IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU: AN EXPLORATION OF WHY TEACHERS LEAVE

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What causes a teacher to leave and move to another district or campus? Many times, teachers leave because they are unsatisfied, overwhelmed, or unprepared for the demands of the job. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district. The following factors, as told from the teachers' perspective, were examined: (a) campus culture, (b) campus leadership, (c) working conditions, and (d) other contributing factors. This study focused on the types of experiences teachers reported encountering, whether positive or negative, that contributed to teacher turnover. Data for this qualitative study included a survey and focus group. Participants selected to participate in this study were teachers who either exited from a public-school district or transferred from one campus to another campus within the same school district. An analysis of the qualitative responses from the teacher survey and a focus group interview provided answers and insight into the research questions. The data were collected and analyzed to further understand the types of experiences or factors that contribute to teacher turnover within one school district. The findings from this study confirm that the literature about factors that influence teacher turnover *DO* matter to teachers. Based on the research literature, this study and my own experiences, the campus principal holds the major responsibility for building and sustaining positive relationships with teachers. Recommendations for future research and implications for future practice as it relates to school principals and district administration are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Teaching is a profession in which capacity building should occur at every stage of the career - novices working with accomplished colleagues, skillful teachers sharing their craft, and opportunities for teacher leadership.

~Randi Weingarten

What causes a teacher to leave and move to another district or campus? Many times, teachers leave because they are unsatisfied, overwhelmed, or unprepared for the demands of the job. What are the causes that lead to these factors that result in "40 to 50 percent of all beginning teachers" leaving the profession? (Ingersoll, 2004, p. 144)? "Employing teachers with inadequate pedagogical knowledge may exacerbate problems of teacher quality by contributing to teacher attrition. . . . These departing teachers often named pedagogical challenges, especially in classroom management, as their main reason for leaving" (Torff & Sessions, 2009, p. 142).

Teachers enter the profession full of hopes and dreams of the impact they anticipate making on their students' lives. However, many teachers may wonder whether they made the right career decision or if they are actually the right fit for the campus to which they are assigned. This internal conundrum can determine their willingness to stay at their campus, move to another district or campus, or even leave the profession altogether. Findings from Callahan's (2016) research indicated that instilling teachers with confidence in their overall ability to succeed correlates directly with a teacher's decision to stay in the teaching profession. A confident teacher, armed with the pedagogical skills and an aptitude to handle the ever-changing world of education, can positively impact student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of practice that calls for conducting this study is that retaining teachers on

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campuses and within districts is a nationwide problem that has a rippling effect. According to data reported by the Texas Education Agency, in the 2016-2017 school year, there were 358,516 public school teachers in Texas (Smith, 2020). Of those, 36,300, or 10.29%, were lost to attrition. The financial implications mean that more money is spent on searching for, recruiting, and hiring the best and brightest educators each spring and summer to fill vacancies. The amount of energy and time it takes to advertise, recruit, interview, and perform reference checks is exhausting, yet it is the cycle that comes with the territory (Synar & Maiden, 2012). Why have we come to accept this revolving door as normal? The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2007) reported an average national cost of more than $8,000 to replace a teacher. The 2012 annual national costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers was $2.2 billion in the United States (G. D. Hughes, 2012). NCTAF (2007) found teacher turnover can cost up to $7 billion a year nationally. The financial burden of the revolving door of educators is epidemic.

These reports do not account for the academic and developmental costs to children who experience these teacher losses over multiple years. Chuong (2008) proclaimed that, when teachers leave the field, they take with them their knowledge of instructional techniques, students' learning styles, and professional development training. Fuller et al. (2018) asserted, "Not only does the teacher turnover contribute to the shortage of teachers, teacher turnover also has negative ripple effects throughout a school" (p. 1). When will educational leaders begin to look at the relationship administrators build with their staff to determine factors related to teacher attrition?

Jacob et al. (2012), contributing writers for The New Teacher Project, emphasized the retention crisis by examining the loss of irreplaceable teachers. Approximately 90,000 teachers

from four urban districts were studied. Teachers were termed "The Irreplaceables" because of their significant impact on student achievement. Characteristically, these teachers were the top 20% of all the teachers in studied districts based on the data provided by each district. These teachers outperformed average teachers, providing two to three additional months of learning. Their students were more likely to go to college, have higher paying salaries in the future, and the probability of being a teenage parent decreased.

As stated by the authors of the report, "Irreplaceables influence students for life, and their talents make them invaluable assets to their schools. The problem is their schools don't seem to know it" (Jacob et al., 2012, p. 2). In their interview with Sarah, an "irreplaceable" elementary teacher, she reported how she was torn with the decision to leave her current, low-performing campus. She toiled with the thought of her students who had made huge gains with her having to return to school the following year with "a bad teacher" (p. 1). Unfortunately, Sarah felt her achievement, lack of recognition, and skills were not appreciated and valued by her campus leadership. Sarah indicated when she resigned, her principal signed her paperwork without saying a word to her. Yet, had he even asked, "What's it going to take for me to get you to stay?" (p. 1) was all that she would have needed to hear to remain at the campus. The lack of validation of the work she accomplished with her students and one inquiry of how to keep her were the two things that caused an extraordinary teacher to leave for another district. In fact, only 37% of irreplaceable teachers surveyed reported they had been encouraged to remain on their campus by a member of the campus leadership. Ultimately, Jacob et al. (2012) concluded their findings and suggested,

> Irreplaceables usually leave for reasons that their school could have controlled. Less than 30 percent of those who planned to leave in the next three years said they were doing so primarily for personal reasons. More than half said they planned either to continue teaching at a nearby school or continue working in K-12 education. And more than 75 percent said they would have stayed at their school if their main issue for leaving were addressed. (p. 13)

The relationship between the administrator and teacher appears to be the key to retaining these high-performing educators. Yet, exceptional and dynamic teachers continue to transfer to other campuses or leave to accept a new position at a different district.

Student achievement drives the mission, vision, and purpose of education. However, high turnover rates can undermine student achievement and success (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Fuller et al. 2018; A 2010 study by Watlington et al. confirmed "the educational achievement of students in at-risk schools is further jeopardized by chronic teacher turnover as teachers disproportionately leave schools with high-minority, low performing student populations" (pp. 32-33). Research conducted through Learning Policy Institute (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017) concluded that while "some teacher turnover is expected and can be beneficial, high turnover rates reduce student achievement" (p. 1). This report further explained that subject areas are affected by the burden of teacher turnover. Extreme shortages across America have been noted in math, science, special education, and English language development. Credentialed teachers in these content areas may find better paying opportunities outside of education as, according to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, math and science teacher were 37% more likely to leave, while 46% of special education teachers and 87% for foreign language teachers were projected to leave.

To be deemed effective, schools across the nation must attract and retain teachers who are prepared for the instructional demands of the classroom. Resources, materials, and administrative support are critical to this success. High teacher turnover is costly and detrimental to student achievement (Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008).

Bearing in mind the financial implications of high turnover rates and lack of student achievement, the root cause of why teachers leave must be explored. Working conditions that

include deficient administrative support, negative school cultures, lack of resources, and limited access to professional development contribute to teacher turnover rates (Fuller et al., 2018).

Purpose of the Study

A variety of contextual factors that exist on a school's campus are strongly related to teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2011). The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. The following factors, as told from the teachers' perspective, were examined: (a) campus culture, (b) campus leadership, (c) working conditions, and (d) other contributing factors. Therefore, this study focused on the types of experiences teachers reported encountering, whether positive or negative, that contributed to teacher turnover.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. From the teachers' perspective, what campus culture factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

2. From the teachers' perspective, what campus leadership factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

3. From the teachers' perspective, what campus working condition factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

4. From the teachers' perspective, what other contributing factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I explored the contextual factors that influence a teachers' decision to leave a school campus. The major concepts related to contextual factors include campus culture,

campus leadership, working conditions, and other contributing factors. Campus culture factors relate to the various components of the school's culture that have positively or negatively affected their experience. Campus leadership factors concern the styles of leadership that impact employee satisfaction and student achievement. Working condition factors concern how teachers participate in professional development and growth opportunities and/or whether they are given quality feedback related to teaching. Other contributing factors are those unknown factors that may not yet have been identified or may be discovered from the teachers who participate in this study. Each of these factors, collectively or independently, may influence the decisions that teachers make regarding why they chose to transfer to another campus or leave the district to accept another position. The concepts are intersecting to demonstrate the possibility there may be multiple factors at play when a teacher chooses to leave a campus. These guiding concepts, shown in Figure 1, provided the conceptual framework that aligned with the research questions and how I clustered emergent themes from the research.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: What Impacts Teacher Retention?
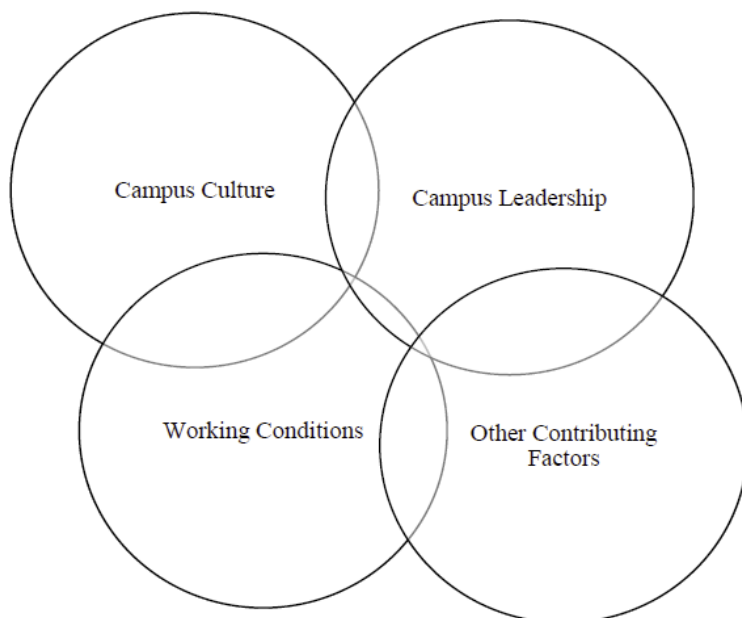
The conceptual framework represents the factors that may affect teacher attrition. This conceptual framework depicts four major factors: campus culture, campus leadership, working conditions, and other contributing factors found in the literature that influenced teachers' decisions to transfer to a different campus or leave the district.

Significance of the Study

The challenge of teacher turnover is that it is a never-ending cycle. While there are many studies on why teachers leave or transfer from within districts, what is lacking in the research literature are areas for principals to self-reflect on their own practices. Turnover and teacher attrition have been addressed in terms of providing support to teachers through mentoring programs, professional development, professional learning communities, and various other programs. There still lies the task each year to recruit, hire, and retain teachers in education. Discovering teachers' explanations of the various components of the school's culture that positively or negatively impacted their experience at a particular campus could provide insight into how administrators might address certain components of the campus culture in terms of what should be emphasized, changed, abandoned, or created. By exploring teachers' perspectives of campus leadership in terms of leadership styles, direct or indirect behaviors, and psychological influences they had on those in the school, a better understanding of how administrators could influence the revolving door of teacher turnover was brought to light. Findings from this study might also encourage principals to consider the perceptions of the teachers they lead and, as a result, they might engage in self-reflective practices to improve the ways they work with teachers, staff, and students in their school. Examining the working conditions at a campus through the lens of the teacher might inform administrators as to how certain working conditions could either weaken or strengthen teachers' abilities to carry out their

assigned duties. Further, issues related to how teachers were treated such as whether they were provided professional development and growth opportunities and/or whether they were given quality feedback related to their effectiveness as a teacher might provide evidence as to why teacher choose to transfer to another campus or leave a district. Finally, other key factors that could inhibit the working relationship or professional abilities of a teacher might be ascertained based on the results of this dissertation study.

Assumptions

For this study, it was assumed the teachers in this sample decided to leave their campus or transfer to another district due to one or more contextual factors including campus culture, campus leadership, working conditions, and/or other contributing factors. It was also assumed the participants would thoughtfully consider each question and provide truthful and honest responses and accurate details about their experiences. It was assumed all participants would answer each of the questions contained within the entire interview protocol. Finally, it was assumed the participants would trust the assurance of anonymity and guaranteed confidentiality.

Delimitations

Several delimitations were used to narrow the scope and define the boundaries of this study. First, the sample was limited to teachers who either transferred within the district to another campus or left the district to work in another district. The participant sample of teachers was drawn from all campuses within the district. Data collection focused entirely on the perspectives of teachers; principals' perspectives were not examined. Teacher participants who decided to remain in the district might have been hesitant to discuss certain contextual factors, particularly in terms of administrator relationships they might have had with their previous supervisor. Teacher participants who left the district were limited due to accessibility, my lack of

familiarity, and because of the nature of the topic. The number of schools in this study due to teacher turnover was limited; consequently, the findings might not be generalizable to all schools in the district. Every attempt was made to limit researcher bias, but researcher bias might have been a concern of the participants since I was an administrator within the district where the selected school sites were located.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

To provide consistency in understanding and meaning for this study, the following definitions of terms were used for this study.

- *Autonomy*. Autonomy describes the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

- *Campus culture*. For the current study, campus culture is linked to what influences tend to make people think, act, and feel.

- *Campus leadership*. For the current study, campus leadership refers to the principal and/or assistant principal(s) on a campus.

- *Classroom management*. Classroom management refers to the way the teacher organizes the classroom to ensure that instructional time is as effective as possible for all students (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

- *Climate*. Climate is the perceived viewpoints and feelings of behaviors, norms, and customs of a campus (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

- *Contextual factors*. For this study, contextual factors are characteristics relating to the effectiveness of a school.

- *Efficacy*. Efficacy is the ability to produce an effect (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a).

- *Leavers*. For the purpose of this study, leavers refer to those teachers who left the profession (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

- *Movers*. Movers refer to those teachers who changed to a different campus U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

- *Stayers*. Stayers refer to those teachers who remain on their campus (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

- *Teacher attrition*. Percentage of teachers who leave the teaching profession in a given school year (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021).

- *Teacher collective efficacy (TCE)*. TCE is the collective belief of teachers in their ability to affect students positively. In Hattie's study, he found an effect size of $d = 1.57$, indicating collective teacher efficacy is strongly correlated with student achievement (Visible Learning, 2018).

- *Teacher migration*. Teacher migration is teachers who transfer or move to a different teaching job at another school within the same district (Ingersoll, 2001).

- *Teacher retention*. For this study, teacher retention is teachers who remain at their current campus.

- *Teacher turnover*. For this study, teacher turnover refers to mobility of teacher personnel on a campus. Turnover is when a teacher moves to another campus, leaves the district, or—in line with the definition of teacher attrition—decides to leave the teaching profession (Redding, 2018).

- *Working conditions*. For the purpose of this study, working conditions include the factors that provide support for teachers and resources needed for them to experience success.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and includes the statement of the problem, a description of the conceptual framework, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature relevant to this study, focused on factors relating to teacher turnover. Chapter 3 includes a description of the research methodology that will be used to conduct the study, the population and sample information, data collection tools including focus-group and individual interviews, data collection and data analysis procedures, researcher positionality, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 contains the findings and results of the study. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings, implications for future practice, recommendations for future research, and the conclusion.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. These components were examined through the perspective of the teacher. The factors examined were campus culture, campus leadership, working conditions, and other contributing factors. Chapter 2 provides a review of the research literature associated with the contextual factors that contribute to teacher turnover.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A leader's influence is in direct relation to his/her faithfulness and empowerment of others.

~Dr. Kate Cirillo

To make an impact on student achievement, students must receive their instruction from teachers who understand academic content and possess the ability to translate the content to their students successfully through best practices instruction, known as pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). One component to improving academic performance lies within management (Odden, 2011). In order to ensure the school meets academic needs, campus leaders must be able to not only recruit and hire excellent educators with such pedagogical content knowledge, they must also be able to retain these teachers. Yet, teacher turnover has become commonplace in education. The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) reported 84% of teachers were identified as stayers, 8% were leavers, and another 8% were movers of the 3,377,900 public school teachers during the 2011-2012 school year. This type of mobility accounts for $4.9 billion dollars per year to replace teachers. Texas districts annually spend more than $235 million to retain teachers (Callahan, 2016).

