).

Literature Review Summary

A school that possesses a strong collective and collaborative teaching community, exhibited by positive, trusting and working relationships, tends to retain its teachers (Boyd et al. 2011) Research reveals that educational leaders matter to organizational and student outcomes, exercising influence in several indirect ways (Bastian & Henry, 2015; Grissom et al., 2015; Louis et al., 2010). The influences include hiring and supporting teachers in their schools to address quality instruction, satisfaction of staff members, and

reduced teacher attrition. Most of the current research on teacher retention focuses on the

factors associated with why teachers leave schools, but fewer research studies explore the

reasons that teachers choose to remain at a school and the role that school leaders play in

influencing their decision to stay. Being a school leader is not the same as in years past

(Grobler, 2012).

Principals have a wide range of responsibilities in their schools, including the

curriculum, budgets, student achievement, and community involvement and teacher

retention. School principals play a very important role in the day-to-day operations of

their schools. The attainment of school and student outcomes are determined in part by

principal effectiveness as a leader (Tanveer, 2005). Since a building principal is integral

to setting standards and creating culture, it is extremely important that the leader in this

role considers leadership style and recognizes the importance of teacher's perception on

his and her effectiveness. Academic research shows that principals and other school

leaders are second only to teachers in terms of the impact they have on children during

school hours. (Grobler, 2012)

School administrators have a tremendous burden in crafting a culture and

preserving a climate conducive to the fulfillment of the teachers (Nooruddin & Biag,

2014). Without principal suitable support or a welcoming climate, coupled with the lack

of teacher morale, the commitment battle to retain teachers will continue to be

problematic. The influence education leaders play with teacher retention could lead to the

increased improvement rates of qualified teachers in Title 1 schools (Tajasom & Ahmad,

2011). As higher skilled teachers move to openings in lower poverty, suburban schools,

Title 1 schools face the dilemma of how to meet rigorous local, state, and national targets

for student achievement while dealing with high numbers of new, unqualified teachers and the challenges associated with children in disadvantaged schools (Stoko, Ingram, & Beaty-O'Ferrall, 2007). In challenging schools, instructional leadership ranks key among factors that influence a teacher's decision to stay (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Greenlee and Brown (2009) examined principal behaviors that influence a teachers' decision to stay in a challenging school. Their findings included instructional leadership as one of the determining factors for teachers who choose to remain in a hard-to-staff school. All teachers, regardless of their years of experience, highly value school leaders who are able to model instructional expectations, communicate school and district initiatives that support student learning, and motivate teachers by helping them to see the purpose and meaning behind their work (Walker & Slear, 2011). Principal behaviors positively impact teacher satisfaction and commitment (Bogler, 2001). The principal's effectiveness as a school manager, instructional leader, and change agent must be examined when considering the factors that may influence quality teachers to remain in our nation's toughest schools (Johnson et al., 2012). In 90/90/90 school research, school administration also set the tone for student motivation of not only students, but faculty and staff throughout a school (Butteroworth & Weinstein, 1996).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Classroom teachers leaving the profession continues to plague schools across the nation. Due to the potential influence principals have over teacher's decisions to remain in the profession or leave it, examining the experiences and realities of classroom teachers who have decided to leave the profession is essential. While there are many factors impacting teachers' decisions, there is the potential that principals may be able to create a school climate that demonstrates a positive impact on retaining teachers. In this qualitative phenomenological study, I explored how principals impact their school culture and teacher retention. I seek to understand how principals' impact school culture and teacher retention in Title I elementary schools. There were two research questions guiding this study.

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals with promoting a teacher sense of belonging through their actions?

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to justify and describe the research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study. This chapter will delineate the research process and answer the research questions of teachers' perception on principal impact on school culture and teacher retention. In terms of structure, I organized Chapter 3 as followed. First, I stated and rationalized the selection of my research design (a qualitative study) and the limitations of the analytical strategy. I discussed the context of the qualitative study and the used the various of data sources and corresponding data collection. I gave

careful attention to the ethical considerations in collected data from teachers. As a scholar-practitioner I undertook research in a Title 1 school, I discussed the process by which I explored my positionality and relationship with the topic, teachers, principals, schools, and district in which the study took place. Lastly, I discussed the strategies by which I ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings I generated.

Context of the Study

In this study, I undertook a qualitative phenomenological study interviewing teachers meeting my prerequisite requirements in five to tenTitle1 certified elementary schools in Kentucky School Districts. A target population, in the context of a research study, refers to an entire group of individuals or subjects in whom a researcher is interested (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Phenomenological studies involve studying multiple people who have experienced the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Phenomenological studies involve studying multiple people who have experienced the same phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Creswell recommends including between five and twenty-five individuals, from multiple sites and multiple people to capture the full essence of the experience (Creswell, 2018). The participants for this study are teachers from five to ten Title 1 certified elementary schools with a minimum of 10 teacher interviews. The focus of this study was to examine principal impact on school culture and teacher retention.

Both structured and open-ended interview questions were used in the study. The researcher held face to face interviews to allow for comfort and ease for the interview process. Face to face interviews allowed the researcher to read body language and hear

the interviewees tone during the interview. The participants shared their experiences

through responses to structured and open-ended interview questions. Structured

interviews consisted of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored,

but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or

response in more detail (Chadwick, Gill, Stewart, and Treasure, 2008).

Research Methods and Design—Qualitative

I used qualitative research for this study because this problem exists within a

natural setting. Creswell (2018) argues qualitative research is best when addressing a

human problem because it works to give voice to those who are involved and impacted

by the problem (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research does not present itself by means of

quantification, but rather research about persons' lived experiences, behaviors, emotions,

and feelings as well as organizational functioning (Rahman, 2017). Creswell (2018)

explains that the process of research flows from philosophical assumptions, to

interpretive lens, and on to the procedures involved in studying social or human

problems. The collection of data in the natural setting sensitive to the people and place

under study is inductive to establish patterns and themes.

Qualitative research involves the researcher studying a phenomenon (or

phenomena) in their natural settings and interpreting meanings that participants and the

researcher make by drawing upon non-numerical data. A phenomenological approach to

qualitative research focuses on the essence of a lived experience, or phenomenon, that

can be observed or felt by people who have different viewpoints (Flood, 2010). The main

aim of phenomenology is to capture, as closely as possible, the way a phenomenon was

lived by people who participated in the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Giorgi &

Giorgi, 2003). The description of a phenomenological study consists of "what" the individuals experienced and "how" they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). A number of research topics and questions indicate when using phenomenology as an appropriate approach. The key criteria are the focus on the nature and the meaning of an experience (a phenomenon), described by the people experiencing the phenomenon (Annells, 1999). Most often, phenomenology is used for studies that are focused on understanding the essence of a particular group of people's lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For interviews, researchers should conduct unstructured in-depth phenomenological one-on-one interviews with only the people who directly experienced the same phenomenon (Flood, 2010; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Groenewald, 2004)

Martin Heidegger (1962) suggested that knowledge of the lived world can only happen through interpretation grounded in the world of things, people, relationships, and language. This is because we cannot step "outside" of the world, as we are already engaged and involved in the world. Phenomenological research takes the experiences of a group of individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon and allows the researcher to describe the participants' understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenology is also a way for the researcher to study a phenomenon experienced by many people and report on the essence of what is really going on (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). The phenomena examined in this study is the principal impact on school culture and teacher retention. This phenomenological study will allow the researcher to grasp an understanding of the principal impact.

I chose this course of study because of my interest in why the longevity of teachers staying in the profession is decreasing at a rapid rate. I wanted to listen to

teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes and help school districts and

central offices hiring staff to focus on ways to retain effective teachers and principal

impact on schools. One strength of the study is this district will see the themes from the

interviews and potentially make changes to address the identified issues and reduce the

challenges a school may face with school culture and teacher retention.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

In qualitative research, the study's research questions, and conceptual framework

guide the initial decision regarding the recruitment approach.   Farrugia (2019).

Explained:

> While quantitative studies often aim to maximize statistical power through the use
>
> of a large a sample size as feasible, qualitative studies usually work with a small
>
> number of cases that are feasible to study in depth. While subjects/cases in
>
> quantitative studies are stripped of their context, the smaller numbers involved in
>
> qualitative research allows exploration and richness of the data collected. (p. 69)

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberate and purposeful in selecting

the sample that he or she believes will be the most fruitful in answering the research

question (Farrugia, 2019). This study focused on Title 1 schools, and so the sampling of

teachers interviewed for the study are teachers from Title 1 schools. I worked to select a

population of participants that accurately reflects the demographics of teachers working

in this environment with regard to gender, race, and years of experience. For example,

veteran teachers' experiences are important to include because of the perspective they

provide with regard to historic trends and because they have worked with a larger number

of administrators over their careers, as compared to newer teachers. However, beginning

teachers represent the largest growing number of new teachers, and especially with regard to my second research question regarding teacher retention, it is important to also include the perspectives of teachers newer to the profession. I intentionally selected participants who met the following criteria:

*Teachers selected from Title 1 certified Kentucky school districts.

*Minimum of two years at current school.

