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Examining The Relationship Between Teacher Stress And Disruptive Student Behavior

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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER STRESS AND

DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

by

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological research study was conducted at one inner-city elementary school in a Central Florida district. The intent of this research was to examine the lived experiences of certified elementary-level inner-city teachers who had experienced stress and burnout while dealing with continuing disruptive student behavior in their classroom. The study addressed three research questions: (a) What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout? (b) How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout? (c) How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?

The conceptual frameworks of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Tajfel and Turner's theory of social identity, and Lazarus and Folkman's theory on stress and coping guided this research. Individual interviews were conducted with six participants. During the interview process, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences of teaching in a disruptive, elementary classroom environment. After data collection was complete, data were hand-coded and analyzed.

The data from the interviews uncovered key findings. Five themes that emerged were the perceptions of: (1) professional esteem, (2) disruptive student behavior, (3) stress and coping, (4) administrative support, and (5) student learning. The results of the research showed that across all six participants, the most prevalent finding in the data was the lack of value shown to

participants by administration. The data also showed that disruptive student behavior and the lack of administrative support contributed to the decline of the participants' professional esteem.

Recommendations include actions for administrators to develop standard practices to increase teacher value, and to develop better strategies to reduce teacher stress. Recommendations also include unexplored areas for further research, such as emphasis being placed on the aspect of teacher stress that involves administrative oversight and indifference or classroom management strategies that address chronic disruptive student behavior.

Key Terms: administrative support, attrition, burnout, disruptive student behavior, stress

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This dissertation was presented

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral work to my mom and best friend, the late Reverend Mary

E. Crudup (1946–2017). You saw this coming long before I did, and you called it even when I

pushed back as I pursued what I thought I wanted and what I thought was best for me. You knew

differently. Other than God, you were the only one who knew me intimately. It deeply hurts me

that you're not here to see this, but I dedicate this degree to you and I am preparing myself for

the next phase of the journey. I love you, Mom.

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Dr. Audrey Brown. You were dynamic and irreplaceable mentors. I love you guys. Special

thanks to Dr. Brianna Parsons, Dr. Marylin Newell, and Dr. Dianna R. Montfort.

Sincerely,

Sidney Crudup II

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Disruptive children in the classroom create a perilous and unique set of circumstances, causing some school administrators to agree with how teachers evaluate the tumultuous learning environment of the inner-city school. The effective management of a classroom riddled with undesirable behavior represents a major challenge for teachers (Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2004). Because of the threat against instructors' performance, turnover rates due to stress and burnout in the academic ranks have been extremely high, particularly in schools serving low-income, nonwhite, and low-achieving student populations (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

To prevent turnover, the concept of teacher efficacy has again emerged in recent research studies. As it relates to leadership in education, a Norwegian study of teacher self-efficacy has gained traction with researchers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The study found that teachers who have a higher level of self-efficacy have a lower level of burnout than those who consider themselves less competent in classroom management and discipline (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Teachers' feelings of less competence in classroom management and discipline can be due to a lack of control, and the supervisory authority not granted by administration.

The implementation of classroom management is the responsibility of teachers, but many teachers labor to produce behavioral management plans that do not succeed (Collier-Meek, Sanetti, & Boyle, 2019, p. 5). The inability to establish and maintain classroom discipline is one of the primary stressors for teachers and for their abandonment of the profession (Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008, p. 693). Fantilli and McDougall (2009) stated that a combination of

more than 100 studies cited classroom management as one of the greater challenges teachers face when trying to teach students (p. 815).

Teaching in the public school system is no longer an enjoyable career but a toxic job (personal communication, May 5, 2019). Job demands, lack of self-efficacy, and the increase in burnout have contributed to teachers leaving the vocation (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014, p. 101). The teacher attrition rate in the United States has been reported as very high (Akdağ & Haser, 2016), with a national rate of 8% annually, although considerable variations exist in some regions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p. 2).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) found that the highest turnover rates tended to be in the South (United States), reaching about 16 to 17% in cities and suburbs and 14 to 15% in towns and rural areas as shown in Figure 1.