Finding the most qualified candidates to fill a classroom teaching position may be a daunting task. Based on the findings of a study conducted by the Learning Policy Institute, in-2016 and 2017, an estimated 87,000 teaching units were not filled by certified teachers in 36 reporting states (Sutcher et al., 2016). Yet, the estimated number of teachers was not accurate as researchers did not account for certain content areas such as fine arts or the remaining states who failed to respond to the survey. The impact teacher departures have on a campus can cause negative conditions to exist such as larger class sizes or inexperienced and untrained personnel,

placing a strain on the capacity for student learning to take place (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Moreover, once a teacher accepts the position, certain contextual factors related to campus culture, school leadership, working conditions, and/or other contributing factors can either contribute to or impede administrators' ability to retain the best teachers at their campuses. Teachers need to feel that their administrators support them by providing the appropriate resources, induction, training, and management of students. For campuses that do not have systems in place to provide induction support, teachers were found to leave at about twice the rate in contrast to campuses that did provide support. When a teacher decides to leave the campus, student achievement is negatively impacted. (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Fuller et al., 2018; Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. Three elements that influence teachers' decisions to stay or leave their campuses have been identified in the research literature: campus culture, school leadership, and working conditions. Although, for the current study, other contributing factors were considered, few studies have revealed a specific list to date. Each of these elements can affect the other and ultimately, influence the relationship between the administrators and teaching staff. The following sections provide a review of the research literature related to each of these elements.

Campus Culture

A healthy and dynamic school culture is the foundation for a thriving, successful school campus that, according to Deal and Peterson (2016), "encourages learning and progress by fostering a climate of purposeful change, support for risk taking and experimentation, and a

community spirit valuing purposeful progress" (p. 8). The leadership of a campus has the powerful ability to create a dynamic culture and establish a healthy climate through specific actions and supportive measures. Campus leaders can strengthen this culture by reinforcing the rituals, traditions, symbols, vision, and mission of the school. Without opportunities to develop positive and reciprocal collaborations, teachers maybegin to feel disempowered in their work. Without a culture that emphasizes and inspires teamwork amongst the faculty and staff, teachers may ultimately feel isolated and unsupported (Banerjee et al., 2017; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). The cultural environment of a school both shapes how teachers perceive themselves as contributors to the school as a whole and determines the teachers' level of satisfaction beyond the classroom.

Motivation

Pink (2011) argued that organizations assume their employees are motivated by salaries, incentives, and other types of carrot-and-stick rewards or punishments. For teachers, one grand assumption is that they are motivated by weekends and summers. Nevertheless, according to Pink, the type of motivation that truly drives people comes from the desire to fulfill a particular purpose. In his book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Pink described the formative research of Harry F. Harlow, a professor for the University of Wisconsin. In 1949, Harlow studied the behavior of primates to look at how they learn through problem solving. The experiment required the monkeys to solve a mechanical puzzle. Within the 2-week period, the monkeys appeared to begin working on the puzzle and solved the puzzle quickly without having to be prompted by the researcher or given rewards for their effort and skill. When Harlow attempted to reward the monkeys with food, the attempt had an adverse effect. The monkeys made more errors and solved the puzzle in less time. This outcome marveled the researchers and

highlighted the need to recognize that factors other than hunger/thirst and affection can motivate one's behavior. Thus, Harlow's findings caused a shift in thinking about how human behaviors are influenced in terms of motivation (Pink, 2011).

Two decades later, Deci was searching for a topic for his dissertation study. Stimulated by the work of Harlow, Deci (1970) conducted a study with human participants using a Soma puzzle cube. The end goal of the Soma puzzle cube was to utilize the cubes to create certain objects. Two groups of participants attempted to accomplish the task over 3 days. Each group was given a drawing and asked to replicate it with the Soma puzzle cube. Group A was given a reward on Day 2, where Group B never received a reward. On the second day, when Group A was told that they would be paid, they appeared to be extremely motivated to complete the puzzles. On Day 3, when they were told they would not be paid for their efforts, the Group A participants only did what was required. However, Group B participants played with the puzzles for a longer time on Days 1 and 2. Just as Harlow had experienced with the monkeys, when the participants were rewarded with *carrots*, there was actually a decline in performance. Deci concluded rewards do not necessarily motivate individuals; in fact, some individuals can lose interest in the goal or activity if rewards are involved.

To create the type of culture that motivates employees, individuals need to have some level of control and discretion over the task, time, technique, and team with whom they work (Pink, 2011). Employees need to have the autonomy to think creatively and the discretion to pursue what they want in a risk-free type of environment. When given this type of freedom, employees choose the path they wish to take with an understanding that whatever they produce will be shared with the leadership of the organization. Allowing this type of independence produces better quality thinking and results that, when applied to schools, can create a campus

culture where high expectations reinforce the established campus mission and vision. Encouraging collaboration with peers to create shared responsibility also changes the dynamic of how people perform. The ultimate motive and desired result of teamwork centers around student learning and achievement. Employees who are less intrigued by the *carrot* are more likely to be gratified by fulfilling the task.

Professional Learning Communities

An African proverb states, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" (Goldberg, 2016, para. 1). How can effective campus leaders create a collaborative culture that facilitates interdependence and reliance on the professional expertise of one another? Allowing educators to join forces and share in the decision-making process regarding instruction, campus needs, and professional development immobilizes the feeling of isolation and establishes a collaborative culture (Donohoo, 2016). One avenue to establish such a culture is through the practice of professional learning communities (PLCs). Rasberry and Mahajan (2008) contend that "instructional leaders, who understand the tenets of distributed leadership, establish high expectations for all, provide relevant, ongoing professional development for their teachers, and ensure that the proper conditions are in place to support their efforts" (p. 4). Utilizing PLCs can accelerate the notion that leadership comes from the bottom up.

PLCs are designed to foster clear and effective working conditions among teachers and administrators, which in turn create a strong network and successful organization (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Crow, 2015). The use of PLCs eradicates the belief that teachers should work in isolation and encourages cooperative relationships among both teachers and administrators. Dufour and Marzano (2011) confirm, "this transformation from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration will not occur in a school, however, without the

effective leadership of the principal" (p. 63). To give merit to the practice of collectively coming together, shared value between teachers and administrators must focus on student learning. The values, vision, and mission of every community should be committed to the continual growth of students' education.

Self-Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, and Teacher Collective Efficacy

To understand the role efficacy plays in teacher longevity and commitment, it is important to look at the seminal work of Bandura (1977) who introduced the psychological theory of *self-efficacy*. Bandura said "an efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcome" (p. 193). He explained people will attempt situations within their own self-perceived abilities and avoid taxing or difficult situations they believe are out of their level of competence. Bandura further explained, when individuals are provided the "appropriate skills and adequate incentives" their "efficacy expectations" serve as a "major determinant" of the activities they choose, the amount of effort they are willing to expend, and the length of time they will sustain their effort when "dealing with stressful situations" (p. 194). Applying this theory to the education platform, teachers who believe they have the skillset and talent are more likely to believe in their ability to impact students learning which may prolong their commitment to the teaching profession (Donohoo, 2016).

Collective efficacy is the shared belief between a group to make change through collective action (Bandura, 2000; Donohoo, 2016). According to Bandura (2000), when a group of individuals share similar views and beliefs in their ability among themselves, their collective efficacy influences the types of future they seek to achieve through collective action" (p. 76). When faced with tough social problems or dilemmas, it is common for people to determine the

level of commitment and effort they will put into an endeavor. They will evaluate their resources, how much effort they will need to exert, and the longevity and staying power they might have when discouragement arises. Having a strong sense of collective efficacy among a group of individuals may motivate them to work through the challenges and dilemmas together.

When teachers believe that together they are capable of making a difference in all of the students that they serve academically, they demonstrate TCE. According to Hattie (2009), teacher subject-matter knowledge has a 0.09 effect size on student achievement. This means that regardless of how much content knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge a teacher may possess, if individuals have an efficacious belief in their abilities, they can utilize other factors in order to increase student achievement. TCE has the highest effect on student achievement at 1.57 (Hattie, 2009). Teachers who believe in their collective efforts have been found to have a greater impact on student achievement than inquiry-based teaching or direct instruction with an effect size of 0.31 and 0.59 respectively (Hattie, 2009). Teachers who believe in their collective efforts have more impact on student achievement than any other internal or external school-related factor that influences achievement (Hattie, 2009; Donohoo, 2016). Therefore, as stated by Dohohoo (2016), finding ways to strengthen CTE "should be a top priority relevant to everyone in the field of education" (p. 1).

Professional Learning Communities Reinforce Collective Efficacy

One mode of creating and fostering teacher collective efficacy is through the implementation of PLCs and collaborative teacher inquiry (Donohoo, 2016; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). According to DuFour and DuFour (2010), a major resolve of PLCs is " to change the context and culture of the school and district" (p. 91). PLC models have continued to be developed over the last 20 years. DuFour and Eaker (1998, 2008) and Hord (1997, 1998) use

the term, PLCs; Murphy and Lick (2004) utilize whole-faculty study groups (WFSG); and Wenger et al. (2002), who are experts in communities of practice (CoP), define such learning communities as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 26).

The strongest similarity of PLCs (Dufour & Eaker, 1998, 2008; Hord, 1997, 1998), WFSGs (Murphy & Lick, 2004), and CoPs (Wenger et al., 2002) is the commitment to shared values. The culture of any organization thrives most when members agree on what is important and how they are going to achieve their goals together. For PLCs to work effectively, research-based dimensions of professional learning must be employed (Hord, 2009). One research-based characteristic is shared beliefs. The values and vision are central to what the school's mission should be. To validate the practice of collectively coming together, shared values must focus on student learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, 2008; Hord, 1997, 1998; Murphy & Lick, 2004; Wenger et al., 2002).

According to Hord (2004), to establish successful PLCs, five conditions must exist:

1. Shared values and vision by the community
2. Shared and supportive leadership
3. Collective learning as determined by the community
4. Supportive conditions
    a. Structural and physical
    b. Human and relational
5. Peers supporting peers. (p. 7)

Successful PLC models focus on the team learning together and then putting their findings into action. Regarding CoP, Wenger et al. (2014) believe effective community design is

built on the collective experience of all community members. The collective approach allows educators to utilize diverse perspectives and experience levels. According to the Center for Teacher Quality, "strong school performance depends on shared leadership mobilizing the collective action of individuals to produce high-quality teaching and learning" (Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008, p. 4).

The work of Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) provides strong evidence that there is a direct correlation between teacher collective efficacy and the impact it has on PLCs. These authors advocate for the recognition that the stronger the collective efficacy amongst teachers, the greater the possibility for high student achievement. When looked at in isolation, Voelkel and Chrispeels' PLCs had a medium effect on student achievement. Using Social Network Analysis, Moolenaar et al. (2012) discovered that teachers who worked closely together did not necessarily influence student achievement in language arts. However, teacher collective efficacy was found to have a greater effect on how well students performed in language arts. As Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) discovered in their research, higher levels of perceived implementation of PLC conditions were predictive of higher levels of teacher collective efficacy. Conditions that influence efficacy, as noted by the work of Lee et al. (1991), include (a) principal leadership, (b) communal organizations, (c) an orderly environment, and (d) teacher control. It is important to note, for each of the elements to serve as a vehicle toward the realization of group collaboration and efficacy, leadership plays an integral role. The school leader can choose to facilitate each of the working elements or stifle the working relationship which can have a negative impact on the school culture and working conditions necessary and the level of teacher job satisfaction that exists in the school.

The community of teachers at a campus can thrive under conditions when they are

allowed to make decisions together that are in line with the district or campus vision. Based on that reality, teachers must collectively create goals and hold each other accountable for reaching them. Berry and Farris-Berg (2016) emphasize "securing teachers' collective autonomy is an important part of starting a teacher-powered school, but even more important is what teacher teams do with the opportunity—what choices they make together" (p. 16).

The strength of teacher collaboration and interdependency on one another concerning professional development and instructional methods is contingent on the quality of work and time they put into their respective PLC. To provide deep and meaningful learning for classroom teachers as well as support staff working alongside them, the frequency of collaboration must also increase. Without recurrent conversations and data analysis, the level of effectiveness decreases, and, without collaboration among teachers and administrators, instructional effectiveness is weakened (Goddard et al., 2015).

According to DuFour and Marzano (2011) "one of the highest duties" of the school leader is to create whatever conditions are necessary "to help others succeed" (p. 86). Leaders must foster a climate that encourages teachers to shift from the belief that they are single units moving mountains on their own. Teachers are great forces of strength, capable of increasing student achievement through conjoined efforts. Campus administrators who give teachers the autonomy they need to respond to the needs of their students can also provide time and space for them to collaborate and search for solutions. When the working conditions of the school allow teachers to work together toward a unified goal or purpose, it can have a positive impact on the campus culture and student achievement. Unless collective group efficacy exists in the PLC model, the school leader may not be able to fully develop the group's capacity in terms of depth or create common and shared goals across the school (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). In short,

students may not reach their potential for learning and growth. To maximize learning for every member of the school community, everyone must put forth a united effort. Administrators should applaud and support their teachers' successes as they are working toward the common goals established by the group. Quality feedback and praise fortifies the efforts of the group and encourages them to continue the work they began. This can translate into success in the classroom, which will then extend into the community. Ultimately, a key positive consequence may lead to teacher longevity and sustainability due to a greater likelihood they may choose to remain in their career (Donohoo, 2016).

School Leadership

Shelves are lined with books about leadership. A Google search for the word leadership will produce 4,770,000,000 results. The term "leadership" has varying definitions; however, leadership skills require a leader to have the capacity to lead others (Merriman-Webster, n.d.b). Motivation, guidance, collaboration, communication, and innovation are skills or behaviors that leaders need to have followers. In a Gallup study, 10,000 followers were asked to describe why they followed the leader that affected their life the most (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Three themes emerged from their findings:

1. Leaders invest in the strengths of their employees.

2. Leaders surround themselves with the right people to enhance the team.

3. Leaders understand their followers' needs.

Leaders can draw people together for a shared purpose and call them to action. The leadership of an organization sets the tone and energy for everything that occurs within it. The general attributes of leadership can be used in varying contexts and fields: business, education,

government, and medical to name a few (Marzano et al., 2005). Leadership within any organization can navigate a course that leads to its success or failure.

Instructional Leadership

Principals are deemed one of the most influential people in the success of a school as they facilitate multifaceted functions throughout their campuses. It is through complex actions and judgments that a principal carries out the mission and vision, collaborates with stakeholders, incorporates the community, and ensures equity and equal access to curriculum and extracurricular activities. Every decision carried out has a positive and influential impact on student achievement. The better-equipped principal can expect to have a higher increase in student achievement (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Kelley et al. (2005) claim educational leadership stands out as one of the most important "determinants of an effective learning environment" (p. 17). According to the Wallace Foundation (2012), 25% of academic student success is a direct effect of the actions by the campus principals. One quantitative research study concluded leadership affected 12% to 20% of the impact on student achievement, after taking into consideration all campus and student demographics (Leithwood et al., 2008). Because teachers provide direct instruction, intervention, as well as accelerated instruction to their students, the residual impact of student achievement comes from subsidiary actions carried out by administrators. The relational factors and systems that are put into place by campus administrators affect teachers whose actions directly affect student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Figure 2 is an adaptation of how DuFour and Marzano (2011) represent the impact that a principal's behaviors can have on teachers' actions in the classroom and their effect on student achievement.

Figure 2

Principal's Behaviors–Teacher Actions–Student Achievement
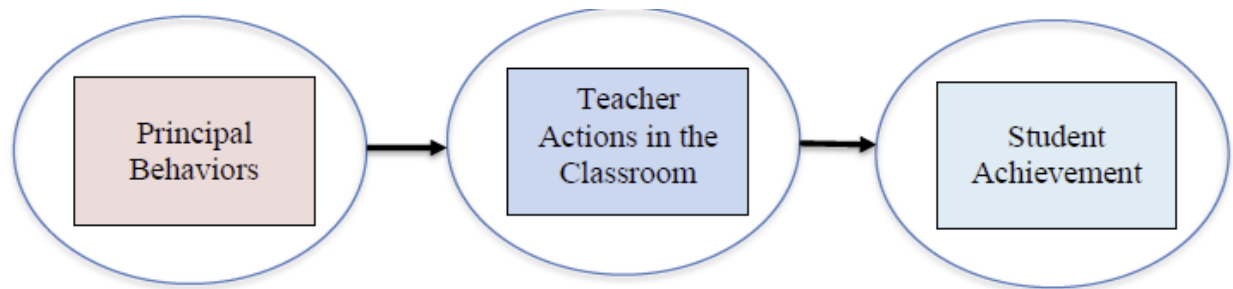
Note. The relationship between the principal's behaviors and the impact they have on teacher actions in the classroom and ultimately, student achievement. Adapted from DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 49.