*Worked with the same principal for at least two years

Prior to the study, I obtained approval from the University of Louisville's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for this study. Subsequently, I obtained approval from the participating Title 1 certified elementary schools in the respective Kentucky school district(s). I received approval from each building principal to interview teachers. Once approval was granted, I sent a request for study participants to the schools involved in the study to solicit teachers interested in and willing to be a part of the study. Next, I communicated with the teachers by a email to schedule the time, location, and method for the interview.

Developing the Interview Protocol

In qualitative research, there are several ways to collect data. Jacob et al. (2012) explained that the four most frequently used tools for collecting qualitative data are observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. Using an interview provides the researcher with a rich understanding of the participants' lived experiences, and through these experiences meaning is made (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Research questions are written and created in a theoretical language, whereas the interview questions are expressed in the everyday language of the participants (Brinkman & Kvale,

2015). Not only will names and districts be non-identifiable, but any personal information that may emerge during the data collection process will also remain confidential.

Kentucky has faced a growing attrition problem of teachers leaving the profession and has relied upon the Kentucky Impact Survey formerly known as the TELL Kentucky Survey data to help analyze the issue to address the problem. The purpose of the Kentucky Impact Survey is to measure teaching and learning conditions in the state. The Kentucky Impact Survey consists of nine core constructs: professional learning, feedback and coaching, school leadership, staff-leadership relationship, school climate, resources, managing student behavior, educating all students and emotional well-being and belonging. The Kentucky Impact Survey is a biennial survey that offers every certified educator in the state the opportunity to give input on teaching conditions. The Kentucky Impact Survey results are available every year and gives detailed information about teacher perception of student behavior, instruction and school climate. The TELL Kentucky Survey functioned as a starting point for the development of the interview questions for this study as the findings from this survey form the foundation of the research this study seeks to expand upon.

Obtaining Consent

The researcher scheduled a time to call each potential participant to establish rapport, review ethical considerations, and explain that the consent form would be emailed to the participants after the phone call. During the phone call, a date and time was scheduled for an in-person interview. Participants were made aware that the interview would be audio-recorded. The researcher shared the interview questions focused on principal impact on teacher retention and school culture in Title 1 elementary

school. I shared the focus to allow participants to reflect on their experiences before the actual interview. During the initial phone conversation, the researcher reviewed the Informed Consent Form. Doing so fosters trust, sound decision making, and facilitates the collection of open and honest data from the participants. The goal was to establish a setting in which the participants felt comfortable to share their beliefs and perceptions during individual semi-structured interviews. Before collecting data from each participant, I considered the potential for hidden agendas, strengths of the group, and potential conflicts of interest (Vaughn & Lohmueller, 1998). Once the initial phone call with each participant was complete, a date and time for each interview was set at the participant's school. The researcher had each participants to sign the Informed Consent Form . Before the interview, the participants were reminded of the upcoming interview.

Data Collection Procedures

In qualitative studies, there are multiple ways to gather data. Creswell (2014) indicated that interviewing is the most commonly used means of data collection in qualitative research. Creswell also added that a qualitative interview is a direct dialogue between the researcher and the participant(s). When conducting the study several steps will be followed to collect qualitative data using interviews.

In a phenomenological qualitative approach, interviews are an essential part of data collection and in this research, data was collected from participants through one-on-one interviews. The participants chosen were elementary school teachers, who worked in Title 1 schools and had at least 2 years' experience with their principal. The study was outlined and explained to participants. The Interview Protocol was explained, and

participants were asked to sign Consent Forms. Interviews were conducted in person after the participants agreed on a suitable time was set. Throughout all interviews, I audio recorded the questions and answers to later transcribe and evaluate.

Conducting the Interview

Eliciting a discussion of participants' experiences takes patience and careful listening (CastilloMontoya, 2016). "A successful researcher interviews people to find out things that are not easily discernible, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, and previous behaviors. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful" (Brayda & Boyce, 2014, p. 319). The first part of the interview was a warm-up, where I got to know the principals' background and tried to make them feel comfortable sharing information with me. Throughout the interviews, I asked follow-up questions if more information was needed to garner deeper meaning and rich data from the participant responses. I took detailed notes for each response during the interview on a personal notebook. One hour was be allotted for the interview for each participant, and the interviews were audio-recorded on a handheld recorder. The interview questions were semi- structured interview, I prepared clarifying and/or probing questions if needed. During each in-person interview, the researcher took notes on body language and other non-verbal cues. I ended the interview by thanking the participants for their time and a token of her appreciation will be giving to each participant. Following the interview, I uploaded the audio recording to Rev.com to be transcribed. Once the transcript was complete, I redacted any names and delete any information the teacher request to be removed from the transcript. I sent a copy of the transcript to the participants and gave them one week to read the transcript and to omit any statements with which they did not

feel comfortable. If a teacher responded with a changes, I deleted those sections or

statements from the transcript before I analyzed of the data.

Once the researcher identified common themes among all of the transcripts, I shared

findings in Chapter 4 and 5.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2014) explained that the purpose of qualitative data analysis is to find

meaning in the text. I used a step-by-step analysis procedure that entailed organizing the

data, finding and organizing ideas and concepts, building overarching themes from the

data, ensuring trustworthiness and rigor in the data analysis and the findings, and

determining possible and plausible explanations of the results (O'Connor & Gibson,

2003). After identifying keywords or phrases and identifying those that occurred often,

the information was organized by codes into categories. I identified themes within each

case, and performed a thematic analysis of all cases, or cross-case analysis, to make

assertions and/or interpretations of the meaning of the case. According to Glesne (2016)

"data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read: in order to make

sense of the data collected and experiences encountered" (p. 183). In this qualitative

study, data was collected using interviews of teachers on principal impact on school

culture and teacher retention.

Upon completion of the interviews, I sent the voice-recorded interviews to

Rev.com for transcription. I saved the voice-recorded interviews to a separate removable

hard drive and deleted the file from the recorder. I kept the removable hard drive locked

in a cabinet when not in use. All participants reviewed their transcribed interviews and

were allowed to omit any information they wish not to include in the study. After each

interview, I analyzed the data looking for common themes. I circled key words or phrases used by participants while describing their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Personal narratives provide access to an individual's "motivations, emotions, imaginations-in other words, about the subjective dimensions of social action-have shaped by cumulative life experiences" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Researchers must know how the story serves the teller's purpose, and ways to ensure greater reliability in scientific research (Maynes et al., 2008).

Throughout the interview process, I worked to remained unbiased and provided counter narrative questioning to the participants to provide transparency and reflection. While analyzing the data, I searched for clear facts which will allow me to pull out themes phases without putting my own influence into the decision.   I made concrete connections to the data and to my interpretations to ensure clarity and credibility. Themes emerged naturally based on the description and context of the stories given by the principals. After coding the themes, I reread the transcripts to be sure no common themes were left out. I collected rich information and coded the leadership skills and actions used by principals to analyze and interpret the data.

Data Storage

All of the physical data collected throughout the interview sessions was stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. All audio-recording from interviews was be downloaded and secured on the researcher's laptop, which is password protected. For protection, the researcher created backup on a removeable hard drive.

Limitations

This study reviewed teacher's perceptions of principal impact on school culture and teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools. As is the case with most research studies, there are limitations to this study. "Limitations are particular features of a study that may negatively affect the results or the ability to generalize" (Roberts, 2010, p.162). For instance, because the nature of this study requires participants to respond about their current building principal, this may have caused some discomfort among the participants. The following are limitations of which the researcher did not have control when determining the boundaries of the study:

1. A disadvantage of qualitative approaches is that findings cannot extend to wider populations as can be the case with some quantitative analyses (Ravitch & Carl 2016).

2. An additional potential bias exists on the part of the researcher, as she serves as a principal and worked a Title 1 certified elementary school.

3. The assumption that participants in this study will answer all interview questions openly and honestly when the research is conducted in a district where I am not employed.

My professional role as a principal may have influenced the participants' responses. The participants may have been wary of providing truthful responses because they relate to their principal's leadership. To address this limitation, my goal was to establish a rapport and trust with the participants before starting the interviews and read a confidentiality statement to each participant, explaining that I will not be providing any identifiable responses from their interview to anyone in their district, including the principal. Another limitation was conducting the study in a school district where I am not

employed. Due to being an outsider in the district, blind recruiting was used because of no district connections. Time and resources can be a limitation of qualitative phenomenological research as well as deciding on the "boundaries" of a case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Not having a previous relationship with the participants prior to the study limited the opportunity to build trust. Finally, because this is not a funded research project but will be conducted by one researcher, the sample size is relatively small, but is consistent with other qualitative studies.

Delimitations

The following were delimitations of which the researcher had control when determining the boundaries of the study:

1. Only Kentucky school districts were selected to participate in the study. One of the two primary data sources for this research is the Kentucky-based Teaching Empowering Leading and Learning (TELL) survey, and therefore schools outside Kentucky would not be represented in this data set.

2. Elementary school teachers working with the principal for 2 years or more were recruited to participate in this study since it was important for research participants to have some minimal sense of perspective regarding their experience in a school and with a particular principal.