TURNOVER RATES BY REGION AND DISTRICT TYPES

	City	Suburb	Town	Rural
Northwest	12.1%	9.2%	7.7%	6.8%
Midwest	16.4%	12.2%	12.1%	9.6%
South	17.3%	15.3%	14.3%	14.7%
West	12.5%	9.6%	12.6%	13.3%
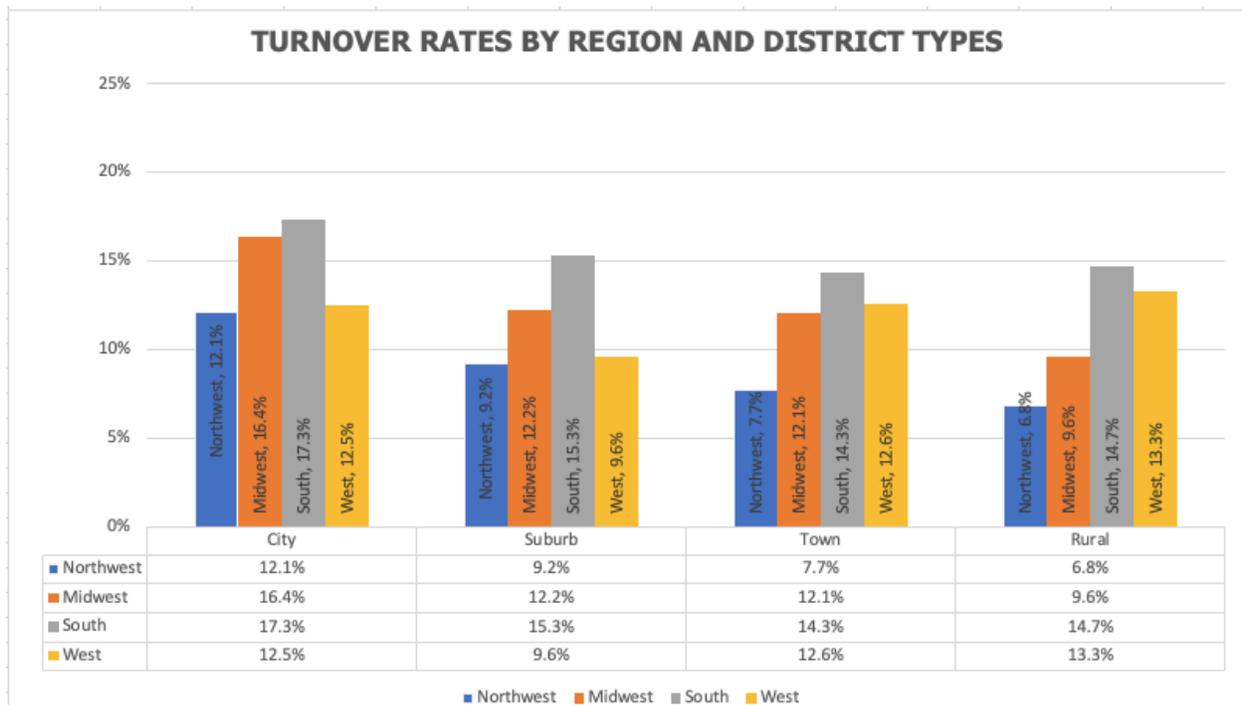
Figure 1. Turnover Rates by Region and District Types

The Northeast had the "lowest turnover rates across all district types, with about 10% turnover overall and less than 8% turnover in towns and rural areas" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p. 6). According to a recent study, nearly 50% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years (Raab, 2018, p. 583). Common reports show the teaching profession is an extremely stressful occupation, which contributes to poor retention (Hayes et al., 2019) and teacher shortages (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

This study aimed to determine factors in an inner-city elementary school that affect the classroom environment and how these factors produce stress and challenge teacher self-efficacy. The study was grounded in the conceptual frameworks of pedagogy, self-efficacy, and the psychological theory of stress and coping. Eliminating teacher stress may lead to increased teacher self-efficacy resulting in improved student achievement and motivation (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 741).