Due to the complexities of overseeing the functions carried out on a school campus, administrators predominantly execute actions and decisions directly through teachers. Principals have the ability to determine the level of autonomy that teachers have in their classroom instruction. Because teachers spend the most direct time with students and perform the critical role of teaching and providing various support to students throughout the day, their actions tend to have the greatest impact on their students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Although the administrator may not be directly involved with each student, their indirect actions and decisions have the capacity to impact the improvement of teaching and learning through the actions of teachers. When teachers are granted the autonomy and authority they need, their teaching improves and student learning increases (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Shurden et al., 2016). For principals to improve teaching and learning on their campuses, The Wallace Foundation (2012) reported five essential tasks:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success based on high standards for all students;

2. Creating a climate hospitable to education so safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail;

3. Cultivating leadership in others, so teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision;

4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost; and

5. Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. (p. 6)

Ethical Leadership

Because campus principals facilitate and execute decisions that have rippling effects, it is essential to possess ethical leadership skills. The ethical framework of Shapiro and Stefkovitch (2016) provides a blending of ethical paradigms. Just as there is a convergence between personal and professional ethics, each paradigm works in tandem to form how leaders make decisions. During those moments, educational leaders evaluate and problem-solve varying situations, and draw upon a particular lens; whether justice, care, critique, or community. The crucial factor is to determine the paradigm that best fits the situation at hand. In some instances, however, the leader may need to employ more than one ethical paradigm in order to make a decision since each paradigm is an extension of another lens (Shapiro & Stefkovitch, 2016). The ethical framework for decision can assist leaders in making decisions that include community and campus stakeholders. The goal for educational leaders should be to frame how staff and students are treated through the ethic of care. This means decisions should be founded on student needs. To meet their diverse needs, leaders must rely on a collaborative effort in inclusivity of all community and campus stakeholders. Administrators, who strive to preserve the dignity of others and establish positive relationships with all members of the campus community, are acting through the ethical vein of care. Through the lens of justice, campus leaders must ensure equity of resources, curriculum, teachers, and policies for each member of the community. Per Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), the ethic of critique "force[s] us to rethink important concepts such as democracy, but also ask[s] us to redefine and reframe other concepts such as privilege, power, culture, language, and even justice" (pg. 13, 14). Innovative leaders are mindful of inequities and

injustice; they challenge and look for ways to improve present circumstances for all people; especially those who face discriminations and bias.

Working Conditions

Working conditions play a role in teacher turnover through two broad modes: school contextual factors and administrative support. Contextual factors include school resources, class size, geographic location, the conditions both within and outside of the school building, and facilities usage. Administrative support affects the working conditions through the level of communication, empowering teachers through decision-making, campus culture, professional development, and succession. Administrators also influence the use of time (instructionally and collaboratively), influence safe and orderly schools, and determine the amount of time spent doing managerial tasks such as lesson plans, documentation, and so forth (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ladd, 2011).

Disparities in resources, facilities, and poor curriculum can influence the connectivity a teacher has with his or her campus. Campus leaders who do not provide teachers the necessary tools and resources may cause teachers to feel unsupported or feel as if they do not have the ability to be successful. According to the work of Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), turnover rates for Title I campuses are 50% higher than non-Title I campuses while turnover rates are 70% higher where there are higher populations of students of color.

The perception teachers have of their working conditions may determine whether they intend to stay at their current campus or leave. Teachers, who work in low socioeconomic areas or within a campus that is unproportionate to teacher-student ethnicities and who lack the resources needed to provide the highest quality education possible, may feel a sense of discouragement and lack the belief that they have the skills to meet student needs. Ladd (2011)

revealed through her research that "the presence of high proportions of racial minorities or low-income students makes it difficult for schools to retain teachers" (p. 237). Ranked highest among the reason's teachers cited for leaving were lack of administrative support, unsatisfactory working conditions, and pressure associated with state testing and accountability (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Gallup, Inc. (2021) created a 12-item survey in 1996 that measured the core elements that a workplace needs to attract, focus, and retain talent. Forbringer (2002) explained that this survey was developed after years of refining survey questions that examined employee engagement. From 1996-2002, approximately 25 million employees participated in the Q^{12} survey in 195 countries. The survey questions intentionally contained extremes within the Likert scale choices. This signified who the most productive employees were and without the extremes, the questions lose their strength and variability. No questions were asked related to pay, benefits, senior management, or structure of the organization, as they do not distinguish great from average/poor employees.

With the Q^{12} survey, Gallup, Inc. (2021) attempted to find the link between employee opinion and business performance. The goal was to find what attracted and retained good employees. The survey questions related to employee satisfaction and engagement. This tool provided business leaders with areas of weakness that may impact employee turnover rates. The survey also provided an opportunity to identify weaknesses in leadership. If business leaders could identify the camp their employees were in, then they knew where to address the needs of their employees first (Forbringer, 2002).

Results told an interesting story. Those who answered more positively to the 12 questions worked at businesses that were more productive. Of even more interest was the fact the ratings

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were based on the unit of business rather than the company. This, in turn, demonstrated that people were influenced by their immediate supervisor's influence and ability. Some job features play a role in the attraction and retention of talented employees; however, research indicated an employee's immediate supervisor is more important than providing daycare, vacation packages, or other benefits (Forbringer, 2002).

The questions in the Q^{12} survey were divided into levels or camps to cluster the questions by level of strength.

- Base Camp: "What do I get?"

- Camp 1: "What do I give?"

- Camp 2: "Do I belong here?"

- Camp 3: "How can we all grow?"

Base camp questions were asked first to identify if the employee understood the expectations and resources for the job. Questions grouped into Camp 1 were self-reflective in nature to detect how employees felt that they helped the organization in terms of their contribution and worth to the organization. Camp 2 questions allowed employees to rate if they felt they fit with the organization and if their values were in alignment with the organization. The final cluster of questions from Camp 3 asked employees to rate if they felt there was growth and innovation to progress and move up within the organization (Forbringer, 2002).

The employees who answered positively to all 12 questions demonstrated they understood the organization's vision and resources needed to do the work, and there was a shared focus and purpose. For managers, these results proved essential for building a strong foundation within levels one and two. If needs are not being met at those levels, then the likelihood of greater achievement and productivity may not occur (Forbringer, 2002). Managers should

establish the foundation for their employees to move beyond to the other levels. Investing in the essential needs of employees early on will create momentum for greater success. This is accomplished by ensuring that employees feel they are valued and appreciated. Employees need to know that the role of the manager is to provide the resources they need while challenging them in their work. In turn, employees will feel their worth and place within the organization.

Other Contributing Factors

While this dissertation study has largely focused on campus culture, school leadership, and working conditions, there is a need to explore other contributing factors that influence teacher turnover. The following contributions to teacher turnover or teacher migration may be due to difficulty in recruiting teachers, the age of teachers, school size, low socioeconomic areas, student discipline, and teacher salaries. Lynch (2018) cites the four biggest factors behind teacher turnover as compensation, working conditions, teacher education, and mentoring. Based on data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics' *Schools and Staffing Surveys*, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported 55% of teachers had either quit teaching leading to teacher attrition and 66% transferred to another school, which is linked to teacher turnover. The results of the data collected revealed four factors that contributed to their dissatisfaction with their previous position: (a) testing and accountability; (b) administrative support; (c) teaching assignments, lack of opportunities for input, and lack of opportunities for advancement; and (d) working conditions, (i.e., class sizes, lack of other resources and facilities).

While these factors do not comprise an inclusive or exhaustive list, it is important to note that other contributing factors related to teacher attrition and migration impacted the decisions they made.

Summary

Literature reviewed provided three contextual factors that may influence teacher retention: campus culture, school leadership, and working conditions. Each element may affect the other and ultimately influence the relationship between the administrator and teaching staff; thus, predicting whether a teacher would remain committed to the current campus or choose to leave. Administrators play major influential roles within their campuses. The areas that are within their control may determine the perceived level of administrative support amongst teachers.

Having inconsistent staff members each year impedes student achievement and costs states millions of dollars to recruit, hire, and retain teachers. Because of these factors, it is imperative that leaders create campus cultures that are supportive. Teachers who are dissatisfied with their working conditions are telltale signs of turnover. The perception of administrative effectiveness is associated with job satisfaction. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found "that more effective principals were associated with higher rates of teacher satisfaction and lower teacher turnover, especially in high need schools" (p. 29). The message this sends to administrators is, while state accountability cannot be controlled, the perceptions of leadership can be. Campus leaders can create a campus culture that encourages collective efficacy, shared visions, and collegiality through how they lead a campus. PLCs provide one path for shared vision and leadership. PLCs require collaboration and a belief that together the educators can achieve their goals. Administrators are the driving force of all activities that take place on a campus. Teachers directly affect learning through instruction; however, the successes and failures of educators lie within the supportive conditions established by campus leadership.

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors

that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the research method and design. This is followed by description of the research site, population and sample, selection or research participants, recruitment process, data collection tools, data collection procedures, data analysis strategies, positionality, etchical considerations, and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Reflection is one of the most underused, yet powerful tools for success.
~Richard Carlson

The need to reduce current trends of high teacher turnover from year-to-year to provide

sustainability of staff in a school campus and increase student achievement has been an ongoing

issue in education. This dilemma in teacher turnover has required district and campus

administrators to evaluate the contextual factors established between campus leadership and

teachers. The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors

that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district

to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. Teacher voice was utilized

to examine the contextual factors that influenced their decision to leave their previous campus

assignment. Factors, told from the teachers' perspective, were (a) the campus culture, (b) campus

leadership, (c) working conditions, and (d) other contributing factors.

The following research questions guided this dissertation study:

1. From the teachers' perspective, what campus culture factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

2. From the teachers' perspective, what campus leadership factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

3. From the teachers' perspective, what campus working condition factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

4. From the teachers' perspective, what other contributing factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

This chapter includes an explanation of the method and research design used to conduct

this dissertation study. Additional information includes an explanation of the research site, the

procedure used to select the participants, a description of the teacher population and sample, an

explanation of the data collection tools and data analysis strategies, a visual representation of the phases for data collection and analysis, researcher positionality and ethical considerations, a preliminary explanation of the limitations of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

Research Design

The primary goal of this study was to form a better understanding of the school culture and relationships between administrators and teaching staff by exploring the factors that influenced positive or negative working relationships; therefore, a descriptive case study design was the best approach for this research. To gain insight and further investigate participants' perspectives of the factors that caused teachers to transfer or leave a district, a descriptive case study research design and approach was utilized. Knapp (2016) reminded practitioners that qualitative studies evolve. A qualitative approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of a phenomenon that investigated how individuals perceived their lived, personal experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2017). With the understanding that, as experiences were shared and more data were collected, this method of inquiry began as a broad understanding, only to be developed and refined through the data collection process. According to Yin (2014), a case study approach serves two purposes:

(1) The researcher investigates a contemporary phenomenon in a real-world setting to provide deep understanding.

(2) The researcher works with the situation at hand, using multiple sources of data.

A qualitative case study approach was found most beneficial in that "it provided the researcher with a holistic understanding of a problem, issue, or phenomenon within its social context" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 221). Because the motivation for conducting this study was to attain a deeper understanding as to why teachers leave or transfer from a campus, it was my desire to gain perspective into the personal experiences of teachers and the influences that led

them to leave their campus or district. The rationale for this study was to understand the factors and levels of support provided by school administrators and their impact on teacher attrition, both at the campus and district levels. Hesse-Biber (2017) argued, "in conducting case study research, identifying and describing contexts is vital in generating meaning and creating understanding" (p. 226). Being able to create a descriptive narrative of teacher's experiences enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of teachers who decided to transfer or leave from their school campus or district. A qualitative descriptive case study research design served as the best vehicle for understanding which contextual factors could be adjusted and/or processes that need to be put into place to help decrease the turnover and migration of teachers and increase the teacher retention rate. A visual representation of the process for conducting this dissertation study is in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Data Collection and Data Analysis Phases
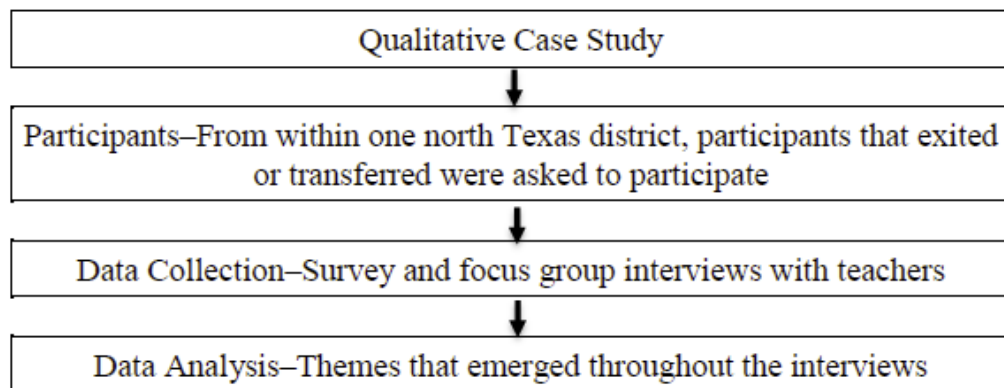
Description of the Research Site

This qualitative case study was conducted at an independent school district in Texas. The participating district is a suburban school district with approximately 650 professional staff employed as of 2019. At the time this study was conducted, United ISD (UISD, pseudonym)

served approximately 11,000 students in 14 educational settings. The total number of administrators at the campus level was 40 principals and assistant principals. At the time this study was conducted, the district housed seven elementary schools (Grades K–4), two intermediates serving Grades 5 and 6, two middle schools with Grades 6–8, two comprehensive high schools for Grades 9–12, and one alternative campus.

Population and Sample

The purpose for this dissertation study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that explained why teachers decided to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. In order to study the contextual factors that influenced teachers' motive to transfer to another campus within UISD or chose to go to another district, I procured a list of teachers who were previously employed in UISD from the 2017-2020 school years or were still employed but transferred to a different campus within the district. The participants for this study were drawn from the population of teachers who met those criteria.

Selection of the Research Participants

A purposive sampling technique, or the deliberate selection of participants due to the criteria and characteristics the participants possessed, was used to intentionally determine selection of participants who were willing to provide their perspective based on experience or actual knowledge (Etikan et al., 2016).

Gatekeepers of the Data

The district's human resources department was contacted to procure a list of teachers who either transferred within or exited from UISD. Purposive sampling, deliberately choosing

teachers who either transferred or exited the district, was applied from within the district to gain rich understanding from the participants' perspectives. Initially, the district provided me with a redacted email list of who transferred from within United ISD and those who exited in the 2019-2020 school year, which included 10 internal transfers and 36 teachers who exited the district in spring 2020, creating a total of 46 prospective participants. Out of the 46 who met the selection criteria, 10 transferred to another school within the district and 36 exited the district. The goal was to recruit as many of the participants for the survey as possible with a minimum of 15 participants to be interviewed via focus groups.

Because the number of teachers who granted their consent and completed the survey was less than 23 teachers or 50% of the eligible participants during the initial recruitment phase, I asked the district to grant permission to survey an additional cohort of teachers who exited from UISD at the end of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic school year, to allow me to increase the pool of teachers who met the criteria of exiting the district altogether to a total of 17 participants. None of the teachers who chose to obtain another position within the district through a lateral move was provided because the school district was realigning the schools during the data collection phase of the study. As part of the realignment process, the administration either selected or reassigned teachers to other campuses within the district; therefore, only one of the two predetermined criteria for recruiting teachers applied: those who exited the district.