As Roberts (2010) explained, the delimitation section clarifies the boundaries of the study. One delimitation is I am electing to limit the study to only elementary schools, teachers supervised by the principal for at less two years and Kentucky Title 1 certified schools. As a result, the findings will be more relevant to Kentucky school districts with Title 1 certified schools.

Strengths

One strength of the research was the use of the TELL Survey. The TELL Survey is a statewide survey given each year to Kentucky teachers about leadership and school culture in their school. This is a publicly-accessible existing data source that has been used for 12 years. Another strength of the study is that as a principal myself positioned in a Title 1 elementary school in the state of Kentucky, while I do not have insider status with regard to the specific research sites that were used for the study, I do have insider status with regard to the focus for the study and anticipate that my experience will allow me to provide deeper insight into the anticipated findings.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2014) stressed the importance of ethical issues in qualitative research. To ensure I considered ethics throughout the study, I used the structured ethical reflection (SER) tool (Stevens et al., 2016). The SER tool allowed me to align the 69 values most relevant to the study with developing partnerships and questions, recruiting participants, collecting and analyzing data, member checking and presentation of the findings.

As such, interpretations can be incorrect or biased and the findings may be controversial (Cheraghi, 2014). No personally identifiable information from the district, schools or teachers who interviewed will be shared during the research, anonymity confidentiality will be ensured. Confidentiality plays an important role in the study from start to finish. Offering a promise of confidentiality will open up a larger window for honesty and transparency through responses. As the researcher I have the ethical responsibility to keep all participants safe from potential harmful consequences. The research used pseudonyms for each participant in the study. In addition, the researcher

will obtain informed consent from all who participate in the study (Yin, 2014). Participants understood they were offering responses voluntarily and agreed to their interview being audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and coding analysis.

Participants took risks in telling a complete stranger their stories. Revealing personal and professional challenges and philosophies placed the participants in an uncomfortable position. I made sure the participants feel comfortable during the interview by smiling and providing good body language. I showed sensitivity to the participants' stories by listening openly without judgment. I did not impose my own beliefs during the interviews or when transcribing the interviews. Overall, I developed a solid rapport with the participants to alleviate any stress or discomfort they may experience due to their participation in the study. In addition, to protect the volunteer participants and maintain confidentiality, no participant names were identified in the study. I used pseudonyms for the participants and the people mentioned during their interviews. Before the interview, I notified participants of any potential harm associated with participating in the study. Participants signed a consent form granting permission to use their stories in the study after we reviewed the voluntary nature of the study, and their ability and the risk associated with their participation. After the transcription of the interviews, participants were reviewed the document and omit information participants feel uncomfortable using in the study. I protected all transcripts in a locked cabinet for the duration of the study and destroyed them after my committee accepted my dissertation.

Process for Exploring Researcher Positionality

Glesne (2016) noted a researcher's positionality depends on the situation, methodology, research context, participants, and the researcher's personality and values. The researcher is entering her twenty-first year in the educational field. She has taught at the elementary and middle school level and held positions as a teacher, district resource teacher, assistant principal and principal. The researcher's schooling and work experience have provided a solid understanding of the research topic and helps to facilitate the research.

Assisting new teachers is important to me and I used an ethnographic lens to explore the feelings, beliefs and meanings of relationships of new teachers as they interact within their ever-changing school culture (Field & Kafai, 2009). As a researcher, my position as it relates to the study to inform my interpretation, self-learning, and action steps for future work of this single instrumental case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a current principal of 7 years, I have experienced a variety of schools both title 1 and non-Title 1, school cultures both positive and negative and schools that had no problem with teacher retention and hard to staff schools. I have been fascinated by the complexity and fragility of school culture in addition to the resistance of school culture to change.

I'm currently employed with a district that has experienced the strain of a teacher shortage that seems to only be getting worse each school year. As a principal I support new and veteran teachers and I bring critical understanding of the challenges of working in an urban Title 1 schools. I must consider my positionality as a colleague to the principals where the study will be conducted. Working in the same state requires the researcher to collaborate with the teachers and principals and sensitive information could

be shared during interviews. I have a personal interest in this research topic because I am a principal and want to gain more knowledge about principal impact.

Because qualitative research often requires the researcher to act as the instrument in data collection and analysis, the researcher's own biases and perspectives must be carefully navigated (Yin 2016). As the human instrument in this study, I collected data through interviews, reviewed data from the Kentucky Impact Survey and teacher retention at each school. According to Milner IV (2007), "researchers in the process of conducting research pose racially and culturally grounded questions about themselves. Engaging in these questions can bring to researchers' awareness and consciousness known (seen), unknown (unseen) and unanticipated (unforeseen) issues, perspectives, epistemologies and positions" (p.395). This is important because it prompts me to be aware of any biases before completing action research. Milner IV (2007) believes that researchers should ask these questions:

> 1 What is my racial and cultural heritage? How do I know? 2 In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my research, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know? 3 How do I negotiate and balance my racial and cultural selves in society and in my research? How do I know? 4 What are and have been the contextual nuances and realities that help shape my racial and cultural ways of knowing both past and present? How do I know?" (p.395).

As an African American female, who led a Title 1 elementary school, my research lens is based on my experience as a minority in public schools. I did my best to be aware of my roles when collecting data.

The motivation for this study was to understand what specific impact school principals have on improving school culture and teacher retention. I have done personal and professional reading on the subject of principal impact and school culture and worked with colleagues and administrators to improve both principal impact and school culture. This invisible force has a significant impact on staff morale, collaboration, and teacher retention, which in turn impacts the learning environment for students.

Strategies for Ensuring Validity and Trustworthiness of Findings

Validation, reliability, and trustworthiness are terms qualitative researchers use to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in naturalistic research (Creswell & Poth 2018). Dependability refers to the process of data collection and how well it was documented (Schwandt, 2015). Credibility in qualitative research is said to correspond to internal validity in quantitative approaches (Morrow, 2005). The credibility of my research will guarantee participants' checks to verify the accuracy of the interviews conducted. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed to have accurate documentation of each participant's responses. Triangulation is an important aspect of building credibility for research findings. Triangulation is defined to be "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). The audio recordings or the interviews will provide complete verbal records, and prevent the interviewer from making an unconscious selection of data favoring the interviewer's biases (Gall et al., 2007)

Strategies that I employed promote transferability providing detailed information in all aspects of the research. The research must also promote the dependability and

confirmability of the results. Dependability emphasizes stability over time and ensures that participants agree with the findings of the research. A strategy used to help promote dependability and confirmability is describing the research steps accurately and in detail. It was important that I am transparent and that I accurately depict the intentions of the participants' responses to the survey.

Trustworthiness is essential and protocol to collection data and to ensure participants are feel a sense of trust among participants and uphold the ethical standards essential for responsible data collection.

Summary

This study intended to lend additional information to the current body of knowledge regarding the impact of principals on school culture and teacher retention. This chapter explains the research methods and procedures that were used to explore teacher's perception on principal impact on school culture and teacher retention in Title 1 certified schools. This chapter also described the research design, data sources, data collection and analysis procedures within the study context. Lastly, this chapter gave insight into the proposed study's strengths and limitations, ethical considerations, and researcher positionality. The study findings will be presented in Chapter 4 organized by research question. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of my study and offers implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify how teachers perceive principal impact on school culture and their influence on teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools. The following chapter provides the findings of this phenomenological research study. The two research questions that guided my study are:

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's culture?

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

The organization of this chapter begins with a condensed review of the study design, data analysis process, and a collective participant description. A discussion of data themes is disclosed and explored to address findings for each research question.

Overview of Study Design and Data Analysis Process

The study took place in an urban Title 1 elementary school settings. All participants were identified as certified teachers in the state of Kentucky. Participants were selected through convenience sampling and were provided information about the research which included the research topic name, a brief description of the research topic, and the contact information of the researcher. Once participants had been identified as having met all established requirements to participate in the study, they were provided the informed consent form document to sign acknowledging their consent to participate in the study. Each participant in the one-on-one interviews had a least two years of experience or more as a principal.   Teachers in this study were asked to participate in 45-60 minute semi-structured in person interviews. I used a semi structured interview

protocol to engage participants in a discussion of their lived experiences as employees at the Title 1 certified school and how these experiences influence their decision to stay or leave a Title 1 certified school. Each participant discussed their experience relative to their experience while at a Title 1 certified school. Participants gave their perceptions of how leadership may affect teacher retention and culture in Title 1 certified schools. The average length of the twelve interviews was forty-nine minutes, with the longest being seventy-five minutes and the shortest being twenty-two minutes.

      The twelve participants came from a wide range of experience and backgrounds and worked two different schools in the same district. Each participant analyzed and considered different factors influencing their decision to continue working at a Title 1 school. Eight of the twelve participants continue to work in a Title 1 school.