Statement of the Problem

According to Akdağ and Haser (2016), studies have revealed that classroom management is the most stressful and challenging aspect of the teaching profession at both the elementary and secondary levels (p. 701). The objective of classroom management is to boost student achievement by creating a positive environment that is conducive to learning (Aloe et al., 2014). In a chaotic classroom where poor management is prevalent, effective teaching and learning are nonexistent (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Chronic student resistance prevents teachers from achieving the objective, challenges their ability to perform, and produces stress and burnout (Aloe et al., 2014). Classroom behavior management and teacher stress are well researched, and the analyses concluded that disruptive behavior in the classroom affects teacher stress and wellbeing (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008).

The principal dilemma of classroom management is disruptive behavior, which challenges efficient order, affects teacher stress, and impacts stakeholders' concerns of a positive and safe learning environment. The ability to manage the classroom is significant to instructors being able to teach efficiently (Aloe et al., 2014, p. 105). Defiant and disruptive behavior of students has caused teachers to struggle with successfully managing their classrooms (Conner, 2015, p. 1). Disruptive student behavior is one of the significant causes of increased teacher stress and abandonment of the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Current literature has thoroughly documented the causes of teacher stress (Haydon, Alter, Hawkins, & Kendall Theado, 2019, p. 1). A national survey on teacher stress consisting of 1,201 K–12 participants revealed that student behavior problems frustrated teachers and identified disruptive behavior as a cause of stress leading to a reduction of teacher effectiveness (Richards, 2012). However, with an extensive review of the most recent research, there appear to be gaps in the literature. Although research could be found on classroom disruptive behavior being a cause for teacher stress, the literature does not address the level of contribution disruptive behavior has on teacher stress. Disruptive behavior in the classroom threatens student achievement due to the impact that stress has on teachers' ability to manage the classroom and engage their students (Haydon et al., 2019, p. 1).

Classroom management, although broader than classroom discipline (i.e., response to disruptive behavior) is of significant concern to critical stakeholders (Lewis, 1999). Barriers to classroom management lead to unique challenges that cause teachers to struggle implementing plans to reverse the problem (Collier-Meek et al., 2019). This research highlighted "teacher burnout" (i.e., stress) that occurs as a result of not being able to address disruptive student behavior effectively and sought to determine actions teachers can take to cope with stress in

order to better serve their students and to help improve their academic performance (Richards, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Through the use of semi-structured, individual interviews, the purpose of this study was to determine the factors that prevent instructors from effectively supervising their classrooms in an inner-city elementary school in Central Florida. This study highlighted the factors that counteract teachers' ability to adequately address disruptive behavior in a manner that promotes teachers' self-efficacy and minimizes teacher stress, burnout, and potential attrition.

Disruptive student behavior refers to conduct in the classroom that is off-task and that distracts teachers from their objective (Nash, Schlosser, & Scarr, 2016, p. 168). Disorderly student conduct is heavily associated with low teacher morale, a key factor that leads to teacher burnout and the system's inability to retain highly qualified instructors (Figlio, 2007; Jacobson, 2016). Studies confirm burnout is a coping problem that correlates to disruptive student behavior (Byrne, 1991; Cherniss, 1980; Eskridge & Coker, 1985, as cited in Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004). Stress arises when teachers are unable to employ preferred discipline strategies in order to manage their classrooms (Lewis, 1999).

Klassen and Chiu (2010) conducted a study on teacher self-efficacy and determined that teachers with greater classroom stress than workload stress had low self-efficacy and low job satisfaction (p. 741). Their study expanded on research that focused on teacher motivation, showing how experience, gender, and three tiers of self-efficacy (i.e., student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management) related to stress and job satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010, p. 750).

Research Questions

A research study conducted by Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, and Trautwein, (2018) confirmed that teachers rated student misbehavior as the specific stressor that consistently contributed to their poor well-being (p. 126). According to a Belgium study, misbehavior of students is one of the most pressing issues for teachers who struggle to maintain classroom order (Aelterman, Vansteenkiste, & Haerens, 2019). Prolonged exposure to disruption (i.e., stressors) is reflected in teachers' emotional exhaustion, which can be predicted by lower levels of teacher efficacy (van Dick, Crawshaw, Karpf, Schuh, & Zhang, 2019). This research study attempted to answer the following research questions:

Leading question: What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?

a. Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout?

b. Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?