Participant Categories

As stated previously, teacher participants met one of two criteria. They either (a) transferred from within the district to another campus, or (b) left the district to go to another district or obtain employment outside of the district. Every teacher that met one of these two

criteria was sent a recruitment email with the invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Because of the size of the district, sensitive information participants were being asked to share about their current or former district and site of employment, and the need to protect the identity of the participants, the participants were not asked to provide any demographic information such as gender, ethnicity, or religion. To maintain anonymity and mask their identities, Survey Monkey™ gave each of the survey participants a number, 1-17, when they completed the survey. To maintain the identity of those who participated in the focus group, participants were given the following pseudonyms: Respondent A, Respondent B, Respondent C, Respondent D, and Respondent E.

Recruitment Process

During the time of the recruitment process, COVID-19 drastically affected the process, requiring all communication between participants and research be electronic. Email messages were sent to the 46 potential participants as well as an informed consent letter through Survey Monkey™. The consent email message provided each participant with specific information about the purpose of the study, the research questions, the potential benefit and outcomes for themselves as well as teachers and campus and district- administrators, assurances their responses would be held in strictest confidence and their identity would remain anonymous, and a request for them to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. The recruitment email also indicated the approximate amount of time required for them to complete the survey as well as the focus group interview. Each educator who agreed to be interviewed was asked to thoroughly read the message with the opportunity to reach out to me or my dissertation committee chairperson with any questions or concerns. If they indicated their willingness to

participate in the study, they were directed to do so by clicking on a link that took them to the online survey questions.

Data Collection Tools

To investigate teacher's personal experiences related to their previous campus leadership, school culture, and other constructs that influenced their decisions to transfer from or exit UISD, two data collection tools were utilized: (1) a teacher survey protocol (Appendix B) and (2) a focus group interview protocol (Appendix C). The survey protocol included nine questions while the focus group interview protocol consisted of six questions.

Prior to conducting the actual survey and focus group interview, I reviewed both protocols with the UISD Human Resource Department and teachers who applied for a lateral transfer from one teaching position and moved to another school within the same district. Members from the Human Resource Department reviewed the survey provided feedback on the content of the questions as well as the overall interview protocol in terms of the number of questions asked and areas where additional clarification or adjustment to the questions were needed. The same members provided input on the focus group interview protocol.

When conducting surveys, a qualitative survey instrument is most appropriate when the researcher's intent is to collect information on the meanings that people attach to their experiences (Fink, 2003). For this study, the nature of each survey question and menu of possible answer choices were worded in a way that allowed each respondent to choose one or more items that applied to them in terms of how they perceived the following: campus culture, campus leadership, working conditions, and other contextual factors. Common themes were analyzed and organized according to these contextual factors to determine whether respondents' answer choices were the same as others who chose to leave the district or transfer to another school

within the district. The analytical and organizational processes enabled me to gather the variety of items chosen to gain a holistic picture of the participants' experiences at their campuses and develop a holistic understanding of the contextual factors as well as any additional themes or contextual factors that might have existed. Essentially, patterns in the data that explained how the participants felt about working at their previous campus were clustered into specific codes and translated into themes.

Based on the initial responses extrapolated from the survey data that asked respondents to identify their perceptions which intimated their experiences, more data were collected through a focus group interview with teachers who elected to participate. The use of a qualitative survey, followed by a focus group interview allowed me to generate additional qualitative data to delve into their actual experiences at their campuses. By beginning with the qualitative survey, I was able to acquire a broad understanding of the participants' experiences. Following the analysis of the survey data, I was able to take a broad understanding into the focus group interview and utilize probes contained in the interview protocol to get more detailed information.

Initially, the survey protocol questions aligned to the research questions, asking participants to indicate a response that was either positive or negative. Each response choice aligned with the characteristics and components described in the literature review. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide descriptions of their personal experiences while working at their previous campus. Survey and focus group questions were designed to provoke more detailed responses from participants, asking them to describe their perception of the campus culture and the types of support they received, or lack thereof, from their campus administrator and individuals associated with their teaching position and role. Other areas participants were asked to describe were associated with their perception of the campus

leadership, working conditions, and any other contextual factors that influenced their decision to leave their campus.

Rationale for Utilizing a Qualitative Survey

The rationale for including a survey was two-fold: to increase the number of teachers who might decide to participate in the study and to add to the credibility of the study (Survey Monkey™, 2019). It was expected that utilization of a survey as the initial tool for data collection would increase the participants' level of comfort; allow them to select their responses more freely, without fear of judgment or repercussion; and encourage them to provide a more detailed account of their experiences, feelings, and opinions. In turn, their responses contributed to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, allowing me to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of what was and was not working on their campuses. Participants were given the option to select specific characteristics that described their experiences or attitudes independently and anonymously because they may have found it difficult to discuss the same experiences, feelings, and opinions through a one-on-one interview conducted with the researcher.

The survey protocol consisted of nine multiple choice response questions. The survey questions were structured in a way that asked individuals to *check all that apply* when looking at the response options so common themes among the participants could be easily identified. The overall intent and content of each survey question were specific to one or more of the research questions. In addition, each survey question drew from information contained in the literature review as it pertained to the factors that identified as influential to in why participants decided to leave their district or transfer to another campus within the same district.

Rationale for Utilizing a Focus Group

The focus group interview provided me the opportunity to seek additional information

and, when applicable, ask participants to provide examples specific to their initial responses. The focus group provided participants the option to ask clarifying questions of me, expound on relevant details in response to each question, and build upon the responses provided by other individuals who participated in the focus group.

Data Collection Procedures

To conduct a credible investigation of this phenomenon, it was vital to the credibility of this study to understand teachers' perspectives on how various contextual factors as well as the type of relationship they had with their school administrator that influenced their decision to stay or leave their campus. Focus group interviews helped me to explore teachers' experiences at their previous campuses that contributed to them leaving or transferring from their previous campus.

Survey Questions

Survey questions were sent to participants via Survey Monkey™. Participants were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the study via an embedded informed consent form prior to the start of the focus-group interview. Participants were able to complete the multiple-choice survey by indicating one or more responses that described their experiences at their previous campus best.

Focus Group Interview

To obtain a first-hand account of teachers' experiences, the focus group questions consisted of six open-ended questions or statements, designed to provoke authentic responses from each participant. Each question was aligned to the research questions guiding this study. The length of the interview was approximately 60 minutes. Participants were offered a $20

Amazon gift card incentive to participate. Preceding each interview, participants received a consent form to review, indicated their agreement to participate in the study, and gave permission to record the focus group interview.

When data collection took place, the COVID-19 pandemic was in force, preventing me from physically obtaining original signatures from the participants. Thus, each participant indicated their agreement to take part in the focus group via email, and the focus group interview was conducted using Zoom™ (2021), an online video communication platform that offered me the opportunity to conduct the interview through video and audio means. The focus group interview included five participants: three male and two female respondents. Of the five participants, four exited UISD while one transferred to another campus. For the remaining participants who completed the survey, attempts were made to recruit them to take part in a second focus group interview; however, none of them volunteered. As an alternative option, the survey respondents had an opportunity to participate in a one-on-one interview; however, none of them volunteered to participate. After several unsuccessful efforts to recruit more participants to increase the participant pool, the decision was made to discontinue future efforts and begin the analysis phase of the study.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Strategies</div>

In many cases, the interrelated process and steps a researcher takes to collect and then analyze qualitative data requires the researcher to frame their thinking and understanding of the data as they align their data by their research questions. Hesse-Biber (2017) insisted there is no prescriptive method for the data analysis and interpretation process; however, she described the data analysis and interpretation process via a number of stages. The process begins first with the collection of data and requires the researcher to know "*what* data" to analyze and interpret and to

determine whether the data will offer the researcher a more distinct understanding of the research question. The next step is data exploration, which is meant to "uncover meaning" (p. 310) during the data collection phase. The next step involves the specification and reduction of data when the researcher codes the data. The final step is interpretation, when the researcher determines "the extent to which power differences between the researcher and researched" might influence or directly affect the results and the "researcher's assessment" (p. 325) of what the overall findings actually mean. This dissertation study used the following steps of qualitative data analysis advanced by Hesse-Biber (2017): data preparation, data exploration, specification and reduction of data, and interpretation.

Data Preparation

Survey results were provided within SurveyMonkey® (2021). Respondents were asked to check all factors or characteristics that pertained to them personally; therefore, data were presented by category focused on shared feelings according to each answer choice selected by a respondent.

The focus group interview was conducted using Zoom™, an online communication platform that allowed me to conduct and record interviews through video conferencing. The focus group recording was uploaded to a professional transcription service, REV.com™ (2021).

Data Exploration

During the initial phase of data exploration, survey data were assembled by each factor and categorized as either positive or negative feelings toward the factor explored. Survey responses were reviewed and analyzed to find shared feelings and perceptions selected by each respondent. The review and analysis steps helped me locate commonalities between the respondents to determine characteristics that were shared when considering their former campus

leadership, culture, working conditions, or other factors. This data were used to help me derive meaning from each of the respondents and search for commonalities within and across their responses that might unify their experiences.

In the first run through of data exploration of the focus group, I reviewed the transcribed text and made note of common words or phrases used repetitively by each of the respondents. To organize the data, descriptive codes were derived from the participants' actual responses and assigned as "tags" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 315), and a tally of high frequency words was maintained. Words and phrases related to one another were identified and grouped together into four categories: campus leadership, school culture, working conditions, and other contributing factors. These four categories directly relate to the four research questions. Chapter 4, Table 1 presents the tally of high frequency words by each of the contextual factors explored. Participants' responses to survey questions were compared to and contrasted against data extracted from the focus group interviews. Common themes that pertained to each of the four influences as well as outliers were identified. The tags were clustered together and used to help derive meaning from each of the respondents and search for commonalities within and across their responses that might unify their experiences. Similarities and differences derived from the respondents' descriptions of their experiences were compared as well. I read the focus group transcripts and made note of certain words and phrases associated with one or more of the four leading elements and combined words or phrases with similar meanings together. In addition, a tally chart of words used by participants was created to describe their experiences when the word was referenced eight or more times.

Specification and Reduction of Data

After several readings of the textual data, I formulated "impressions about the

participants" and discovered that "a little bit of data can reveal important patterns" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 314). As a result, common themes began to emerge from the data. Through the process of clustering data according to the factors contained within the conceptual framework that were studied, commonalities in participants' responses were found which were then grouped further into themes as they aligned with the experiences of the respondents. Thus, within each of the clusters of data, themes related to each of the factors became more evident. In relation to school leadership, the themes of collaboration and positive/good environment were prominent. Relationships, support, communication, and autonomy/freedom emerged as themes related to the school leadership. When the focus group participants were asked about the working conditions that existed at their campus, collaborative meetings, feedback, and availability of the school principal were prevalent among the group members. The final category related to other contributing factors that led to teachers transferring or leaving their previous school district were cultural awareness, relocation, and job opportunity.

Interpretation

Survey and interview data were analyzed and coded in conjunction with each of the contextual factors. For both the qualitative survey data analysis and focus group data analysis, I examined the opinions and shared characteristics that each participant identified in one or both data sources.

In vivo codes, extracted directly from the participants' own words, were used to identity emerging themes. To establish credibility and trustworthiness, I provided a copy of the focus group transcript to each participant in the focus group and gave them the opportunity to check for accuracy. In addition, participants had the opportunity to add to, change, or eliminate any of their responses. One of the focus group participants elaborated on their response while the remaining

participants verified the accuracy of the transcript accounts of their experiences.

Positionality

A large part of the credibility of this study depends on the researcher who serves as the researcher instrument. It is important for the researcher to acknowledge their background and experience and make every attempt to maintain a predisposition throughout a study to help limit any personal and professional biases associated with the purpose and intent of the study. Using bracketing, I attempted to refrain from making subjective assumptions or decisions related to all aspects of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process to minimize any biased views so an accurate analysis, interpretation, and representation of the participants' perceptions could be achieved as much as possible.

Throughout this study, I served as the interviewer and data collector, data recorder, and data analyst. As a newly hired administrator in UISD where the individuals who participated in this study are employed or were once employed, I was familiar with some of the administrators in the district. Yet, as a newly hired administrator with little history within the district, my relationship with a vast majority of principals and participants was limited.

Depending on the types of experiences each teacher had on their previous campus, some teacher participants may not have felt that they could disclose their personal stories as candidly and fully as they may have liked. As a campus administrator, I have carried out many responsibilities including personnel management and worked closely with campus principals to make decisions about staffing needs, areas of growth for teachers, and building the capacity of teacher leaders on campus. The administrator roles served in my previous and current positions were beneficial to this study, providing specific experience and additional knowledge that enhanced my ability to understand many of the challenges and decision-making processes that

the teachers who participated in this study encountered.

It should also be noted that in my previous experience, I worked with a principal who did not treat all teachers fairly or communicate effectively on that campus. The principal, in turn, was perceived by faculty and myself as a bully. This experience allowed me to bring sensitivity to the perspective that teachers had of their former administrator. Using the practice of reflexivity within this qualitative approach, my personal background influenced and shaped the interpretation of participants' accounts (Creswell, 2014).

Because of my connection to district administrators, I remained cognizant of my position as a colleague to other administrators. Therefore, I made every effort to bracket and suspend any preconceived assumptions about the teachers' experiences. For this study, my purpose was to discover the contextual factors (and potentially, the types of relationships that administrators establish with their staff) that may have influenced teachers' decision, in whole or part, to leave their previous campus and determine whether there were common characteristics administrators possessed or lacked that caused teachers to choose to leave. Each teacher provided their individual experience and I guarded against any tendency to rely on my previous experiences or allow my connection to other administrators to influence the message or themes that emerged from the holistic accounts given by the participants.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting qualitative research and working with other people, ethical considerations must be made. Participants were assured their identity would be protected if they agreed to participate. An informed consent was emailed to each participant before engaging in the survey or focus group interview (see Appendix D). It was explained and affirmed that participation was voluntary and if, at any point, participants wished to excuse themselves, they

could do so. Procedures for obtaining informed and written consent were aligned with the

requirements of the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board. The survey and

process to be used for the focus-group interview was shared with all participants. To maintain a

record of the participants, each participant received a specific pseudonym. Thus, their identity

remained private and the information they shared was held in strictest confidence. Identities and

responses to survey questions were not disclosed to district or campus administrators.

Pseudonyms were used for all participants, the district, and campuses cited within this study.

Limitations of the Study

There was a possibility of flawed or limited data due to the timing of the data collection

phase of this study. Waiting too long after a teacher had transferred from within the district or

moved to another district, the most reliable information could have been lost due to a loss of

emotion. For example, a teacher who moved to another campus or district could be influenced by

their experience with their current administrator. If the teachers' previous relationships were

negative and they reported they lacked administrative support at their previous campus, the

participant might have previously viewed their experience adversely; yet, the participant's

experience might no longer be viewed to the same degree, months or even a year after leaving.

Such a participant could realize that the grass is not necessarily greener at their new campus. The

current situation or state of mind of the respondent could have impacted how they represented or

ascribed meaning to how they experienced their previous experience and conditions at their prior

school as well as the history and consequent emotions related to what caused each of the

participants to leave their campuses in the first place.

For some participants, it was anticipated that there would be limited trust between them

and me. Building a foundation of trust was a primary factor in being able to explore participants'

in-depth responses as to why they may have viewed their relationship with an administrator as a reason they decided to transfer to a different campus in UISD or leave the district to obtain a position at a different district. Every caution was taken to reduce any potential area of mistrust between the participants and myself.

Summary

In accordance with the purpose of the study and research questions, I collected and analyzed survey responses and focus group interviews. This data was collected from teachers who either transferred from their former campus within UISD or exited the district to examine the relationship that existed between the teacher participants and their campus administrator, the culture of said campus, and those teachers who chose to transfer to another campus or district. Four themes, derived from the literature review and developed within the conceptual framework explained in Chapter 2, were used as a priori code to delve into the administrator-teacher relationship: (a) perceptions of campus leadership, (b) campus culture, (c) factors related to working conditions in the organizational context, and (d) other contributing factors.