Table 3

Demographics of the Participants

Participant	Race	Gender	Total Years in Education	Total Number of Schools
Participant 1	African American	Female	6	3
Participant 2	Caucasian	Female	16	3
Participant 3	African American	Female	19	2
Participant 4	Caucasian	Female	2	1
Participant 5	Caucasian	Female	14	1
Participant 6	Caucasian	Female	25	4

Participant 7	African American	Male	12	3
Participant 8	African American	Female	25	1
Participant 9	Caucasian	Male	4	2
Participant 10	African American	Female	11	3
Participant 11	African American	Female	19	4
Participant 12	African American	Female	10	2

The teaching experience ranged from 2 years to 25 years and the average tenure in the profession is 13.5 years. (Table 3). Two of the 12 participants were beginning teachers with teaching experience from 0-5 years. All twelve participants serve students in elementary, grades ranging from kindergarten to 5th grade. The demographics of the student population is 95.6% economically disadvantaged, 40.6% Hispanic or Latino, 23.2% white, 23% African American and 13.2% other.

Table 4

Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience
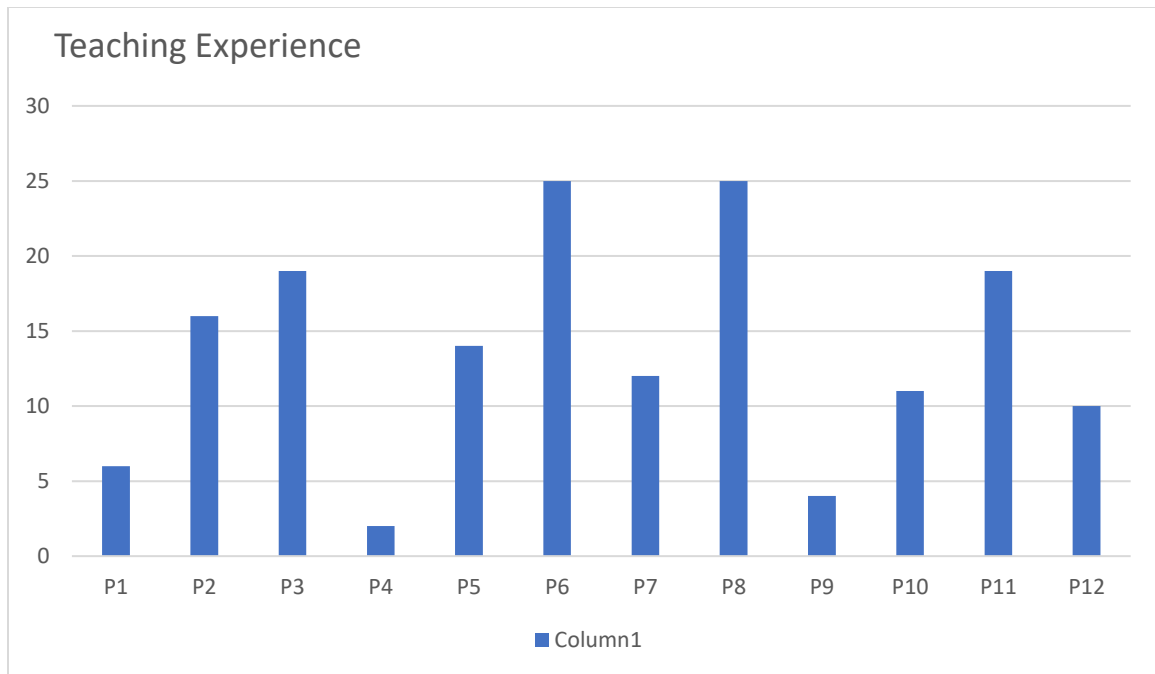
The data collected for this qualitative study was done so through a structured interview protocol. The interview protocol consisted of twelve open-ended questions. One additional follow-up question was asked during all interviews to probe for more in-depth responses. The data was transcribed by Rev.com and transcribing the interviews verbatim. I read each transcript multiple times; as each transcript was read, I recorded my thoughts on the margins of each page. Open coding occurred initially of each transcript from words or phrases. The open codes provided insight into the lived experiences through participants thoughts and feelings in their interview responses aligned to the research questions. Open coding was used to designate labels for segments of data to identify recurring patterns so that "similar codes are clustered together to create a smaller number of categories" (Miles et al., 2014, pg. 73). Creswell and Poth (2018), memoing, while transcribing the interviews, helps in determining the themes. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize the importance of this process as it allows the researcher to discover the similarities within the information. To detect these similarities, open coding was used

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to identify themes or patterns based on recurring words or phrases from each interview transcript that relate to the research questions and thus identified themes in the data that showed similarities and/or differences from the participants. The codes were compared for consistencies.

The continuous reading of the transcripts and the use of Rev.com allowed me to identify common words, phrases, and ideas. I created a spreadsheet where I organized and identified commonalities. The major commonalities or themes were identified. After the spreadsheet was complete, I noted that within each theme, there were several subthemes. The organization of the data into themes made the information much easier to read and identify many common threads between all twelve participants.

Clustering Meaning Units- Labeling Themes

Moustakas (1994) noted that the clustered and labeled themes create the essential themes of the experience, stating, "From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience" (p.4). The next step for data analysis occurred through deleting irrelevant, repeated, or overlapping statements. The remaining statements were then considered the horizons or textural meanings. The textural and structural descriptions of the experiences are synthesized into a composite description of the phenomenon through the research process referred to by Moustakas (1994, p. 100) as "intuitive integration." This description becomes the essence, which captures the meaning ascribed to the experience of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I carefully examined the identified significant statements about school culture and teacher retention and clustered the statements into themes or meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). In the final step, patterns, themes,

similarities are differences, and explanations will be highlighted to capture the essence of the phenomenon Codes and labels were used to assign meaning to the data. This helped me to identify new and emerging themes from each participant. The coding tied together observations and statements and allowed for patterns and themes to emerge.   I also labeled chunks of data that were relevant to answering the research questions.   All 12 participants experienced the phenomenon of school culture and teacher retention and offered a deeper understanding of what they experienced. There were 4 themes to emerge which were: school culture, relationships, communication and trust, and leadership from principal.

The following four themes emerged from this analysis about how participants experienced school culture and teacher retention in their certified Title 1 elementary school. (Table 5)

Table 5

School culture/teacher retention and turnover themes

School Culture/Teacher Retention	Turnover
School Culture	Health and Safety
Relationships	Lack of Support
Communication and Trust	Toxic School Culture
Leadership from Principal	Student Achievement
	Parent and Home support
	High Demands and Stress

Theme 1: School Culture

Ten of the twelve participants referenced that school culture was important to

Title 1 schools. One participant stated that a negative school culture could cause stress

on the staff and students. It is a challenge for the school principal to have a pulse on the

entire school (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001). Principals need to

know their school culture and the impacts that undermine them from transforming

(Muhammad, 2009). Staff at Title 1 schools may form bonds with students that non-title 1

staff do not often consider, said Participant 4. For example, staff often take on a lot of

other responsibilities working in a Title 1 school such as mentor, social worker, care giver

and the student's "person" as one of the participants explained it. School culture was a

common thread in ten of the twelve participant interviews.

The following are the answers participants gave in response to questions asked about

school culture.

Participant 4

I have been teaching for two years. This is my second year, and I have only taught
here. I student taught here and fell in love with the school, so I've stayed here,
and only taught fourth grade math. So that was the grade and content level I
wanted this and I got very fortunate and got it.

I think negative culture, I think that's hard because whenever something goes bad
or the students have had a bad day and then you're negative with them, I think it's
a trickle effect. They can really go down that slope very quickly. So, I think
trying to stay away from that negative culture as much as possible with students
and staff, but especially in Title 1 schools is huge.

Participant 7

This is my 12th year teaching and I've only been at this school until this school
year. This school year I job share and teach at two schools. I spent an hour and a
half at another Title 1 school in the a.m. I taught kindergarten, first and second

grade reading, which was a bit of a challenge. With students that are so low academically, principals often try to have split classes.

Well, there's a lot of challenges that come with it because you have the low socioeconomics, a lot of our kids live in poverty, so we deal with a lot of behavior. We deal a lot of the low academic success. We deal with families not being very involved. I mean their home life is their biggest challenge. But we have such a great team here, I mean our staff is amazing that working together we've created a school that is none other. I mean, that's why I've been here for my past 12 years is because everyone's like, "why don't you maybe leave where it could be easier and you don't have to really worry about kids being low academically. I'm like because I make a difference.

Theme 2: Relationships

Teachers frequently mentioned building relationships with student, parents, staff and their principal in their responses. Many of the teachers participating in the study indicated that they still stay in contact with students and their parents from past years. They mentioned that students often reach out to them as adults to ask for advice, talk about their future educational goals and share personal stories.

Many participants expressed the camaraderie with staff was also an important relationship. Participants expressed the importance of sharing resources, getting to know each other, having each other's back with difficult situations that come with teaching in a Title 1 school. Participants became very emotional and were almost brought to tears when they spoke of their former students. Each participant felt they were vital in their students' lives. Relationships developed with students were found to be relevant by all twelve participants. Families/parent relationships were recounted in seven of the twelve interviews. Colleague relationships have influenced participants to remain teaching at a Title 1 school Participant 3 and Participant 7 affirmed this.

The following are the answers participants gave in response to questions asked about relationships.

Participant 8

This is my 25th year teaching. I was certified to teach seventh through twelfth grade, social studies and history, and that was 25 years ago. And then at that time, there was a shortage of special education teachers, so I did my rank one and got a position here. I've been pretty much K through third grade, but some years things fluctuate.