Conceptual Framework

Imenda (2014) stated that a conceptual framework is a synthesis of existing views in the literature concerning a given situation (p. 189). The purpose of the conceptual framework is to help the researcher clearly see the variables and concepts in a given study, to provide the researcher with a general approach, to guide the researcher in collecting and interpreting data, and to guide future research (Imenda, 2014, p. 193). The conceptual framework combines concepts to give a wide-ranging understanding of a research problem (Imenda, 2014, p. 189).

The conceptual framework is made up of three components: personal interests, topical research, and a theoretical framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). Personal interest refers to the underlying passion or inner motivation that drives the researcher to engage in a particular work (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). Topical research is the work that focuses on the subject matter in which the researcher is interested. Ravitch and Riggan (2016) stated that it shapes how the researcher may conduct the study. Theoretical framework refers to the theories that are found in scholarly literature and provides the lens through which researchers conceive their conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016).

Elementary education is heavily entrenched in the psychological and social fields of study. The conceptual framework for this study focuses on pedagogy, self-efficacy, and the psychological theory of stress and coping. Three theories guided this study: Maslow's (1943) theory on the hierarchy of needs, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theory of social identity, and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological theory on stress and coping.

Figure 2 included below shows the connections and relationship among these three theories. At the base of the figure is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which is the best known theory among the three. The two theories that connect to the hierarchy of needs are the Social Identity Theory and the Lazarus and Folkman Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping. The Social Identity Theory fits the hierarchical range of Maslow's theory, while Lazarus and Folkman specifically connect to Maslow's upper tier needs.
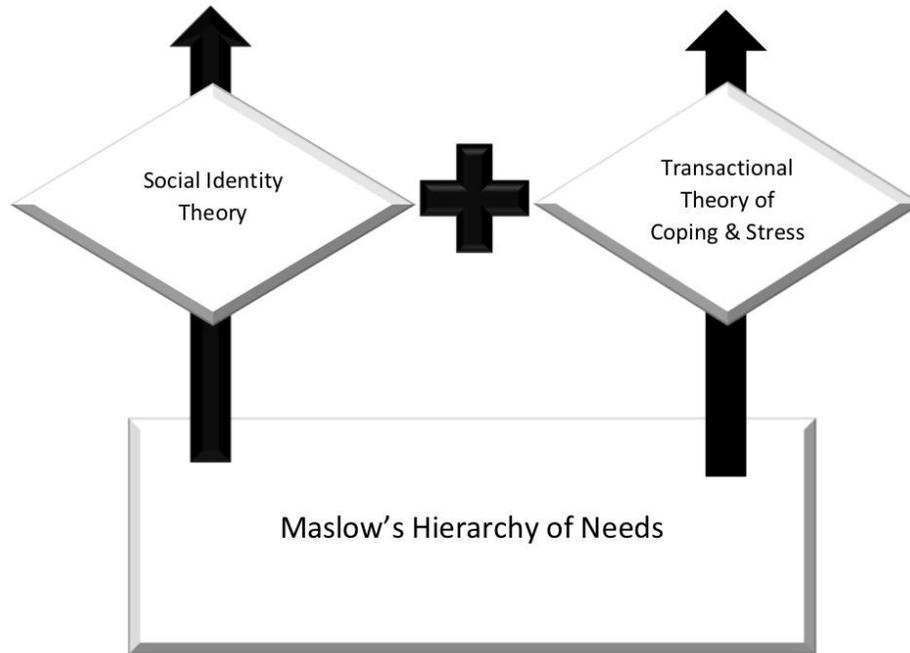
Figure 2. Theoretical Framework's Connection to Hierarchy of Needs

The central theory that guided this study is the concept of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy model was developed by American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–1970). It is a theory of human motivation, a hypothesis that was first introduced in a paper written by Maslow in 1943 (Atkins & Harmon, 2016). Maslow conceived human needs as existing within a 5-tier pyramid, with the most basic needs at the bottom and the highest need (i.e., self-actualization) at the top (Burger, 2011; Yoshihara, 2018). Physiological, safety, and social needs are the most basic needs and must be satisfied before the upper tier needs (belonging, love, esteem, and self-actualization) can motivate humans to strive for them (Burger, 2011; Yoshihara, 2018).