This descriptive case study provided critical insights into the leadership characteristics of administrators and how that affected the school culture. An additional intent of this study was to acquire a greater understanding of how administrators might create a campus culture to develop the capacity of novice teachers and decrease the attrition rate of their campus while, at the same time, serve administrators in a way that is reflective in nature. If administrators can identify areas of weakness within their leadership and the culture of their campus, they might be able to reduce the number of teacher turnovers on their campus. Chapter 4 includes a detailed report of the findings derived from the teacher survey and focus group interviews with teachers.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The art of communication is the language of leadership.
~James Humes

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the contextual factors that may have impacted teachers' decisions to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district. This study examined the following factors, as told from the teachers' perspective: (a) the campus culture, (b) campus leadership, (c) working conditions, and (d) other contributing factors. Therefore, this study's focus was the types of experiences teachers reportedly encountered, whether positive or negative, that contributed to their experiences on their previous campus. Results have been organized according to the responses that aligned to the four factors, represented within the research literature as well as the conceptual framework, highlighted in this study. The following research questions guided this study:

1. From the teachers' perspective, what campus culture factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

2. From the teachers' perspective, what campus leadership factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

3. From the teachers' perspective, what campus working condition factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

4. From the teachers' perspective, what other contributing factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

Following is the presentation of findings that emerged as they align with each of the four examined contextual factors. The four major categories or themes that centered on the administrator-teacher relationship from the teachers' perspective were (a) campus leadership, (b) campus culture, (c) factors related to working conditions in the organizational context, and (d) other contributing factors.

In the initial stages of the data analysis process, data were coded and grouped to align with each research question. After a preliminary analysis of the participants' responses, however, the factors affecting participants' decisions to transfer to another campus or leave the district altogether surfaced as most important. Attempting to present the data to align with each research question masked the actual findings generated by the participants' responses, both positive and negative, to each survey question. Therefore, rather than presenting the findings to align with each research question, the specific factors that are identified within each research question are highlighted. A presentation of the qualitative survey data and findings, aligned with each of the major categories from the conceptual framework, are presented first, followed by the presentation of the qualitative data collected via the focus group.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were collected from two separate data collection instruments: (a) teacher survey and (b) a focus group interview. SurveyMonkey™ was utilized to collect and analyze data and the focus group interview was conducted using Zoom, an online communication platform. The online survey was sent to a total of 132 prospective participants. Prospective participants were drawn from individuals employed during the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years who transferred and exited from United ISD. A total of 17 participants answered the nine survey questions. The questions allowed the respondent to choose from a list of characteristics that were either positive or negative. Respondents checked all factors or characteristics that pertained to them personally, based on their experiences at their former campus.

The qualitative survey provided qualitative data with feelings and perceptions of the campus culture, leadership, and working conditions. Two questions asked the respondents to

explain or provide any other information that they wanted to add that may help with this dissertation study.

To analyze data collected from the survey, I examined the responses from study participants to identity positive and negative experiences. The survey provided qualitative data with the feelings and perceptions of the campus culture, leadership, and working conditions.

Focus Group

A second data collection strategy was to conduct a focus group to expand the qualitative data collected. The participants who formed the focus group were drawn from the same individuals who completed the survey. The respondents described their perceptions of their previous campus leadership, working conditions, and any other contextual factors that may have influenced their decision to leave their campus. Their focus-group questions were intended to elicit a thorough explanation of their experiences, provide clarification, further insights, and enrich the responses collected from the survey participants. The online focus group interview was conducted using Zoom, a video communication platform that allowed video and audio conferences. The virtual focus group interview was recorded and transcribed.

To analyze data collected from the focus group interview, I examined the responses from four former teachers of United ISD and one current employee who transferred from within the district. The participants were identified as Respondent A, Respondent B, Respondent C, Respondent D, and Respondent E. Focus group participants consisted of three males and two females; however, I chose not to focus on gender, ethnicity, years of service, or any other identifying demographic. Because of the size of the district, nature of the research study, and potentially sensitive information being asked of the participants, these criteria were intentionally ignored to prevent any identifiers of the participants.

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After the online focus group was conducted, the audio recording from Zoom was uploaded to Rev.com™ for professional transcription. Once returned, the transcript was emailed to the respondents to allow for member checking to ensure their responses were correct and reflected their central message and experience accurately.

What follows is a presentation of the findings and themes that emerged as they aligned to the four contextual factors that influenced positive or negative perceptions on a campus. It is essential to make note that the perceptions gathered from the focus group participants were more positive than what was gathered from the 17 survey participants. Overall, the focus group participants provided characteristics that affirmed what the research literature revealed to be important to teachers related to three of the four larger categories: campus culture factors, campus leadership factors, and working condition factors.

Table 1

Presentation of Themes by Factor Examined

Contextual Factor Examined	Emergent Theme	No. of References
1 Campus Culture	Collaboration	17
	Positive Environment	12
2. Campus Leadership	Relationships	24
	Support	14
	Communication	11
	Autonomy	10
3. Working Condition	Collaborative Meetings	11
	Feedback	8
	Availability	8
4. Other Contributing	Cultural Awareness	13
	Relocation	2
	Job Opportunity	2

As qualitative data were analyzed, themes emerged as they related to each of the research questions. During this round of analysis, the transcript was printed and hand coded. When analyzing data contained in the transcript, the number of times certain words were used in relation to the questions posed was counted. Table 1 depicts the word frequency as they corresponded with the research questions in terms of how often they were referenced by participants via the qualitative survey questions.

Research Question 1 asked "From the teachers' perspective, what campus culture factors existed that impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?" This question was designed to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of their campus administrator's leadership. The survey questions related to Research Question 1 were as follows:

- How did the campus leadership create a culture of shared responsibility for teachers at your campus?

- How did the campus culture impact how you felt about working at your previous campus?

In response to a feeling of shared leadership existed on their campuses, overall, the campus leadership created a positive school culture among teachers with 27 positive responses checked in this survey question as shown in Table 2. There were 20 times a negative response was a selected answer choice that described characteristics that did not contribute to shared responsibilities among the staff. Three respondents had a mixture of positive and negative responses while eight respondents only reported positive characteristics and six respondents only reported negative characteristics that applied to their experiences. Two respondents chose only one description that applied to them with this question. Interestingly, it depicts the pattern that developed from the survey. Survey Respondent 11 chose, "Leadership sought input from faculty and staff" while respondent 14 chose, "Leadership did not seek input from staff." Even though

there were more positive responses chosen from this survey question, there was a divided feeling among the survey participants.

Table 2

How Administrators Created a Culture of Shared Leadership

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
I was given autonomy to make professional decisions.	4
Leadership sought input from faculty and staff.	8
I felt my opinion and experience mattered.	5
Leadership roles and opportunists were given to faculty.	10
I was not given the autonomy to make professional decisions.	5
Leadership did not seek input from staff.	8
I did not feel my opinion or experience mattered.	5
There was a lack of leadership roles and responsibilities given to faculty.	2

The next survey question asked participants to respond to the following: How did the campus culture impact how you felt about working at your previous campus? Nine of the 17 participants chose only positive responses over negative responses as shown in Table 3. Of those who responded to how they felt about going to work daily, 7 of the 17 survey participants indicated they found it hard to go to work every day, while another seven looked forward to going to work. Three participants did not give feedback on how the culture affected their outlook in terms of whether they looked forward or dreaded going to work. The significance of this may have to do with peer relationships as eight of the 17 participants felt they could rely on their teammates during tough times. In fact, five of the respondents chose both positive responses.

Overall, findings from the survey respondents to how campus culture impacted how a survey respondent felt about going to work revealed campus leadership created positive school cultures with a combined 15 times a positive indicator was checked versus 11 times a negative indicator was checked. Fourteen respondents chose to answer how the culture impacted how they

felt about going to work daily. The pattern of response was an even split. Seven chose that they looked forward to going to work while the other seven indicated they found it hard to go to work. This pattern of responses indicated a divide in opinion. Three respondents did not give any feedback about how they felt about going to work; however, two of them did indicate that they could come together during tough times with co-workers. This pattern of response suggested they even though there may have been a neutral feeling about going to work, they knew their colleagues were there for them. The third respondent indicated they found it difficult to rely on their co-workers, this pattern in response suggested an overall negative campus culture. While this difference was by only four, those who participated generally had a more positive view of campus culture than a negative one.

Table 3

How Campus Culture Impacted Teachers Going to Work

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
I look forward to going to work every day.	7
Even when things were tough, we came together to be successful.	8
I found it hard to go to work every day.	7
It was difficult to rely on my team/co-workers.	4

Survey participants appeared to be consistent with how they responded to the campus culture questions. For both survey questions, three participants only chose negative responses. Five consistently chose positive responses to both questions. Nine participants shared mixed feelings. For example, two respondents had indicated their principal sought input from staff yet found it difficult to go to work every day. Another two respondents checked their principals gave leadership roles and opportunities to staff, yet also found it difficult to go to work each day. This pattern of responses suggested there was some negative feeling regarding co-workers as neither

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checked either description about their co-workers. In general, the survey suggested campus culture was not an overwhelmingly positive nor negative indicator as to why these teachers chose to exit or transfer.

Survey Findings for Campus Leadership

Research Question 2 asked, "From the teachers' perspective, what campus leadership factors existed that impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave a position at another district?" The survey questions related to campus leadership were designed to provoke responses that related to the campus principal's role in a teacher choosing to leave their previous campus. The following survey questions related to Research Question 2 regarding teacher participants' specific perceptions of the school leadership:

- Describe ways that your previous administrator contributed to the culture.

- Describe your perception of the leadership at your previous campus.

Table 4 reflects participants' responses related to how their previous administrator contributed to the school culture.

Table 4

Perceptions of How Administrators Contributed to School Culture

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
Expressed high expectations	9
Promoted collaboration among peers	9
Had a clear vision and mission	7
Micromanaged	8
Did not seek input from staff	5

The specific content of the survey questions allowed me to gain a unique view of participants' perceptions of the campus leadership. Two participants chose a combination of

positive and negative characteristics, while eight of the 17 respondents selected negative characteristics in terms of how their campus administrator contributed to the culture of the campus. On the other hand, eight of the 17 respondents checked strictly positive characteristics related to their school administrators' campus culture leadership factors. Three out of the five answer choices which participants were able to select indicated positive or clear perceptions of the ways in which their previous leadership contributed to the school culture. Based on their responses, over half of the participants believed their leadership held high standards and encouraged collaboration among their peers. Seven of the 17 indicated the vision and mission of the campus was clear while 10 did not provide an indicator. This pattern established a feeling that the principal did not express a clear vision or mission from their perspectives. Regarding how much their campus administrator contributed to the culture of the campus, two participants chose a combination of positive and negative characteristics, while nearly half of the participants' selected choices were associated with negative characteristics (see Table 4). The repetition of positive responses toward the campus principal revealed a common confidence in the principal.

Table 5

Perception of Leadership

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
Encouraging	6
Supportive	9
Open communication	7
Shared leadership roles among staff	7
Provided feedback about my teaching	10
Lack of encouragement	6
Lack of support	6

(table continues)

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
Lack of communication	5
Micromanaged	5
Lack of feedback about my teaching	2

When survey participants reviewed an array of options related to their perception of leadership by choosing all the descriptors that applied, seven of the descriptors were positive while seven of the answers chosen reflected a negative perception as shown in Table 5. An either-or perception was present in this question, with only three participants indicating a mixed outlook on the leadership resulting in a 50/50 split in negative versus positive perceptions. Again, the pattern of responses to the perception of campus leadership provided a very split opinion.

In response to supportiveness, six of the 17 indicated there was a lack of support while 9 times the "supportive" characteristic was checked. One respondent did not indicate either choice. Eight of the 17 respondents chose positive characteristics of their leadership. Over half of the participants indicated their leadership provided feedback about their teacher, while only ten participants indicated they received feedback. Two participants indicated their leadership provided little feedback in terms of their teaching. Five participants did not provide any response regarding the type of feedback they received about their teaching or any other topic. Nevertheless, the dominant theme that emerged from participants' responses reveled their principals offered specific feedback.

Twelve of the 17 participants checked one of the two selections regarding encouragement. Six indicated their previous principal was encouraging while another six indicated the encouragement they received from the previous principal was lacking. Five participants did not indicate either choice which points to a lack of encouragement

Survey Findings for Working Conditions

Research Question 3 asked: "From the teachers' perspective, what campus working condition factors existed that impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?" Research Question 3 was addressed in the survey with the following questions:

- Which areas of characteristics best describe your experience at your previous campus?

- How did teachers come together to collaborate about instruction, data, or student achievement at your previous campus?

- How would you describe the working conditions at your previous campus?

The overall areas that best described participants' campus experiences were generally optimistic. Out of 102 possible times a positive descriptor could have been checked, a positive descriptor was chosen 50 times while the number of times a negative descriptor was selected was 18. In total, participants felt they were part of a team with collaboration from peers as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Description of Campus Experience

Answer Choice	No of Times Checked
Supportive leadership	7
Resources were available	10
Leadership communicated often	5
Collaboration with peers	10
I felt a part of a team	11
I was given leadership responsibilities	7
Non-supportive leadership	3
Lack of resources	2
Lack of communication	7

(table continues)

Answer Choice	No of Times Checked
Lack of collaboration from peers	2
I felt alone and isolated in my work	2
I wanted more leadership responsibility	2

Eleven of the 17 participants felt a part of the team. Yet, three of the 11 who felt a part of a team did not attribute positive characteristics to their previous leadership, suggesting that despite their selection of negative leadership attributes pertaining to their previous administrator, they were able to achieve a strong team connection.

For the questions related to the third research question and descriptor options, participants related their responses more to their department or grade level team rather than their administration. Participants could also add a brief explanation after their selected responses.

Respondent 1 indicated a split differential in terms of how they worked with members of the department versus the principal: they felt "part of the department team not with admin." According to Respondent 10, "Some of the administration practiced extremely proficient communication and support while others did not practice it at all." These two statements aligned with most of the participants who, according to their survey responses, seemed to hold negative perceptions of their administration overall.

When asked to describe how teachers and staff collaborated together, the overwhelming response was collaboration among teachers occurred throughout their time at their previous school with only one respondent choosing "no collaboration." That same respondent also specified that collaboration occurred before or after school as shown in Table 7. Based on these two choices, it could be surmised that, if planning did not occur before or after work, it did not occur at all, perhaps revealing that this participant was not given time during their workday to meet and plan with colleagues.

Table 7

Teacher Collaboration

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
PLC	14
Before or after school	4
Faculty Meeting	12
Conference Period	12
No Collaboration	1

Table 8

Working Conditions

Answer Choice	No. of Times Checked
Plenty of resources	8
Safe and orderly school	7
Access to professional development	11
Communication Rich	7
Strong Curriculum	6
Lack of Resources	4
Did not feel safe at school	2
Lack of professional development	0
Lack of Communication	7
Poor Curriculum	1

This question provides insight that the working conditions were favorable as 39 of the 85 potential responses were positive while only 14 times an unfavorable working condition was checked as shown in Table 8. Eleven participants selected choices indicating they had access to professional development and none of the participants indicated any deficiency. Regarding resources, all of the participants except for four indicated they had sufficient resources suggesting the district made professional development a priority. Nine of the 17 participants

addressed safety as part of their working conditions. Seven believed their previous campus was safe and orderly, while two indicated they did not feel safe at school. Even though eight do not check either descriptor, it is inferred that safety was not a factor and suggested the campuses followed safety protocols and created a safe school environment. Addressing communication, respondents were split in their perceptions: seven indicated rich communication while the other seven indicated a lack of communication.

Survey Findings for Other Contributing Factors

Research Question 4 asked: "From the teachers' perspective, what other contributing factors existed that impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?"

Participants were able to share reasons why they exited or transferred from within the district. The final question of the survey asked respondents to provide information about anything they wanted to share in addition to what was asked on the survey. While eight of the participants chose to skip this question and opt out of further explanation, three of the participants indicated other reasons for leaving. One survey participant out of the 17 stated they "left because of pay," another participant commented, "did not leave because of dislike," and another response indicated the participant relocated to another state. These reasons for leaving indicated these three participants may not have left of one of the four factors explored in this study. Based on their responses, four themes emerged: relocation, job opportunity, equitable treatment, and cultural awareness.