The only thing I can think that really gets teachers down a little bit, is just the day to day in a Title 1 school. Must days we are shorthanded and that's not anybody's fault. But not getting subs you help cover classes. We all stick together but it does not always seem fair.

Participant 4

I think the biggest challenge for me so far, and again, I'm very new to this situation, but I think that you have such high goals for some of these students and you have such little time, especially including outside of school. We don't get them very often unless they're getting extra assistance. So, I think just filling that gap between them and their benchmark of where they should be is our biggest challenge that I see in this Title 1 school.

Participant 9

I have been an educator, this is my fourth year, in all four of my years have been in fifth grade social studies and science at Title 1 schools.

I feel like building relationships is the biggest key.

Participant 12

I began teaching third-grade special education. It was a mixture of special education and regular ed students, but the regular ed students were the bottom performing students in third grade in the district. I taught all subjects. Most of my education career was in intermediate grades.

So just being able see and build those relationships, because in Title 1 like we mentioned before, behavior could be a thing because they're dealing with a lot more outside of school than your average child. So, with that being sad, the relationships that you build there to me are just way deeper. You get to know their families on a deeper level, and also, the families are so appreciative of the work you're putting in with their kiddos because they're probably working multiple jobs and they just build deeper relationships, I feel like, and that's my favorite part of teaching in a Title 1 school.

Participant 6

So, this is my 25th or 26th year. I did one month as a teacher's assistant. I've taught in three different districts. I've taught kindergarten through fifth grade. I only taught first grade virtually during COVID. I've spent the majority of my time in the intermediate classrooms.

I think it's beneficial because you don't have to retain new teachers every year. They know the routines and procedures. Even if they don't have the student, they can still build relationships with them. They can be an encouraging adult, a mentor, and influencer. If the teacher population is constantly revolving. You lack building those relationships. You lack some consistency. Children of Title 1 schools need as much consistency, I feel like, as they can get because there's such a lack of it sometimes at their homes.

Theme 3: Communication and Trust

No professional community can endure without trust between teachers and administrators (Louis & Washlstrom, 2011). With this in mind, Morrison (2018) study suggested that this entails "hiring the right people, getting in the right position, building those important relationships, and building and maintaining clear line of communication as a means of increasing the efficacy of change." The participants' shared beliefs around communication and trust as just being able to approach and talk to their principal and trust what they say is to be true.

The following are the answers participants gave in response to questions asked about communication and trust.

Participant 3

I've been teaching for nineteen years and I have been in the same district the entire time. After I graduated, I became a long-term sub. The last day of school, I literally got my job and have been here ever since. I have had kindergarten, first, second, third. Second is my favorite, so I have spent more time in that grade than any of the other grade levels.

I'm going to say fairness. Maybe being a team player. Again, supportive. Maybe have your back, even if I'm not quite right, you can chew me out later for it, but maybe have my back as well.

Participant 12

The main thing that I feel like we value in Title 1 schools from our admin is understanding it is hard work we're putting in, and we're trying our best. Because even sometimes when students do not perform, just like the question of, "Okay, what can you do differently?' When each week you are trying new strategies, talking with your team, and planning. So, you hope your principal understands that often times you may see growth, but it may not show on these standardized assessments, but there is a lot of growth taking place. So first, understanding that and working as a village. So, making sure to ask, "How can I support you? What things do you need? Because a lot of times, we need support because, like I mentioned before, there are so many variables that lead to student success. So, we really need all hands-on deck working together.

Participant 2

Fortunately, I have only taught at this school. I've been here for 16 years. I started as a computer lab and science lab teacher. Then I moved to third grade reading a few years ago, and now I'm our reading interventionist.

Oh my goodness. There has to be some caring there for us and for what we do and some understanding and not just lip service. We have to actually really see it. I think… I say he because we have a male principal, but I think the principal there also needs to be a level of trust. All principals must trust their educators, but especially with the ones in Title 1 schools, there has to be a level of trust because our students are all over the place. The students don't always have home support. Our leader really needs to trust us to be the experts to reach all of those students.

Theme 4: Leadership from Principal

Administrative support and the direction of the principal in building positive relationships with staff was a recounted comment from eight different participants. Several participants talked about working with principals that micromanaged the work environment and had dictator-like personalities. Those responses were unlike Participant 3, who felt appreciated and supported by the principal.

The following are the answers participants gave in response to questions asked about leadership from the principal.

Participant 3

My principal does a really good job with building relationships with us. She's always checking on us, "Do you need anything?

Participant 6

Well, one thing, she provided dinner for those of us that stayed after a certain time doing parent teacher conference, that's more like showing her gratitude.

Participant 11

"I've almost completed five years of teaching. I've done special education the first few years, second grade, and then first grade, and I've done all the subjects. And then now I'm just math, and this is the second school I've been at, so I've taught at two different schools."

I did not stay at the Title 1 school. I actually chose to leave the Title 1 school after the new principal came. I think the lack of support when it came to behavior that was going on at the school, it was not physically safe for me to be there anymore. As a mom, I needed to put my family first, and so my mental health, my physical health, there at that school building, I didn't feel like it was the best environment for me. And so, I chose to leave.

Participant 7

I think the problem with retention, the lack of principal caring for their staff, I have a lot of teacher friends and some teach at other schools we always talk about what makes a good principal. In one of the schools I taught in the principal wasn't a good communicator and wasn't very consistent and that irked a lot of teachers.

Participant 12

Yes, So the problem with teacher retention too, I feel, is a little bit more beyond just the leadership with the school because, of course the district, there's a lot of things that take place at the district level that principals don't really have a hand in, including but not limited to teacher pay and resources for schools. There's not many jobs where you have to have a bachelor's or a master's and you come in making such a small amount of money.

The connection between the TELL survey items, interview questions (IQ), and research questions (RQ) is crucial for achieving depth and richness in data collection and analysis. Each component offers a deeper understanding of the participants' perspective to assist with exploring themes and concepts in greater detail. By triangulating findings from the

TELL survey, interview questions, there is a more complete understanding of the

perceptions of teachers and their principal's leadership.

Table 6

Link Between TELL Survey Items and Interview Questions (IQ) to Research Questions (RQ)

RQ #1 How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals with promoting a teacher's sense of belonging through their actions?

RQ#2 How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

Tell Survey (TS)	Interview Question (IQ)	Research Question (RQ)
TS #1 How positive is the working environment at your school?	IQ #7 What impact does positive culture have on Title1 certified schools? What impact does a negative or toxic culture have on Title 1 certified schools?	RQ #1
TS #2 How positive is the tone that school leaders set for culture of the school?	IQ #5 How do you see teacher retention impacting school culture?	RQ #1
TS #3 For your school leaders, how important is teacher satisfaction?	IQ #6 How does your principal work to retain effective teachers?	RQ #2
TS #4 How effectively do school leaders communication important information to teachers?	IQ #11 Are there any other reasons to stay at a Title 1 school?	RQ #2
TS #5 How knowledgeable are your school leaders about what is going on in teachers' classrooms?	IQ #4 Explain how teacher retention impacts student learning.	RQ #2
TS #6 Overall, how positive is the influence of	IQ #3 What characteristics or traits do teachers value	RQ #2

the school leaders on the quality of your teaching?	in principals who lead Title 1 certified schools?	
TS #7 How responsive are school leaders to your feedback?	IQ #9 What practices do teachers perceive to be the most important in helping to create and maintain positive school culture?	RQ #1
TS #8 When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?	IQ #10 What leadership practices of your principal impact your decision to stay at a Title 1 certified school?	RQ #2
TS #9When you face challenges at work, how supportive are your school leadership?	IQ #2 What are the greatest challenges for teachers who work in Title 1 certified schools?	RQ #2
TS #10 When challenges arise in your personal life how understanding are your school leadership?	IQ #8 What is either a personal experience or situation you have seen firsthand to help illustrate ways your principal attempts to foster positive school culture?	RQ #1 RQ #2
TS #11 How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?	IQ #8 What is either a personal experience or situation you have seen firsthand to help illustrate ways your principal attempts to foster positive school culture?	RQ #1 RQ #2

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings from this research support the existing literature suggesting leadership does influence school culture and teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools. Despite numerous research studies on the topic, teacher retention continues to be an issue of high interest, due to a rise in the number of teachers leaving their schools or even their professions (Dahlkamp et al., 2017, Tuan, 2020). Teacher retention continues to plague education organizations, including Title I elementary schools.

Sergiovanni (2001) examined the difference between high and low achieving schools and determined that the principal was a key player in setting the tone for school improvement. Sergiovanni (2001) stated, "In higher achieving schools, principals exerted strong leadership, participated directly and frequently in instructional matters, had higher expectation for success, and were oriented toward academic goals" (p. 162). According to Fullan (1997) the principal should be willing to empower and be supportive of others, visible, and sensitive to the staff, stand up to the district for the good of the school, be positive and open minded, and believe every child can succeed. Research indicated there are many aspects of leadership behaviors that impact student success and teacher perceptions of the principal's role as an instructional leader.