Another foundational and secondary conceptual framework theory that was used in this study is the social identity theory. One source noted that social identity theory, a hypothesis developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), was based on Tajfel's belief that superiority in group

relationships (intergroup) was of supreme importance (Insko et al., 1992, p. 274). McLeod (2008) noted Tajfel's belief that groups were an important source of pride and self-esteem, which pushed Tajfel to develop the psychological theory of social identity: a sense of belonging. The theory highlights the distinction between intergroup and interpersonal behavior (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979), enhancing the status of the group to which one belongs (McLeod, 2008). According to the theory, self-image is increased when the status of the group is increased (McLeod, 2008).

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping is an additional framework that was used in this study. Although developed in the 1960s, the theory has been instrumental in studying the phenomenon of stress, and it continues to be researched and revised (Biggs, Brough, & Drummond, 2017). The main thrust of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) hypothesis was that individuals consistently appraise their environment, and if stimuli from that environment are threatening (i.e., stressors), coping mechanisms commence in the attempt to manage the distress caused by the stimuli (Biggs et al., 2017, p. 352). Biggs, Brough, and Drummond (2017) noted the two main features of the theory are *cognitive appraisal* (recognizing and defining the stimuli) and *coping* (attempting to resolve the stressor).

Assumptions

The qualitative research study was conducted in one inner-city elementary school in the Central Florida area. It was assumed the researcher would employ the appropriate instruments that would adequately address the research problem. It was also assumed that the researcher employed the phenomenological approach to the study, which attempted to ascertain the lived experiences of teachers who work in the environment of disruptive classrooms. A third assumption concerned the openness of teachers who took part in the study. It was assumed that

interviewees would demonstrate transparency when answering survey questions. A fourth assumption concerned the possibility that teachers in a disruptive classroom may suffer a lack of internal locus of control, the belief that they can influence events and outcomes. Lastly, the researcher assumed that administration and the district would offer support for the study.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study was limited to one elementary school in the Central Florida area. All of the teachers that were interviewed have taught within the past three to five years or are still teaching in grades PreK–5 and have taught or are still teaching at the school where the study took place. The research was limited to 6 participants with various years of teaching experience. As the sole researcher in this study, another limitation was potential bias, particularly when conducting interviews on a campus where the researcher took part in instructional modules. To mitigate potential bias, the researcher employed bracketing. Although the study uncovered inner-city, elementary teacher perceptions regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout, the study did not intend to assess the impacts of student behavior on student achievement.

Rationale and Significance

The rationale for an in-depth look into this phenomenon is twofold. First, teacher stress has a negative impact on teachers' efficiency in the classroom, contributing to poor teacher-student rapport (Ouellette et al., 2018, p. 495). Second, a widely acknowledged challenge facing the teacher profession in the United States is teacher attrition (Ryan et al., 2017, p. 2). The departure of teachers from the profession has historically been connected to stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction (Ryan et al., 2017 p. 2).

At every school level, one of the greatest challenges for teachers, and one that is a major source of stress, is controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom (Travers & Cooper, 1996, as cited in Kokkinos et al., 2004). A disruptive educational environment is a significant problem. According to one expert educator, the problem of public education is now a crisis (Klein, 2014). Ardent defenders of the status quo, however, say there is no crisis, squarely placing the majority of the blame on kids who come from poor and challenged neighborhoods (Klein, 2014). Improvement becomes difficult when both general and special education instructors report feeling inadequately trained to deal with disruptive, defiant, and aggressive behavior (Cihak, Kirk, & Boon, 2009).