Focus Group Findings for Campus Culture

Results from the focus group interview told a very positive story among the respondents. Questions related to campus culture revealed teachers' previous experiences focused on positive

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environments and collaboration. Participants were asked what role their principal played in creating a collaborative culture on the campus they left. Participants consistently used positive descriptors regarding their previous campus culture; they spoke of collaborative meetings, most occurring in similar manners where they were typically by department 2 to 3 days a week and then campus-wide meetings occurred monthly to encourage collaboration amongst the staff. As one respondent described their campus, they were "encouraged to talk as a campus." Another respondent indicated "the communication was constantly flowing because everyone worked together in those departments, so that was one thing he (the principal) was really committed to and making sure that happened." Two participants alluded to their principals being instructional leaders on their campuses that centered the collaboration on data and instruction. According to Respondent C,

> There was a lot of time for that with instructional coaches, same subject group. And she really led by example in as far as collaborating with just the office staff, with the teachers, you could just see she was in meetings, there was a lot of collaboration, encouraged, allowed, planned for very deliberate.

Another focus group participant, Respondent B, indicated their campus principal micromanaged the meetings to specifically design each time teachers met to be more prescriptive in each day's expectations for meeting together as a department. Respondent B detailed how the building administrator was intentional in defining how each of the departmental or content-level meetings should be organized each day. The administrator specified the expectations for what should be accomplished each day and how they were to work collaboratively with one another:

> With my overall administrator she really pushed a lot of the collaboration going on. It was not just expected. It was, there were days where it was laid out for you. So, every Tuesday we would meet and they would split us up into two sections. So, if the math department was meeting with the data person on Tuesday, then we would meet with the instructional person on Wednesday.

Respondent B also indicated the building administrator determined which day each

administrator would participate in their collaborative planning meetings and as well as which teachers would be involved. Every meeting and day were predetermined and structured for each grade level team. Despite what content area team members, who taught the same subject, might have wanted to be able to accomplish through team meetings, content area team meetings were only able to meet one time per week:

> The principal would assign which other admin people she wanted in those meetings as far as where they were expected, everybody knew who was going to be in what room each week. And so Tuesday, if I was in the data meeting and Wednesday, I was in the planning meeting, then Thursday, I finally got to meet with my curriculum chairs that we all are teaching the same content.

Overall, respondents indicated the value of collaboration made their campuses feel good. According to Respondent D, their campus was involved in utilizing Capturing Kids' Hearts (2020), a research-based program that campus staff, teachers, and administrators use to develop and build relationships with students and each other. The implementation of Capturing Kids' Hearts by the campus administrator brought the campus together in ways that strengthened the campus culture. Capturing Kids' Hearts was not only a positive influence for the student body, but for the teaching staff as well. This team of teachers helped to shape their campus culture in a way that increased encouragement and collaboration among the staff. This respondent indicated that because the principal

> really got involved with process champions team (Capturing Kids' Hearts teacher-leaders) and encouraged and asked for help . . . it helped introduce people and collaboration. So, I think pushing the Capturing Kids' Hearts thing on the campus and getting the teachers more involved in; it seemed to really kind of help build that culture from what I saw.

Collaboration and communication had a positive impact on the school environment. The common theme among respondents was their previous school environment was positive (see Table 2). As one focus group respondent indicated, "I feel like there was really good

communication and so that helped create a really, good positive environment." Respondent E supported that same perspective by indicating there was, "quite a bit of communication that went on made it feel very comfortable, very good environment." While another respondent reminisced that their relationship with their previous leadership "was great" and they were allowed the "opportunity to grow [them]self" while also indicating they "felt comfortable going to him, and actually still text and talk quite often even now."

Each respondent came from different experiences and campuses within United ISD; however, they shared a common positive school culture experience. In their personal accounts, participants' remembrance of each of these experiences were favorable and some were even sprinkled with sentimental thoughts.

Focus Group Findings for Campus Leadership: Relationships, Supportive, Communication, and Autonomy

Focus group findings were grounded in positive nomenclature regarding the participants' previous relationships and personal experiences with their UISD principals. Participants described their relationship with their previous administrators. Overall, participants felt they had positive relationships with their campus leadership. Respondents reminisced of their administrators with high esteem and respect. Respondent A shared "[my] relationship with my supervisor was perfect," further stating this relationship was open in that it, "offered me the ability to be creative in the classroom as well as provide input. And that supervisor asked for my input so it wasn't always just a top-down relationship." Respondent C, as well, spoke positively about their former principal who served as a mentor for them. They commented, "She was amazing. She was able to encourage me and she was always digging, like wanting me to develop myself farther in terms of advanced degrees and just different options, even outside of just the classroom." Out of the five, one participant indicated a more neutral experience:" It was a good

working relationship, nothing more." However, this same participant acknowledged that relationships were a priority for their former principal:

> I think their leadership characteristics that they had that were strong, maybe, first of all relationships; that was a very big thing for my principal and assistant putting the students first, that was a big thing for them. And they were always talking about, "they didn't care how much you knew until the student knew how much you cared."

All the participants indicated their relationship with their principal was essentially good.

Participants in the focus group were also asked to describe the characteristics that made their relationship negative or positive. As a form of communication, feedback from their principals as well as the ability to provide feedback and potential insights to their principals positively impacted their relationship and working conditions. Receiving feedback about instructional practices and professional growth opportunities left favorable impressions and recollections on respondents. Specifically affirming and providing suggestions for instructional practices, Respondent C shared, "She would offer constructive feedback as in where to improve, where I'm doing really well." Giving and providing input also affected the campus working conditions. Participants underscored the importance of opportunities to give input to their principal. According to Respondent A, the opportunity showed "it wasn't always just a top-down" relationship. Allowing the staff to provide input and then putting it into action allowed for more open communication between teacher and principal. Respondent C also recalled how "they were very open to new ideas, feedback. A lot of the suggestions that we put forth were kind of tested out and implemented."

Communication between the principal and participants also emerged as a positive connection which, in turn, contributed to the existence of a positive school culture and enjoyable working relationships. Open, honest communication as well as the availability of the principal played a positive role in the participants' perceptions. Respondent E emphasized, "The

communication that went on made it feel very comfortable, very good environment." Others

agreed the flow of communication allowed for a collaborative relationship with their principal.

Respondent A shared two things that stood out about their former principal—communication and

honesty. This respondent stressed spoke about how communicating affirmations made an impact:

"By just spending time with you, whether it's affirming you, 'Hey, you're doing a great job. I

like how you did X, Y, and, Z on Tuesday', or, 'thank you for turning in your (lesson) plan on

time.'"

Participants spoke of the support they received by having freedoms to make decisions for

their classrooms. As described by Respondent D, "I had freedom to do what I needed to do, and

to me, they weren't overbearing." The ability to be creative and have autonomy was shared by

most respondents. While having such freedoms were not referenced as much as other factors,

only 10 references throughout the interview, the principle of freedom still played a role in how

each participant perceived their relationship with their former administrators. Respondent B

compared their current experience with their previous one, realizing they had a little more

autonomy in their current placement: "There was definitely a little more micromanaging than

where I'm currently at." However, they did share, "I was allowed to do what I needed to do in

the classroom." Other participants agreed they had freedoms in their classroom and that made for

a positive experience with their administrator.

Focus Group Findings for Working Conditions

The focus group interview addressed campus working conditions by asking participants

what role their previous leadership played in creating a collaborative culture. Essentially, the

intent of this question was to help me understand what the working conditions were like on each

campus. This question was used to draw out responses about how the campus principal led their

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staff to collaborate as well as provide resources or feedback for teachers. Common themes among the five participants that emerged were collaborative planning meetings, support, feedback, and availability of the principal.

Collaborative planning meetings were described by the participants as full staff meetings first, and then as department or grade level meetings. Each participant did indicate principals ensured that teachers had the opportunity to plan and collaborate. The occurrences of meetings were different for each participant; however, two participants did agree meetings occurred multiple times a week on their campuses. Most participants indicated their planning meetings were held with instructional coaches who helped them with instructional practices, content expertise, and data support. These instructional coaches were an added resource to their meetings and assisted teachers with planning throughout the year. Respondent B viewed their leadership as being knowledgeable of content standards and utilizing data to make education that influenced instruction. Because of how the principal viewed data and instruction, this respondent described collaborative planning in terms of how it was "pushed a lot" and "expected":

> My overall administrator really pushed a lot of the collaboration going on. It was not just expected, there were days where it was laid out for you. Every Tuesday we would meet and they would split us up into two sections, so if the math department was meeting with the data person on Tuesday, then we would meet with the instructional person on Wednesday.

Respondent B continued to detail that the principal specifically assigned which people and other administrators were working together and what their assignments were for each meeting. Expectations were made explicit for each day, team member, and topic:

> The principal would assign which other admin people she wanted in those meetings as far as where they were expected, everybody knew who was going to be in what room each week. And so Tuesday, if I was in the data meeting and Wednesday, I was in the planning meeting, then Thursday, I finally got to meet with my curriculum chairs that [were] all are teaching the same content.

Respondent A offered a similar description of how planning occurred on their campus, although the frequency of how often the teachers met varied as did how the meetings were organized. They described their planning time as a time to help one another and prepare for students within their department:

> Just that collaboration with other teachers within your same area, helped prepare for lesson plans and certain types of students. Communication was constantly flowing because everyone worked together in those departments, that was one thing that he [the principal] really was committed to making sure that that happened.

Overall, participants recalled positive experiences and characteristics of their campus principals indicating they felt supported by their campus principal due to how the communication patterns between the teachers and campus principal flowed, creating a positive culture on their campuses. Participants also felt their former administrators had their backs and supported them with discipline, parents, or development opportunities. Concerning issues related to student discipline, Respondent C summarized, "When it came to discipline issues, they were very supportive with that. Parents, they were supportive. I think they were there, they were available is what I would say, I guess, available for whatever I needed."

When discussing the role a principal plays in creating a positive culture by being supportive, a final emergent theme from the focus group that participants deemed to be important pertained to the extent to which the building principals adhered to two specific components in terms of the working conditions of the school: (a) principal availability and (b) principal visibility. In terms of the practices and behaviors displayed by the head principal of the school for the individuals who participated in the focus group, however, principal availability and principal visibility seemed to be lacking. Two participants shared their principals were not always visible to the staff. Sometimes, a week would go by without them seeing their principals. While realizing it was not possible nor even required to be out of their office all the time due to

other obligations, meetings, and so forth, Respondent B indicated that while teaching a particular grade level, her students did not even know who the principal of the campus was due to a lack of availability or visibility to students and staff. Respondent E agreed, noting that this was not necessarily the case with the assistant principals, noting the benefit that might be generated if the principal would "roam the halls" each day:

> Everybody knew who the assistant principals were, and there were times where we'd be addressed by the assistant principals, but the head principal was not exactly visible all the time. At least once a day, or a couple of times a day seeing them roam the halls would be nice.

The value of seeing their principal within the campus and knowing they are available were characteristics that affected their perception of their principal and how it played a role into working conditions. Knowing that they had the support from and access to their principal was important to creating favorable working conditions; however, it was also clear that they would have liked to see the principal be more visible among students and within the campus.

Focus Group Findings for Other Contributing Factors

The final focus group question asked the respondents to share anything else they thought would be informative for this study. Based on their responses, four themes emerged: relocation, job opportunity, equitable treatment, and cultural awareness. While only relocation and job opportunity were the only reasons shared for leaving, equitable treatment and cultural awareness became evident as factors that left impressionable memories from the respondents.

While the participants who completed the survey were not matched with the respondents who participated in the focus group, the focus group participant who indicated a move to another state could have been the same individual who selected that reason in the survey. Another participant moved to a district closer to their home, indicating they wanted to teach in the district where their own children attended. Two focus group members left for coaching opportunities,

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one at the college level while the other left the district after a new head coach within the district was hired. Respondent E indicated, "A new coach came in, brought a new staff in, and I was kind of pushed out; but I was looking to move on to a new coaching assignment." Another participant transferred because the district had realigned campuses. To keep teaching at the same grade level, they had to transfer to a different campus.

Equitable Treatment

When asked about areas that contributed to a positive or a negative relationship with their previous administrator, equitable treatment between staff and students came out in the discussion as some of the participants witnessed their colleagues being treated differently than themselves. For example, although every participant did not feel that they were treated poorly, they noted that they observed others not being treated in the same manner. Respondent D shared, "I didn't experience it as much, but I did see other staff members that, the principal would address me one way, but they might address somebody else completely different." Respondent C validated this statement by commenting how the principal communicated with staff, giving them "pause" about the way their administrator interacted with others: "I felt like there was some instances, and it didn't quite happen with me, but someone on my team, there's this message that was passed that made them feel less than." This same participant perceived that student discipline did not always appear equitable. The underlying implication of their responses revealed that the imbalance and inequities created by how faculty or staff were treated differently impacted their perspective of the campus leadership. This perception continued to be brought out when they discussed what some perceived to be a lack of cultural awareness within the district.

Cultural Awareness

When given the opportunity to critique an area that could improve their relationship with

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their previous administrator, all participants discussed the need for their school leaders to improve in how they handled situations related to cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity toward culturally and ethnically diverse adult and student populations. Focus group members discussed the importance of hiring teachers who mirrored the ethnic diversity of the school and community and students in the district. Some recommended providing professional development for those who had been with the district for many years. Respondent B stressed how the district had grown from being "*Anglo saturated* to having minority groups, that's something that not all of us are aware of or and familiar with." This respondent added: "And we don't ever want to be the ones on the channel evening news about how culturally insensitive we are. That's not what we got into this business for and we want to be sensitive." Discussion over having to implement dress code in the classroom impacted their perceptions as well. The length of boys' hair and how they wore their hair were also discussed. Respondent C shared that having more cultural awareness would help build relationships with students: "For example, with long hair in boys, there's some cultures that long hair is part of and just dreadlocks---there's a lot of culture associated with that." Respondent A spoke about the issue of hair styles and cultural differences in this way:

> I think some of the rules were tough, like some of the rules about young men and how they wore their hair…now that's the first, I've never seen that in other places I've been. But some guys do wear their hair long. That's the one thing I could think about that was very different than any place I've been. It was like *Footloose*, the movie, and they could have been less restrictive on that.

Participant responses revealed UISD lacked cultural awareness at the time of their employment based on their personal experiences and observations, which contributed to their perceptions of their campus leadership and the overall district- and campus-level leadership.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that could help to explain why some teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. The following factors, as told from the teachers' perspective, were examined: (a) the campus culture, (b) campus leadership, (c) working conditions, and (d) other contributing factors. Therefore, the types of experiences teachers reportedly encountered, whether positive or negative, that contributed to teacher turnover, were the major focus of this study. Participants selected to participate in this study were teachers who either exited from a public-school district or transferred from one campus to another campus within the same Texas school district. An analysis of the qualitative responses from the teacher survey and a focus group interview provided answers and insight into the four factors that contribute to a positive or negative experience. The data were collected and analyzed to further understand the types of experiences or factors that contribute to teacher turnover within one school district. Inductive coding of interview transcripts and the conceptual framework served as research tools and aided in categorizing the emergent themes of the research data. Through the analysis process, themes related to campus culture, campus leadership, working conditions, and other contributing factors were identified and discussed as research findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATONS

The atmosphere in which it is easiest to teach is the atmosphere in which it is easiest to learn.

~Maggie Haley

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the descriptive qualitative study with an overview of the research study, a brief review of the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, and methodology. This study obtained results through qualitative methods and a qualitative research design described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presented Important conclusions gathered from the data.

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings, how these findings align and address the four research questions, and the correlation of the findings to literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Additional sections of the chapter include implications for current and future practice, recommendations for future research concerning teacher turnover and the need to further examine the potential impact that the administrator-teacher relationship has on teacher turnover. Researcher reflections serve as the conclusion.