As teachers share their perceptions of principal impact on school culture and teacher retention, findings from this study will offer principals, field of education and human resource district's personnel additional insight into teacher's perceptive and their

views regarding principal impact actions and strategies that can be used to improve teacher sense of belonging and teacher retention. In this chapter, the researcher provides a summary of the findings revealed in this study, concluding statements regarding findings, recommendations for further research, and proposed implications for professional practice. This study further affirms those previous findings.

In this study, I sought to answer two research questions. These were:

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals with promoting a teacher sense of belonging through their actions?

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

This study aimed to fill in the research gap by conducting a phenomenological study centered on interviewing twelve principals from Title 1 certified elementary schools in Kentucky. I present a summary of the findings for each research question. I then discuss the implications of my findings for policy, practice, and will highlight a number of potential future research.

RQ 1: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principal with promoting a teacher's sense of belonging through their actions?

My first research question explored lived experiences of study participants, with their sense of belonging from their principal's action. The environment in which a person works has an impact on not only job satisfaction, but also on the ability to do the job well and maintain the desire to continue working in the job and the profession (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). It was interesting to see the comparison across their responses from the

TELL Survey and their responses to the interview questions aligned with this research question. In the TELL Survey the question "How much do your school leaders care about you as an individual?" This question was rated at 95%. Participants also commented that their principals' interactions with them were respectful, which instilled positive feelings about coming to work. One participant said "Not only does my principal do classroom visits but he often stops by just to ask how I'm doing and even asks about my children and family. He'll ask do you need anything for your class. He just sits down and will have a causal conversation with you." This builds a sense of belonging with staff, it shows that principals care about their staff. The research supports that a mutual trust and relationships must be formed between leadership and teachers and between teachers and students to promote a positive school culture (Prokopchuk, 2016).

Statements from participants indicate that support from other staff members also helped with the sense of belonging. One participant smiled as she discussed how she works with other staff members to support each other in ways that appeared to foster their sense of belonging in their school community. "You know, we're a team, and you want provide a supportive, safe and loving environment where your student can truly thrive and do their best and your colleagues know you have their back"

The lack of trust between principals and teachers had a negative effect on the teacher's sense of belonging. Differences in leadership style, values, or priorities between the principal and teachers may create tension and misunderstanding that undermine trust and collaboration within the school community. The principal plays both directly and indirectly on teachers' sense of community. It was made clear when teachers reported that they were frustrated with principals having favorite staff members as an

example. This causes a toxic environment; one participant shared the principal catered to certain staff members and made the other staff feel not as welcomed or wanted at the school.

All participants agreed that teaching is a high demand job with an enormous number of responsibilities that often leads to feelings of stress and pressure. With the stress this job demands one participant stated "The teachers have to enjoy what they're doing. They have to want to come to school and feeling a sense of belonging helps with that." Weathers (2006) found that the strongest predictor of teachers' sense of community was teachers' perception of administrator support. This is an important result particularly for public, Title 1 elementary schools that are often characterized as larger institutions that service students of lower socioeconomic levels. The support and leadership from the principal is extremely important in building cohesive staffs and creating and supporting a sense of belonging in the teachers. In summary, this study affirms that the principal's leadership has a significant impact on teacher moral and sense of belonging in certified Title 1 elementary schools. By fostering a supportive, collaborative, inclusive school culture, principals can create an environment where teachers feel valued, respected, and motivated to stay at their school and make a difference in the lives of their students.

RQ 2: How do teachers in Title 1 certified elementary schools perceive their principals as impacting their school's teacher retention?

My second research question sought to reveal principal impact on teacher retention. In contrast to the results from the first research question, as I translated the results from the survey and interview questions to my second research question, I uncovered a parallel between principal leadership and school culture. Elmore (2000),

Sergiovanni (1994), Halligan (1999), and Hill (2000) agreed that there is a direct connection between the principal's leadership practices and school culture. This study has indicated that listening to and caring for teachers, students, and parents were important in changing the school culture. For example, the participants expressed how simply being listened to provide a deeper level of understanding between the principal and themselves. In many of the participants' reflections, they believed the principal listened with an open mind and was nonjudgmental.

The findings provided insight into direct and indirect ways principals impact their school's teacher retention. The principal's willingness to directly support teachers with academics, instruction strategies, materials, parents, and/or students, was considered another measurement of the principal's leadership impact on changing the school culture. This finding aligned with Heck (2000), whose research revealed that a principal's interactions and involvement with teachers, students, and parents may have an indirect impact in improving the school's culture in many areas, such as academics, student behavior, and teacher morale. While it is interesting that Heck's (2000) study listed the principal's interaction and involvement being an indirect impact, this study places significant importance on the direct impact of the principal's engagement with teachers, students, and parents.

Participants all shared their challenges tied to teacher retention Title 1 schools being labeled as "failing" or "low-performing" based on test scores. This perception of failure can impact teacher morale, job satisfaction, and in the extreme, leading some teachers to seek employment at schools with better reputations. One participant shared that "while teachers in Title 1 schools are seeing growth, your students are so many grade

levels behind, so trying to catch them up and teach grade level standards is pretty difficult."

In addition, unexpected findings of this study support arguments presented by experts in the field of school culture regarding the importance of trust between teachers, principals, parents (Barth, 2002). These findings are in line with what 5 of 12 participants stated in their interviews about the imperative need for trust to build a positive school culture.

The most common reason participants in the study offered for their choice to stay or leave a school was the principal and their leadership. Eight participants said they stay at their school because of the support from the principal and how they felt about the students. Two participants said the main reason they decided to leave and transfer to a different school was the principal. One participant shared the lack of administration support was a huge factor. She also stated a lot of teachers are felt like the accountability was on the teachers and a lack of accountability for students, students' behavior, and parent accountability as well. Participants also said that unqualified principals and principals with little experience contributed to their decision.

There is no question that the teacher shortage in the nation's K-12 schools has become a growing concern (Baitlinger, 2021; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Natansan, 2022). Increased attention has been called to this problem, as teachers are leaving the classroom in pursuit of other educational opportunities or leaving the field altogether (Walker, 2022a). This study adds a greater understanding about principal impact on school culture and teacher retention and why teachers may be leaving their positions at such alarming rates, particularly in Title 1 certified elementary schools. The study revealed contributing

factors of teacher retention described by participants as the opportunity to build relationships the school culture, the leadership of the principal, and effective communication and trust among leadership, teachers, students, and parents.

The following section provides the implications from this study. The findings of this study have generated some significant implications. These implications are divided and outlined into two sections: (a) "Theme" and b) "Implications for field of education or principal leadership." The implications derive from the five themes discovered during the study. Table 5 lists the themes and their associated implications.

Table 7

Theme and Implications

Theme	Implications For
1.Student Relationships	Field of Education
2.Toxic School Culture	Principal Leadership
3.Communication and Trust	Principal Leadership
4.Leadership from Principal	Principal Leadership

Theme 1: Relationships

A reoccurring prominent theme in this study was the relationships. Participants expressed the word "relationships" 40 times throughout all the interviews. These relationships reference the connections teachers have with students, families/parents, or colleagues. Connectedness and relationships are the building blocks of any institution. These connections make life predictable and comfortable for students who attend Title 1

schools. Recent research validates that quality parent-teacher relationships can lead to increased academic and behavioral outcomes (Garbacz 2016).

Theme 2: School Culture

Research has clearly shown that understanding the dynamics of a principal's impact on creating effective school culture is crucial because it reveals possible causes to teachers leaving the profession quicker than universities can develop future teachers (Baptiste, 2019). Participants in this study understood that school culture was a large contributor in their decision to stay or leave a school. This aligns with Smith (2014), who indicated that a school climate is made by the stakeholders' collective experiences with the school's norm, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. One participant defined school culture as the school's mood. Participants were very clear about specific behaviors and actions of their principal that set the entire tone of their building. For example, participants shared that "during big assemblies all students that scored really well are recognized and teachers from kindergarten to fifth grade would stand up to also be recognized. So you knew it wasn't just one teacher that did it, it was everybody and the cheering was for the student and all the teachers who helped make the student successful. Just little things like celebrating the students and staff."

Theme 3: Communication and Trust

Participants in this study indicated transparency and honesty with staff provide a sense of trust between staff and leadership. Their responses also indicated individual communication styles affect culture by instilling a feeling of belonging and support. Inclusivity allows all to feel a part of the collective work occurring through collaborative

efforts as evidenced by their responses. Participant 1 shared "It is all about communication, honesty, and trust. I mean those three and passion. I have been on teams that have all of those, and you it makes life at work amazing." Participant 10 "The relationship with teachers and the way we communicate. If you don't have that, it's not going to be a healthy environment. It comes down to communication and respecting each other."

Theme 4: Leadership from Principal

Eight of the participants in the study explained that their principal was an important factor in their decision to leave or stay at their school. The respondents indicated that school leaders play a pivotal role in staff retention, teachers' sense of belonging and school culture. Their responses supported the statement that effective leaders are the cornerstone for successful teaching and student learning. Participants felt that their principals' leadership skills directly affected their ability to remain classroom teachers. Participants recognized the importance of school-wide goal. Those who spoke of positive experiences cited specific organizational structures, such as professional learning communities, that their principals had put in place to create collaborative, supportive and empathetic relationships with staff.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers perceive principal impact on school culture and their influence on teacher retention in Title 1 certified elementary schools. Principals play a pivotal role in school culture and teacher retention. Effective leaders are the cornerstone for making an impact on teaching and student learning with

school culture and teacher retention. There are direct implications for leadership practices for school principals from this study.

1. Principals must be aware that teachers expect their principals to support them as they handle the everyday stressors of working in a Title 1 school. This awareness is key in creating a school climate that encourages teacher retention by fostering a school culture in which teachers are respected and positive peer relationships are encouraged. Principals can demonstrate support for their teachers through various actions and initiatives that prioritize their well-being, professional growth, and overall job satisfaction.

2. Building relationships is another implication that principals can encourage by working together with others toward common goals, leveraging each other's strengths and skills. Collaboration fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens relationships between the principal and staff. Being reliable, consistent, and honest with actions and words helps to foster the relationship. Trust is essential for building strong relationships.

3. School culture and teacher retention efforts can play a significant role in addressing educational inequities. High-needs schools, such as those serving low-income communities or students of color, often experience higher turnover rates and struggle to retain experienced educators. By prioritizing school culture and providing support to teachers in these schools, education leaders can promote equity and ensure that all students have access to high-quality education.

4. Communication of vision and directions is an implication that can be supported by clear communication of goals, priorities, and expectations. Principals play a critical role in articulating a shared vision and direction for the school. Also, principals clearly expressing their thoughts and feelings while being respectful and considerate of others' viewpoints. Use of non-verbal cues such as eye contact and body language convey openness and sincerity.

5. Finally, the principal's leadership of encouraging a healthy work-life balance by promoting reasonable workloads and recognizing the importance of self-care and providing opportunities for professional development and mentorships.

This research study supports the concept that principals have a noteworthy influence on teachers' workplace experiences and student achievement. Warrick (2018) emphasized the plausibility of leaders in the future will need to be capable of not just managing an organization well, but capable of building healthy, high performing schools as well. The participants in this study gave several accounts of the importance of leadership being instrumental to retaining teachers.

Given the above-mentioned implications, the following recommendations seem appropriate as a result of the findings. Table 6 addresses recommendations and responsible parties to help improve principals' effectiveness to lead a Title 1 certified elementary school.

Table 8

Recommended Actions

Recommendations	Responsible Party
Leadership Support for Principals	Principal Preparation Program
Communication and Trust	District/Mentoring Program
Relationships	District/Mentoring Program

The first recommendation more in depth training for principal in principal preparation programs. According to Pianta and Allen (2018), "principals do not get nearly enough training on how to build strong relationships and be a champion for their teachers" (p. 1). Principal preparation programs play a crucial role in developing the next generation of effective school leaders who are equipped to meet the complex challenges of education in Title 1 schools and make a positive impact on school culture and teacher retention. Principal preparation programs need to integrate on principal professional learning communities (PPLC) and mentorship.

PPLCs provide a supportive and collaborative environment where principals can exchange ideas, share best practices, and learn from each other's experiences. PPLCs promote reflective practice by encouraging principals to critically examine their leadership practices, reflect on success and failures, and identify areas for growth. With reflection, principals can develop greater self-awareness and refine their leadership. The collaborative approach fosters professional growth and promotes continuous improvement with school culture and teacher retention.

The second recommendation is to establish a mentoring program for principals aimed at specific supports for those facing the challenges of leading Title 1 certified schools. This mentoring work should originate at the district level from the human relations or human resource office or, if the district is a large district with a complex organization, from their immediate supervisor or leadership development office. One aspect of the mentor program would include district-level mentors to provide guidance, support, and feedback to principals as they navigate the challenges and responsibilities of school leadership in a Title 1 certified elementary school. The mentorship would pair Title 1 principals with experienced mentors who provide guidance, support, and feedback. The mentorship programs should focus on practical strategies for navigating challenges related to school culture, teacher retention and challenges related to leading Title 1 elementary schools.

A second aspect of the mentoring program should focus on building supportive and collaborative relationships between and among staff and leadership. It should include work around enhancing district to school relationships, as well as those between leaders and teachers. Critical, too, should be supporting positive and collaborative relationships between and among leadership teams in schools. All principals, whether leading a Title 1 school or not, would benefit from this district-level support. Principals who can establish supportive and trusting relationships with staff are more likely to keep their teachers (Sawchuk, 2020). Participants expressed that coworker relationships and healthy interactions with their fellow staff members helped them have a more positive outlook while teaching. Intentionality through a well-developed and well-supported mentor program would help support those relationships.

Decades of research also acknowledges that crucial role that effective principals have in cultivating a strong and sustainable teacher workforce. Teachers often identify the quality of administrative support as more important in their decisions to stay or leave, more so than salaries, workload, or lack of autonomy (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). In the case of school leadership, high turnover rates result in a negative school culture, which in turn also has a negative effect on student achievement (Lathan, 2022).

Recommendations for Future Research

The problem addressed in this study was to understand teacher perception of principal impact on teacher retention and school culture. Teacher retention is a national, state, and district problem and it is especially an issue in Title I certified elementary schools. When teachers leave the classroom, many are affected: teachers who remain in the classroom experience and increased workload; school leaders responsible for supporting and developing their staff and sense of community, parents left with what may seem a rotating cast of teachers responsible for the learning environment of their children, and most importantly students who are not provided with optimal educational experiences because their classrooms may be filled with inadequate or novice teachers who are not prepared to meet the needs of all students.

Additional research needs to be conducted relative to the importance of principal preparation programs and the impact of those programs on school culture and teacher retention. We know the expertise and quality of the school principal is closely linked to teacher retention rates. Research has consistently shown that teachers are more likely to stay in schools with supportive and effective principals who provide instructional leadership, professional development opportunities, and a positive working environment.

Principals who are well- prepared through rigorous preparation programs are more likely to possess the leadership skills need to lead a Title 1 school and retain talented teachers. Additional research conducted in the current educational environment would add to the body of knowledge about the contemporary issues of schools and districts. Research that examines how the findings of the elementary school culture and teacher retention in this study compare to experiences at the middle school and high school levels would help us more fully understand the challenges faced at all levels of public education.

Conclusions

"Educations is the only way out of poverty" (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). If we truly believe this statement, it is our duty to give these students in Title 1 certified elementary schools a fair chance that will lead to success. A fair chance with teachers who are invested in their well-being and help students and their families break generational curses of poverty through education. To recruit, train, and retain better teachers at Title 1 certified elementary schools, we need principals who impact teachers sense of belonging and support highly qualified teachers so that they remain at their schools serving their students. It is no doubt that being a principal is hard work. Certain things matter to teachers, as evidenced through the findings of this study. A positive school culture matters to teachers. Principal behaviors matter to teachers.

Federal and state accountability measures hold schools to the same standard of student achievement regardless of the populations they serve. Though principals are often described as having an indirect impact on student achievement, the principal is often the most visible individual when a school is failing. Therefore, their leadership is

critical. Their advocacy for fairness and equity in assessing school success is critical. Students in Title 1 certified elementary schools deserve the best effort of every professional in the building. We know through practice that these schools often are staffed with the most inexperienced teachers. These teachers need the most support from their principals in order to meet the needs of the students they serve.

This study determined that teacher's perception of principal impact on teacher's sense of belonging and teacher retention to have a direct link to principal leadership practices. Therefore, the experienced and highly trained principals, adept at providing support for their teachers, nurturing their development, and helping to establish and nurture a positive school culture are critical to turning the tide of teacher migration from schools, especially in the high needs Title I certified elementary schools.

There are certain verified behaviors that teachers feel are necessary from their principals, school teams, and district personnel. These behaviors include robust professional development determined by the demonstrated needs of their teachers, and designed with their unique teaching faculty in mind, and delivered in a timely and supportive manner. A second behavior of principals and district teams is the development of a comprehensive mentoring program. Mentoring does not just have to take place early in a teaching career. A comprehensive mentoring program will account for all teachers and those who support them on their journey of continuous growth and improvement of practice. Along with a mentoring program, a coaching program, exclusive of formal evaluation, would help to build trust and confidence between and among teachers, principals, and district staff. Essential to principal effectiveness with teachers is that

notion of "keeping your finger on the pulse of the building" which can only come through increased visibility and availability of the principal to the teachers.

The findings from this study may potentially contribute to a movement leading to positive social change through professional literature regarding how to develop a cohesive system of education reform taking into account principals' influence on teacher retention (Glazer, 2018; Lambersky, 2016). Furthermore, I believe operationalizing recommendations from this study will be in the best interest of school leaders of those hard to staff schools. Principals would do well to prepare deliberate strategies and employ actions that would improve relations with teachers and improve teachers' sense of belonging thus positively impacting teacher retention.

The ultimate goal of this study is to improve the quality of the educational experience provided to students in Title 1 certified elementary schools. The results of this study will help the field of education and principal to better understand the successful practices that keep teachers satisfied in their jobs and less likely to leave the school or the field altogether. The experiences of these participants provided an authentic look at how they perceive their principal's impact on school culture and teacher retention. As Aldridge & Fraser (2016) argue, stronger, more positive school culture will lead to a better educational experience for students and better student outcomes While these findings speak only to the teacher perspective, they are a starting point for considering impacts on school culture and teacher retention. In creating a stronger, more positive an environment where everyone thrives can be attained.