Overview of the Study

The problem of practice that called for this study stemmed from the findings of former studies, concluding that retention of teachers on campuses and within districts is a nationwide problem and has created a rippling effect in our nation's schools, both historically and currently. According to data reported by the Texas Education Agency, in the 2016-2017 school year, there were 358,514 public school teachers in Texas (Smith, 2020). Of those, 36,300, or 10.29%, made the shift from their campuses to another campus, left the district altogether, or were lost to attrition. The financial implications mean that more money is spent on searching for, recruiting,

and hiring the best and brightest educators each spring and summer to fill vacancies. The amount of energy and time it takes to advertise, recruit, interview, and perform reference checks is exhausting, yet it is the cycle that comes with the territory (Synar & Maiden, 2012). The NCTAF (2007) reported an average national cost of more than $8,000 to replace a teacher. The 2012 annual national costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers was $2.2 billion in the United States (G. D. Hughes, 2012). NCTAF (2007) found teacher turnover can cost up to $7 billion a year nationally. The financial burden of the revolving door of educators is epidemic.

These reports do not account for the academic and developmental costs to children who experience these teacher losses over multiple years. Chuong (2008) said, when teachers leave the field, they take with them their knowledge of instructional techniques, students' learning styles, and professional development training. Fuller et al. (2018) asserted, "Not only does teacher turnover contribute to the shortage of teachers, teacher turnover also has negative ripple effects throughout a school" (p. 1). To investigate this problem, I wanted to examine the relationship administrators build with their staff or lack thereof to determine factors related to teacher attrition.

Bearing in mind the financial implications of high turnover rates and lack of student achievement, the root cause of why teachers leave needed exploration. Working conditions that include deficient administrative support, negative school cultures, lack of resources, and limited access to professional development contribute to teacher turnover rates (Fuller et al., 2018). While there is research establishing a need for better methods of retaining teachers across the nation, there is insufficient research as to the direct impact the relationship between teacher and administrator might play in a teacher's decision to exit or transfer from a campus.

For this study, I investigated teachers' perceptions to examine the contextual factors that

influenced their decision to leave their previous campus assignment. The recollections gleaned from the responses of teachers who participated in this study provide support for district- and campus level administrators to reflect on the factors that affect a teacher's reason for staying or leaving.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. Using a descriptive, qualitative approach, I examined four contextual factors, as told from the teachers' perspectives: (a) the campus culture; (b) campus leadership; (c) working conditions; and (d) other contributing factors. To accomplish the purpose, I focused on the types of experiences that teachers reportedly encountered, whether positive or negative, that contributed to teacher turnover. The following research questions guided this study:

1. From the teachers' perspective, what campus culture factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

2. From the teachers' perspective, what campus leadership factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

3. From the teachers' perspective, what campus working condition factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

4. From the teachers' perspective, what other contributing factors impacted their decision to transfer to another campus or leave for a position at another district?

Review of the Methodology

The primary goal of this study was to form a better understanding of the culture and relationships between administration and teaching staff by exploring the factors that influenced positive or negative working relationships. Therefore, a descriptive, qualitative study design was

the best approach for this research to gain insight and further investigate participants'

perspectives of the factors that cause teachers to transfer or leave a district.

To investigate teachers' personal experiences related to their previous campus leadership,

school culture, and other constructs that influenced their decisions to transfer or exit from a

public-school district in Texas, data were collected based on participants' responses and

reactions from both their completion of a survey and participation in a focus-group interview.

The literature review focused primarily on previous research that indicated factors related to

teacher turnover. Thirteen themes emerged that coordinated to each research question, as shown

in Table 9.

Table 9

Presentation of Themes by Factors Examined and Emergent Themes

Factor Examined	Emergent Theme
Campus Culture	Collaboration
	Positive/Good Environment
Campus Leadership	Relationships
	Communication/Feedback
	Autonomy/Freedom
Working Condition	Supportive
	Collaborative Meetings
	Availability
Other Contributing Factors	Cultural Awareness
	Equitable Interaction
	Job Opportunity

Discussion of Findings

Chapter 4 presented emergent themes and findings of the research data and illustrated

specific examples and recollections participants provided during the focus group interview and

an analysis of the teacher survey data. This section presents a comprehensive summary of those discoveries. The results of the current study are aligned to the conceptual framework and are applicable to the research design.

In this research study, I acknowledged, documented, and analyzed the factors connected to teacher turnover that teachers who were employed and exited or transferred from within a Texas district experienced, as told from their perspectives. Three elements that influence teachers' decisions to stay or leave their campuses have been identified in the research literature: campus culture, school leadership, working conditions. This study also considered other contributing factors because few studies have revealed a specific list to date (see Table 10). Each of these elements can affect the other factors and influence the relationship between administrators and teachers. The research and data collected revealed that each factor is interrelated and influences the other components. While the research did not reveal that these were reasons for the respondents to leave, it did affirm that these factors are important to creating either a positive or negative experience. The data confirmed areas of importance to teachers and they did value these characteristics. The following sections provide an analysis of research literature related to the reactions and responses from the survey and focus group interview.

Campus Culture Factors

Campus culture factors that impact teachers' decisions to remain or leave are interrelated with the vision and mission that campus administrators create. The state of the campus culture is interconnected with the campus leadership and working conditions, each affected by the other. Campus leaders can strengthen this culture by reinforcing the customs and systems of the school (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Data derived from this study revealed teachers valued the collaboration from not only their peers, but also their administrators.

Table 10

Conditions That Impact Teacher Turnover

Conceptual Framework	Factors That Impact Teacher Turnover	Conditions That Support Teacher Retention
Campus Culture	Feeling Isolated	Collaborative Environment
	Campus Environment	Creating a Positive Environment
Campus Leadership	Lack of Relationships	Create Opportunities for Relationship Building
	Lack of Communication	Valuing All Team Members
	Lack of Autonomy	Transparent and Open Communication, Feedback
Working Conditions	Lack of Administrative Support	Support with Student Discipline, Parents, Etc.
	Unsatisfactory Working Conditions	Allow for Shared Responsibilities Among Staff
		Available Resources, Academic Support, and Tools
Other Contributing Factors	Lack of Cultural Awareness	Practicing Inclusivity
	Job Opportunity	Creating Leadership Opportunities

According to the research literature previously reviewed, when a lack of positive and shared collaboration opportunities exists within a school, teachers begin to feel disempowered. Eventually, they become more isolated and unsupported in their work without the existence of a teamwork culture (Banerjee et al., 2017; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Respondents from this study shared how they felt they were a part of a team and valued the collaboration, giving credit to their campus leadership for making time for such collaboration to occur at the campus. Participants also addressed ways in which the campus leadership worked to create the positive school culture among teachers, seeking input, and making teachers feel their opinions mattered. As revealed previously, professional learning communities nurture the working conditions between teachers and administrators which generates a successful system (Crow, 2015; Deal &

Peterson, 2016; Dufour & Marzano, 2011), a finding that was supported by this study's findings. On multiple instances, respondents spoke about how the environment on their campus "felt good" when discussing the overall school culture.

Participant data also revealed communication on their campuses contributed to the comfortable feeling they experienced at their former campuses. This communication took place within collaborative meetings as well as other modes; however, respondents focused on the collaborative meetings that allowed for the flow of communication. Respondents even shared that because of the culture of their former campuses, the majority looked forward to going to work and could rely on their teammates. This factor was a result of the network established from collaboration and having open communication between co-workers and administrators. Respondents spoke positively about their campus cultures, which did not appear to be a factor in their decisions for exiting nor transferring from within UISD. Because of the positive recollections when discussing campus culture, it is essential to note the importance of supporting teacher and administrator collaboration. Administrators should note the importance and value teachers give the opportunity to connect with their peers. Data extrapolated from this study confirmed that collaboration and communication are essential factors in preserving positive school environments.

Campus Leadership Factors

Campus leaders have the responsibility of establishing many, if not all, functions of their campus. Marzano et al. (2005) said the relational factors and systems that principals organize clearly affect teachers whose actions directly impact student performance. Campus principals have the influence and control, either positively or negatively, to establish relationships and communication, and give teachers control in their classrooms. Participants spoke about how their

relationships with their principals influenced the perceptions of their experiences. They recollected relationships to be a priority with their administrators, indicating they knew relationships came first. Respondents' feelings about their relationship ranged from "professional, working relationship" to "perfect." Those whose responses aligned with this range of feelings attributed the feelings to the actions of their principals who sought staff input, gave feedback, and provided support and encouragement.

Communication between campus principals and teachers also impacted teacher perceptions. Respondents spoke of open communication when identifying characteristics that created a positive or negative impact in their perspective. They shared collectively that they all had comfortable and open conversations and communications with their former principals as well as with colleagues during collaborative planning time. Feedback, as a form of communication, was also of value and shared positively. Respondents indicated their principals gave encouraging feedback and affirmed areas of strength while also giving them opportunities for them to grow.

According to Deal and Peterson (2016), part of a healthy campus culture includes purposefully encouraging change by supporting teachers to take risks and experiment so they could increase and make progress in their own learning as well as the learning of others. Principals can determine how much autonomy is given to teachers. When given autonomy and authority in the classroom, teachers' instruction improves and student learning increases (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Shurden et al., 2016). As already mentioned, respondents in the current study said their principals created and allowed time to collaborate with peers, gave them freedom to do what was needed for their students, reinforced what was shared in their collaborative meetings, and made them feel trusted. Data collected from the respondents confirmed these beliefs.

Findings from this study not only highlight but reinforce that campus leadership factors influence many facets of the campus. It is vital for campus leadership to create opportunities to build relationships among teachers and staff members. These relationships open the doors to openly communicating, providing feedback, and valuing input from teachers. Giving teachers the freedom to make professional decisions in their classroom is vital to a healthy and reciprocal relationship between the teacher and administrator as supported by Pink's (2011) factors of autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

Working Condition Factors

Research from Burkhauser (2017), Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), and Ladd (2011) showed working conditions tend to play a role in two extensive ways: school contextual factors and administrative support. Regarding the current study, participants' focus was on administrative support. School contextual factors were not indicated as lacking. Participants had access to professional development, to plenty of resources, and to a viable curriculum. What was noted with most participants was the support of the administrators with student discipline and parental issues. Respondents mentioned they felt supported with whatever issues they needed. Within the context of this study, the responses gathered from participants strengthen the research linked to teachers' need to feel supported from their principals in various ways. As cited by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), an absence of administrator support and unfavorable working conditions ranked among the highest causes for teacher turnover.

Other Contributing Factors

While the overall intent of this dissertation study was to focus on campus culture, school leadership, and working conditions, other contributing factors that could have influenced teacher

turnover needed to be explored. Lynch (2018) submitted the four chief factors resulting in teacher turnover were compensation, working conditions, teacher education, and mentoring. Only one respondent mentioned teacher pay; however, teacher pay was not mentioned as a motivator for the participant's reason to exit UISD. No other participant indicated compensation as a factor for leaving.

On the other hand, several participants chose to leave the district because they relocated or had another job opportunity. One of the participants who transferred from within the district did so due to the restructuring of campuses rather than for any administrative concern. Another unexpected factor that caused respondents to be critical of their previous district was a lack of cultural awareness among the educational leaders at various campuses within the district. Participants felt this was an area of improvement for their district. They recalled dress code issues that appeared to exclude customs from cultures outside of the White, Anglo-Saxon culture. Participants also highlighted the reality that the demographic makeup of the teachers did not mirror the demographics of the student population. Thus, the participants indicated a need for more inclusivity, sensitivity toward individuals from diverse cultures and ethnicities and thus, the need to hire more teachers with the same race or ethnicity as students within the district.

Implications for Current and Future Practice

The findings derived from the current study could assist educational leaders in determining relational and instructional supports that might aid in retaining teachers. These findings add to the current research literature in terms of specific studies that sought to discover the causes and impact of teacher turnover. By becoming cognizant of what matters to teachers in the workplace and working to cultivate positive relationships, campus cultures, and other working conditions, administrators might be able to learn how to nurture those characteristics on

their own campuses. One must recognize that there should be a combination between the campus culture, working conditions, and behavioral and social emotional facets that are associated with how principals contribute to the overall campus and satisfaction of teachers.

Several calls to action, based on the overall findings of this study, could benefit district and campus administrators and inform leadership preparation programs that prepare both campus- and district-level administrators. The data presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in this chapter offer additional information that could develop a number of recommended practices and procedures for principals so they can begin reflecting on the types of practices that are more likely to support teacher retention. Suggestions for implementation at the campus and district level include the following:

- University courses in educational leadership designed to help explore and develop behavioral and relational skills in aspiring principals and other hopeful educational leaders.

- Mentoring of principals through behavioral and relational skills at the district level.

- Professional development for campus principals for building relationships, school culture, and supportive working conditions.

- The use of feedback from teachers specific to the behaviors and relationships between teachers and administrators.

- Creating and implementing campus wide agreements of shared agreements for standards of behavior between all campus staff.

- Support and provide time for collaboration between teachers and administrators.

- More comprehensive factors in principal feedback and evaluation (i.e., district level observational walk-throughs, turnover rates, climate surveys, and teacher feedback).

- The use of climate surveys for principals to create goals of growth.

- Time for relationship and team building opportunities throughout the year.

- Intentional methods of connecting and building relationships with and for staff.

Just as teachers must not only consider the academic needs of students, but also the social emotional and behavioral concerns for setting up a classroom conducive to learning, campus principals must also do the same for their teachers. The roles and responsibilities of a campus administrator are exhaustive. These duties are in place to ensure academic success of every child in their building. Administrators must be careful to develop and maintain working relationships with staff members. The actions of teachers are direct results of the vision, mission, and job satisfaction that they have on their campus. Teachers are the direct result of an administrator's actions as it has been said, "teacher working conditions are student learning conditions" (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007, p. 4).

New principals and those who have high turnover rates may benefit from receiving mentoring and coaching from district administrators or other qualified experts in educational leadership. Providing principals with the opportunity to reflect on their practices and cultivate their relationship building skills to create working conditions that allow teachers to do their best work could both teacher retention rates and student achievement (Grissom et al., 2021).

Educational leadership courses could include components beyond policies, theories, and academia such as components emphasizing how to make a social emotional connection with teachers and staff members. Districts could also benefit by providing professional development to campus leaders about social emotional and relational skills. District-level administrators could conduct district level observations to provide feedback to principals to create growth opportunities (Hirsch & Emerick, 2006; Berry et al., 2021). Considering the use of the transfer rate from within a district, specifically lateral moves from one campus to another, may also be one indicator for potential areas of principal growth. This data would be useful only with the knowledge of why the teacher chose to exit or transfer from within a district and if it were due to

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reasons that were outside of relocating, promotions, or other causes not related to toxic relationships and working conditions. Gaining deeper insights as to why teachers choose to transfer from one campus to another campus for a lateral move could imply that there are personal or relational issues. Understanding those motivators for transfer could provide district and campus administrators with areas of growth in interpersonal skills and campus culture.

Promoting the importance of relationship building and creating time to develop relationships among staff and with administrators could nurture and encourage positive conditions on each campus and enhance collaboration between teachers and administrators. The use of social contracts provides each team member the guidelines for how to treat one another. The combination of clear and agreed upon norms in which each person respects the other establishes solid expectations for collaborative meetings. It also sets the tone for the standard of relationships and expresses to each other a commitment to interact positively (Paul, 2016). In conjunction with the need to develop specific norms, relationship building, celebrating each other, and learning about one's colleagues creates not only positive relationships, but fosters a sense of accountability toward each other. Nurturing the relationships on campus often enhance every other working condition on campus and play a greater role in student achievement (Paul, 2016).

While developing and training leaders to improve student achievement and understanding pedagogy is essential, it is also worth the time to invest in the work of administrators who impact the people they lead. Giving teachers the opportunity to provide feedback to district- and campus-level administrators through a district-level climate survey could give educational leaders more in-depth perspectives about the habits that inhibit their working environment (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010)

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that there are many factors influencing whether a teacher will stay committed to a campus or choose to leave. While there may not be a single or consistent deciding factor, many of these factors are interrelated and influenced by one or more intersecting factor. The campus administrator inspires and motivates the connections between campus culture and working conditions (Hirsch & Emerick, 2006). Through such actions, they may be able to pinpoint potentially toxic traits in themselves and take appropriate action to create an environment that puts teachers in a position to be able to perform at their best on a daily basis.