I feel deeply about this topic as a former student who attended a Title 1 school. As an elementary school principal, I worry about our future if we do not prioritize education

and find new ways to support teachers, all teachers, and especially those working in the high need Title I certified elementary schools. On a personal note, I am happy to report that I broke a generational curse and realized education was the only way out of poverty for me. I am a testimony of former President Obama's 2007 quote "The best anti-poverty program is a world-class education."

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please share a little bit about yourself, including but not limited to the number of years as an educator, what grade level and subject you teach, what schools and settings you have taught in, etc.

2. What are the greatest challenges for teachers who work in Title 1 certified schools?

3. What characteristics or traits do teachers value in principals who lead Title 1 certified schools?

4. Explain how teacher retention/attrition impacts student learning?

5. How does teacher retention/attrition impact school culture?

6. How does your principal work to retain effective teachers in Title 1 certified schools? \

7. What impact does a positive culture have in Title l certified schools? What impact does a negative or toxic culture have in Title 1 certified schools?

8. What is either a personal experience or a situation you have seen first-hand that helps to illustrate ways your principal attempts to foster positive school culture?

9. Thinking about principal leadership practices, which practices do teachers perceive to be the most important in helping to create and maintain a positive school culture.

10. What leadership practices of your principal impact your decision to stay at this Title I certified school?

11. What are other reason(s) you stay at this Title 1 certified school?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share that would help me better understand the importance of school culture or the problem of retention and attrition?

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Semi-Structure Interviews

Project Title:
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL IMPACT ON SCHOOL CULTURE AND
TEACHER RETENTION IN TITLE 1 CERTIFIED SCHOOLS

Investigators(s) name & address

Dr. Deborah Powers
College of Education and Human Development
University of Louisville
1905 South 1ˢᵗ Street Louisville, KY 40292
deborah.powers@louisville.edu

Erika Walker
1051Hess Lane
Louisville, KY 40219
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Site(s) Where Study is to be Conducted:

Introduction and Background Information:

You are invited to participate in a research study about principal impact o school culture
and teacher retention. The study is being conducted by Erika Walker, a doctoral student a
the University of Louisville, who is being supervised by Dr. Deborah Powers, Program
Director, Education Administration and Leadership. The study will take place at 5-10 title 1
certified elementary schools in Kentucky. Approximately 10 participants will be invited to
participate.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify how teachers perceive principal's
impact on school culture and the influence on teacher retention in Title 1 certified
elementary schools.

Procedures:

In this study you will be asked to participate in semi-structed interviews. This is an
individual interview in which I will ask you to respond to 11 questions about your
perception of principal impact on school culture and teacher retention. The interview will
take place at each school and should take approximately 30-45 minutes, depending on
how detailed the teacher's responses. I will audio and/or video record the interview in
order to conduct and analysis of interviewee responses later.

Potential Risks:

There are no foreseeable risks other than the sacrifice of your time to participate.

Benefits:

There are multiple potential benefits of this study: (1) the findings may influence   (2) the findings may influence

Compensation:

You will not be compensated for your time, inconvenience, or expenses while you participate in this study, but drinks an refreshments will be provided during the semi-structured interviews. Some small tokens of appreciation will also be provided to show gratitude for your participation.

Confidentiality:

The data will be stored on a recording device to all the researcher to accurately transcribe the information from the recordings. Once transcription is complete, the audio recording will be erased. Only the researcher will have access to the initial data and paper records will be shredded.

Voluntary Participation:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop taking part of any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify. You will be told about any changes that may affect your decision to continue in the study.

Contact Persons, Research Subject's Rights, Questions, Concerns, and Complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints about the study or the study staff, you have three options. You may contact the principal investigator at (502) 852-6428 or deborah.powers@louisville.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a study subject, questions, concerns or complaints, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO) (502) 852-5188. You may discuss any questions about your rights as a subject, in secret, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the HSPPO staff. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as lay members of the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this study. If you want to speak to a person outside the University, you may call 1-877-852-1167. You will be given the chance to talk about any questions, concerns or complaints in secret. This is a 24-hour hot line answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville. If you have questions about the study, you can ask me now or anytime during the study. You can also call me at (502)485-8205 or e-mail me at erika.walker@jefferson.kyschools.us. If you

have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the IRB Office at University of Louisville. You will receive a copy of this form for your records. This informed consent document is not a contract. This document tells you what will happen during the study if you choose to take part. Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in the study. You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Acknowledgment and Signatures:

This informed consent document is not a contract. This document tells you what will happen during the study if you choose to take part. Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in the study. You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

_____   _____
_____
Subject Name (Please Print)   Signature of Subject   Date
Signed

_____   _____
_____
Name of Investigator   Signature of Investigator   Date
Signed

List of Investigators   Phone Numbers
Deborah Power, Ph.D.   (502) 852-6428
Erika Walker   (502) 485-8205

APPENDIX C: STRUCTURED ETHICAL REFLECTION

Values	Developing Partnerships	Constructing Research Question	Planning Project/Action	Recruiting Participants	Collecting Data/ Taking Action	Analyzing Data/ Evaluating Action	Member Checking	Going Public (Presentation and Publication)
Trust	Building relationships and consider viewpoints of others.	Developing open ended questions that lead to pertinent information for the research	Providing a safe and warm environment	Explaining the process and purpose of how data is collected and analyzed.	Following disclosed procedures.	Using accurate data only for the purpose of the study.	Allowing participants to review transcripts for any changes.	Accurately present data as it was given.
Respect	Being aware of participants needs and time constraints.	Designing questions that avoid sensitive and personal topics.	Being cognizant of participants personal time and follow agreed interview procedures.	Seek participants in a variety of content/ teaching roles aligned to research.	Ensuring that data is collected in an efficient manner to respect participant's time.	Safeguarding participant's personal data.	Providing a convenient way for provide to give feedback.	Keeping the authenticity of participants viewpoint and voice.
Open Mindness	Awareness of others with different viewpoints	Using open ended questions to allow for different viewpoints.	Taking into consideration the input and perspective of committee members.	Allowing participation from a variety of participants.	Listening to the words, answers and meaning behind each question.	Checking bias thoughts and get clear message from member checking.	Staying grounded in phenomenological approach.	Understanding that findings may compare and conflict with previous research.
Transparency	Making the purpose of the study clear and concise.	Ensuring interview questions are aligned to the research questions.	Providing clear and concise explanation of the study and process.	Contacting potential participants to share information and answer questions.	Asking clarifying questions for accurate understanding.	Be precise in data analysis processes and steps.	Allowing participants to review interview data for adjustments.	Communicating the study purpose, process and findings.
Caring	Having the ability to be build relationships.	Creating questions that help participants to self reflect.	Building a good rapport and relationship before and during interviews.	Following up with personal about interview feedback.	Setting an inviting environment for participants.	Safeguarding personal information.	Ensuring participants are comfortable before the interview.	Being mindful of the needs of the participants.
Integrity	Following set prescribed procedures.	Constructing questions that are open ended and support the research topic.	Keeping the study purpose in mind in all study actions.	Confirming the participants are clear about the purpose of study.	Using data only for the purposes of the research.	Implementing controls against confirmation bias.	Providing an opportunity to respond to interview transcripts.	Staying tune to the research plan throughout the research.

APPENDIX E: INVITATION LETTER

Initial Email/Invitation Participant Letter
Dear _____ :

My name is Erika Walker and I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Teacher Perceptions of Principal Impact on School Culture and Teacher Retention in Title 1 Schools" So that you are aware, this study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Ed. D. in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development through The University of Louisville. I will be serving as the co-investigator in this study (502) 852-6428, or @louisville.edu). My Doctoral Committee Chair and Principal Investigator is Dr. Deborah Powers (, or deborah.powers@louisville.edu). You are being asked to volunteer as a participant because you are an teacher in Kentucky at a Title 1 school and I believe that you could offer great insight into the lived educational experience of a teachers in Title 1 schools. If you choose to participate in this study, it will include an interview conversation with me one on one that should last between 45 minutes to one hour. This interview will take place during the school day in a secure location away from distractions. I will record the interview via a tape recorder to ensure thoughts are captured. I will also be taking written notes during the interview. Email may also be used to contact you throughout the study; however, clarification of information will be done in person. Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating or withdrawing from the study. If you are interested and would like more information, please plan to meet with me on the following day and time:
Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (502) 485-8205 or email me at erika.walker@louisville.edu .

I look forward to meeting you soon!

 Erika Walker

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Erika Walker

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EMAIL: erika.walker@jefferson.kyschools.us.

EDUCATION: M.ED, Western Kentucky University, 2006

B.S., Kentucky State University, 1998

EXPERIENCE: Principal, Audubon Traditional Elementary 2019-Present

Principal, Minors Lane Elementary 2016-2019

Assistant Principal, Greathouse Elementary 2011-2016

Resource Teacher, JCPS, KY 2009-2011

Teacher, JCPS, KY 2001-2009

AWARDS: Principal of the Year 2021

Leadership Institute for School Principals 2020
"Kentucky Colonel"