Recommendations for Further Research

For this study, participants who exited or transferred a Texas school district were surveyed and a small sample of participants who completed the survey participated in a focus-group interview. Based on teachers' reported perceptions, a list of factors that affirmed what teachers value in their workplace was formed. A future study with a larger sample size of participants could results in additional findings regarding relational and structural conditions that can impact a teacher's decision to commit to or exit a campus.

This study could be expanded in several ways. First, this study could be replicated to compare a rural district to a larger urban district to find similar factors that matter most to teachers. Additionally, the methodology used to conduct this study could be altered. One way would be to interview teachers individually rather than in a focus group setting to give participants the opportunity to speak more candidly. One concern from this study was that respondents did not share as frankly as they might have done in an individual setting. Furthermore, interviewing principals about their practices could also provide researchers another perspective of how campus leaders practice building relationships on their campus and influence

the school culture and working conditions. Observations of interactions between campus leaders and their staff may also be one way to expand this study to analyze the social practices on a campus.

Further, completing a comparative study between school leaders who build relationships by utilizing methods and techniques that shape the social context among staff members and school leaders who might not do so could provide insights that are more definitive as to why teachers choose to exit or transfer from a campus. By conducting these and other types of exploratory studies, researchers might be able to enlighten leadership preparation programs and district-level officials of the complexities that lie within teacher attrition so they can offer preservice training that addresses these realities or develop professional development offerings so district- and campus-level administrators can take appropriate action to retain teachers who possess the knowledge, talents and skills, dispositions, and ability to teach students.

<div align="center">Researcher Reflections</div>

I was motivated to conduct this study based on my own personal experience and observations of how a principal influenced the culture of a high school campus. What I witnessed and experienced was a principal who did not practice equitable treatment of staff members. I observed staff members feeling rejected, unsupported, and insignificant. By the end of the year, 17 teachers transferred to other campuses within the district, one being the teacher who was voted Teacher of the Year. Another teacher left teaching altogether after serving on that campus as both a paraprofessional and teacher, only to transfer and return to the district a year later to another campus. The campus secretary even left for another secretarial position for the district. I requested to be transferred as well due to the lack of equitable treatment between myself and the other assistant principal. The principal treated the staff as if they were replaceable at any given

moment. It was devastating for me to see these teachers feel isolated, unsupported, and unheard.

It was even more devastating when they chose to transfer and take their talents to other campuses

within the district. In my situation, the majority of teachers took lateral positions available in the

district. There was no pay raise, stipend, or promotion. There was no lack of resources,

technology, or curriculum. These teachers left because of the disjointed relationship they had

with the campus administrator. The undesirable conditions created by the principal caused a

massive exodus of what Jacob et al. (2012) referred to as "irreplaceables" from this campus.

Thus, the problem of practice for this study was born. I chose to explore the relational factors

that influence why a teacher might choose to remain at their assigned campus or leave their

current campus assignment to transfer to another district-level campus or leave the district

altogether. I was especially intrigued by those who chose to transfer from their previous campus

within a district to obtain a lateral position.

When I first began this journey, I assumed the majority of people who chose to exit or

transfer from within a school district for lateral teaching positions chose to do so due to the

behavioral components that were lacking due to teachers' relationships with their principals. I set

out to discover what the "other" on the teacher exit survey meant. What was the untold story

from that teacher's perspective and what did I need to do to keep from losing great educators to

attrition?

The findings from this study confirm that the literature about factors that influence

teacher turnover DO matter to teachers. What I hoped to learn was more about the relational

factors that exist between teachers and administrators. Based on the research literature, this study

and my own experiences, the campus principal holds the major responsibility for building and

sustaining positive relationships with teachers. They are central in cultivating a positive school

culture and providing teachers with adequate resources to do their jobs in the classroom (Banerjee et al., 2017; DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

What I wanted to learn was the major characteristics of the school principal that directly impacted these areas. When analyzing the findings, a few of the explanations provided in the teacher survey confirmed my belief that relationships were lacking between teachers and administrators. One participant stated, "[I] did not feel welcome in the admin office, did not feel like they wanted to develop a professional relationship, nor get to know my curriculum." Another response provided by a participant who completed the survey indicated a strong negative perception and lack of relationship due to "misogyny, distrust, and bullying are the main reason(s) I left." These two examples indicated there was and continues to be an untold story, waiting to be discovered. However, during the focus group, the participants spoke fondly about their experiences. One respondent noted their own observations of seeing colleagues treated differently; however, they make sure to state that was how they were treated. The fact that this respondent mentions how they witnessed other colleagues being treated unfairly left a lasting impression on them. It could be inferred that while this respondent was not treated poorly, the fact that others were may have caused them to question the integrity or give them pause in whether or not their former principal was fair in how they treated other staff members. This discovery further informed me that there are still untold stories waiting to be discovered.

Having a deeper understanding of the practices and skills necessary for principals to function as the instructional leaders of the campus needs to include a deeper understanding of how the principal plays a role in teacher satisfaction. Such an understanding could influence future practice and course content for both principal preparation programs and inform district-level principal mentoring and professional development programs, providing administrators with

the tools they need to retain teachers on their campus. Even more so, understanding the implications of the behavioral and relational factors that are related to working with teachers could encourage principals to begin the practice of self-reflection with a goal to examine or improve their people skills.

Recognizing what practices and characteristics teachers find beneficial in their principals are areas of study that researchers could fully identify and explore. Acknowledging that there are interrelated skills and behaviors that principals could practice and apply in their roles as principal might need to be cultivated which, in turn, could lead to the development of a specific approach that preservice principal internship supervisors and coordinators as well as district-level administrators who are capable of coaching and mentoring administrators in relational and social behaviors.

Conclusion

Administrators influence many interrelated areas within their campus. The areas that are within their control determine the perceived level of administrative support and satisfaction among teachers. As Jacob et al. (2012) concluded from their research, principals who created a culture of high expectations for teaching and learning took specific action when a teacher's performance did not meet their expectations. In doing so, they maintained mutual respect and trust. Teachers who felt supported tended to stay at their campuses. Findings from this study support and affirm there are numerous conditions that can impact whether a teacher will stay committed to a campus or choose to leave. Administrators need to put ego aside and build relationships with staff who are identified as irreplaceable in order to prevent loss. When administrator sees that a teacher is good for students and wants to contribute to the success of the campus, before they lose them, they need to be able to ask, "What do you need from me? How

can I support you? How can we work together to keep you here? Unless principals examine their

own practices and creating conditions that help others succeed, the revolving door of teacher

turnover will keep turning.

> If he would have said, "What's it going to take for me to get you to stay?" that's all he had to do, she said. "Most people, if they had a really dynamic teacher, wouldn't they say, "What's it going to take?" – Sarah, Irreplacable Teacher. (Jacob et al., 2012, p. 1)

APPENDIX A

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE LETTER

IRB-19-299 – It's Not Me, It's You: An Exploration of Why Teachers Leave

Email Recruitment Letter (Participants)

Dear [*insert name*],

My name is Rose Neighbors and I am a doctoral student from the College of Education at the University of North Texas at Denton. You are receiving this email to invite you to participate in an online survey followed by a focus group interview for my research study entitled, "*It's Not Me, It's You: An Exploration of Why Teachers Leave*, you're eligible to be in this study because you have either transferred to another campus for a lateral position or exited Forney ISD for another teaching position in another district. Your contact information was used from the Forney ISD Human Resources Department exit survey or transfer list.

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective. The following factors, as told from the teachers' perspective, will be examined: (a) the campus culture; (b) campus leadership; and (c) working conditions; and (d) other contributing factors.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will have approximately ten days to complete and submit the online survey and will be invited to participate in a focus group interview. The online focus group interview will be scheduled to last for approximately 60-90 minutes and conducted using Zoom. The survey and interview questions will concentrate on the purpose of the study. The focus group interview will be audio and video recorded and later transcribed to determine common themes among the participants' responses. Pseudonyms will be used and you will have to option to turn off your video for the Zoom focus group, this will allow you to use an avatar or your pseudonym to eliminate your face from being recorded.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. Attached to this email, is an explanation of your rights as a subject of research conducted through the University of North Texas at Denton. If you'd like to participate, please click the link below to be directed to the Informed Consent Form and to begin your survey. If you have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ [redacted] or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ [redacted]. My hope is that you will find value in this topic and decide to participate in this meaningful research study.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Rose Neighbors

APPENDIX B

TEACHER SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What was your role at your campus? (open ended)

2. Which areas or characteristics best describe your experience at your previous campus? (RQ3)

    a. Supportive leadership

    b. Resources were available

    c. Leadership communicated often

    d. Collaboration with peers

    e. I felt a part of a team.

    f. I was given leadership responsibilities

    g. Non-supportive leadership

    h. Lack of resources

    i. Lack of communication

    j. Lack of collaboration from peers

    k. I felt alone and isolated in my work.

    l. I wanted more leadership responsibility

    m. (Option to explain)

3. How did the campus leadership create a culture of shared responsibility for teachers at your campus? Check all that apply. (RQ1)

    a. I was given autonomy to make professional decisions.

    b. Leadership sought input from faculty and staff

    c. I felt my opinion and experience mattered.

    d. Leadership roles and opportunists were given to faculty.

    e. I was not given the autonomy to make professional decisions.

    f. Leadership did not seek input from staff.

    g. I did not feel my opinion or experience mattered.

    h. There was a lack of leadership roles and responsibilities given to faculty.

4.   Describe ways that your previous administrator contributed to the culture. (RQ2) Check all that apply.

      a.   Expressed high expectations

      b.   Promoted collaboration among peers

      c.   Had a clear vision and mission

      d.   Micromanaged

      e.   Did not seek input from staff

5.   How did the campus culture impact how you felt about working at your previous campus? (RQ1)

      a.   I looked forward to going to work every day.

      b.   I knew that even when things were tough, we could come together as a group and be successful.

      c.   I found it hard to go to work every day.

      d.   It was difficult to rely on my team/co-workers.

6.   How did teachers come together to collaborate about instruction, data, and student achievement at your previous campus? Check all that apply. (RQ3)

      a.   PLC meetings

      b.   Before or after school

      c.   Faculty meetings

      d.   Conference periods

      e.   No collaboration occurred

7.   How would you describe the working conditions at your previous campus? Check all that apply. (RQ3)

      a.   Plenty of resources and materials.

      b.   Safe and orderly school

      c.   Access to professional development

      d.   Communication rich

   e. Strong curriculum

   f. Lack of resources and materials

   g. Did not feel safe at school

   h. Lack of professional development

   i. Lack of communication

   j. Poor curriculum

8. Describe your perception of the leadership at your previous campus. Check all that apply. (RQ2)

   a. Encouraging

   b. Supportive

   c. Open communication

   d. Shared leadership roles amongst staff

   e. Provided feedback about my teaching

   f. Lack of encouragement

   g. Lack of support

   h. Lack of communication

   i. Micromanaged

   j. Lack of feedback about my teaching

9. Is there anything else you might tell me that would help with this study? (RQ4)

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS WHO EXITED

1. What factors caused you to choose to leave Unity ISD? (RQ1)

    a. If you transferred within UISD, what factors caused you to transfer to a different campus while employed by Unity? (RQ1)

2. How would you describe the campus leadership where you worked, prior to transferring or leaving? (RQ3)

3. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor at the campus where you worked prior to your transfer or leaving? (RQ2)

    a. What characteristics created a positive/negative relationship?

4. What role did your principal play in creating a collaborative culture on that campus? (RQ3)

5. If you could critique three areas to ensure a more positive relationship with your administrator, what would they be? (RQ3)

6. Is there anything else you might tell me that would be informative for this study?

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: It's Not Me, It's You: An Exploration of Why Teachers Leave

RESEARCH TEAM: Rose Neighbors, College of Education, ███████████ ███████████████████. This dissertation is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Pazey.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Taking part in this study is voluntary. The investigators will explain the study to you and will any answer any questions you might have. It is your choice whether or not you take part in this study. If you agree to participate and then choose to withdraw from the study, that is your right, and your decision will not be held against you.

You are being asked to take part in a research study about the contextual factors that influence a teachers' decision to leave a school campus.

Your participation in this research study involves an online survey, and an invitation to participate in a focus group interview. More details will be provided in the next section.

You might want to participate in this study if you would like to provide insight as to why teacher choose to transfer to another campus in the same district or exit to another district for a teaching position.

You may choose to participate in this research study if you chose to transfer to another campus in the same district for a lateral position or exited to another district for a teaching position.

The reasonable foreseeable risks include the potential for the loss of confidentiality.

DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY: The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that may explain why teachers decide to transfer to another campus or leave their current district to pursue a position at another district from the teachers' perspective.

TIME COMMITMENT: Participants will have ten days to complete the online survey and the focus group will be scheduled once that response window closes for all potential participants. The focus group will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

STUDY PROCEDURES: As a part of the research participants will be asked to complete an online survey. These will be delivered to participants electronically and participants will be asked to complete these within a ten-day timeframe. The survey may be completed anywhere the participant is able to connect to a Wi-Fi connection. Teachers will participate in a focus group of 6-8 participants with other teachers after personnel contract hours at a location to be determined. Participants are not required to respond to all questions in a focus group interview.

AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHY:

☐ **I agree** to be audio recorded during the research study.

☐ **I agree** that the audio recording can be used in publications or presentations.

☐ **I do not agree** that the audio recording can be used in publications or presentations.

☐ **I do not agree** to be audio recorded during the research study.

You may participate in the study if you do not agree to be audio recorded.

The recordings will be kept with other electronic data in a secure UNT OneDrive account for the duration of the study.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: By exploring teachers' perspectives of campus leadership in terms of leadership styles, direct or indirect behaviors, and psychological influences they may have on those in the school, a better understanding of how administrators tend to influence the revolving door of teacher turnover might be brought to light. Findings from this study may also encourage principals to consider the perceptions of the teachers with whom they lead and, as a result, they may engage in self-reflective practices to improve the ways in which they work with teachers, staff, and students in their school.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: "The reasonable foreseeable risks include the potential for the loss of confidentiality. " Your participation in this online survey involves risks to confidentiality similar to a person's everyday use of the internet. Remember that you have the right to withdraw any study procedures at any time without penalty, and may do so by informing the research team.

Participating in research may involve a loss of privacy and the potential for a breach in confidentiality. Study data will be physically and electronically secured by the research team. As with any use of electronic means to store data, there is a risk of breach of data security.

If you experience excessive discomfort when completing the research activity, you may choose to stop participating at any time without penalty. The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen, but the study may involve risks to the participant, which are currently unforeseeable. UNT does not provide medical services, or financial assistance for emotional distress or injuries that might happen from participating in this research. If you need to discuss your discomfort further, please contact a mental health provider, or you may contact the researcher who will refer you to appropriate services. If your need is urgent, helpful resources include Dallas County MHMR crisis hotline at 877-283-2121; The Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program at 214-424-7208; National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255

COMPENSATION: There will be no compensation provided for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Efforts will be made by the research team to keep your personal information private, including research study, and disclosure will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. All paper and electronic data collected from this study will be stored in a secure location on the UNT campus and/or a secure UNT server for at least three (3) years past the end of this research in a password protected computer in the researcher's office.

Research records will be labeled with a code or pseudonym and the master key linking names with codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take these steps to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

The results of this study may be published and/or presented without naming you as a participant. The data collected about you for this study may be used for future research studies that are not described in this consent form. If that occurs, an IRB would first evaluate the use of any information that is identifiable to you, and confidentiality protection would be maintained.

While absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the research team will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of your records, as described here and to the extent permitted by law. In addition to the research team, the following entities may have access to your records, but only on a need-to-know basis: the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the FDA (federal regulating agencies), the reviewing IRB, and sponsors of the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Rose Neighbors by phone at (903)288-1687 or email at rneighbors@my.unt.edu. Any questions you have regarding your rights as a research subject, or complaints about the research may be directed to the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 940-565-4643, or by email at untirb@unt.edu.

CONSENT:

- Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above.

- You confirm that you have been told the possible benefits, risks, and/or discomforts of the study.

- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits.

- You understand your rights as a research participant, and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study; you also understand that the study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.

- By signing, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Please sign below if you are at least 18 years of age and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

_____

DATE

☐ **I have read the consent information and AGREE to take part in the research**

☐ **I have read the consent information and DO NOT AGREE to take part in the research**

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