This research study may provide practical and informative benefits. Because of the potential harm that a disruptive educational environment can create for teachers (i.e., teacher stress, burnout, and attrition), this study matters to the district, school administrators, and instructional staff within the arena of the elementary school. There are several areas of significance in understanding the severe issues administrators and instructors face when encountering disruptive students. One major area of significance is teacher turnover, which can harm student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Teacher stress and burnout lead to turnover and should be understood, because teachers may be the only role models at-risk children have to guide them, giving them a chance to experience better lives (Payne, 2012, as cited in Jacobson, 2016).

The threat of teacher turnover and attrition provides a solid rationale for this study. According to Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013), there are differing assumptions among researchers as to whether teacher stress and high turnover do in fact harm student progress. There has been minimal research conducted to calculate the causal effect of teacher turnover on student

achievement (Ronfeldt et al, 2013, p. 5). In another study, Adnot, Dee, Katz, and Wyckoff (2017) confirmed that they could not find any other research that documented how teacher turnover (i.e., created by attrition or the hiring of new teachers) influenced student achievement (p. 55).

One tool used for teachers to assist them in improving student achievement was value added measures, or growth measures. Value added measures for teachers have become crucial to student achievement (Basileo & Toth, 2019). These growth measures are used to evaluate teachers' impact on students' performance, whether the impact is positive or negative (Basileo & Toth, 2019). Improving student success is a national priority and connecting student success with value-added models is a large part of the priority (Basileo & Toth, 2019). Legislative reforms (i.e., education law) had been enacted to pinpoint key areas of progress for high needs students, and states and school districts responded to those laws by initiating evaluation measures for principals and teachers (Basileo & Toth, 2019, p. 1).

The Basileo and Toth (2019) study researched correlation levels in the state of Florida, using three years of data to investigate the connection between teacher value-added measures and teacher observation ratings (p. 1). According to Basileo and Toth (2019), the research was employed to close the gap in the literature regarding the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model (MTEM). The Marzano model was intended to facilitate teachers' professional growth (Crump, 2019, p. 4). The MTEM was used widely in the state of Florida, but it has yet to receive large-scale attention in the research community concerning its ability to reliably predict teacher value-added measures (Basileo & Toth, 2019, p. 2). The study concluded that there was only one study that directly tested the relationship between teacher observation scores and teacher value-added measures using the MTEM (Basileo & Toth, 2019).

Value-added models (VAMs) aim to measure the amount of "value" teachers add to (or detract from) student learning and growth from one school year to the next (Amrein-Beardsley & Holloway, 2019, p. 516–517). VAMs measure teachers' effectiveness in classroom instruction (Amrein-Beardsley & Holloway, 2019). Academic scholars are divided on the VAM debate, with one side (i.e., educational economists) promoting the strengths of the model, and the other side (i.e., educational researchers) offering criticism (Amrein-Beardsley & Holloway, 2019, p. 518). The debate has been surrounded by a narrative largely dominated by the single discipline of economics and is considered convoluted and highly complex (Amrein-Beardsley & Holloway, 2019).

However, what is often cited as an obstacle to teacher effectiveness is classroom disruption (Horoi & Ost, 2015). According to Horoi and Ost (2015), little is known about how disruptive students influence classroom learning and teacher evaluation. The study (Horoi & Ost, 2015) investigated how students' serious behavioral issues reduced the growth of peers (e.g., peer effect) and penalized teachers based on the students assigned to them. Although VAMs are used as a tool to assist and to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, VAMs fail to account for the peer effects caused by the disruptive behavior of other students. Based on the results of their study, Horoi and Ost (2015) concluded that VAMs are limited and cannot account for managing disruptive behavior, thus the researchers are uncertain if school districts should use value-added models for high-stakes teacher evaluations (p. 191).

Therefore, the significance of this study is connected to the concept of change orientation. Change orientation refers to changes in administrators' leadership preparation to better meet the needs of the children and the teachers who teach them (Thurston, Clift, & Schacht, 1993). The change-oriented leader can positively affect the teachers, the school, and the

surrounding communities. District policy has minimal room for teacher discretion in relation to disruptive behaviors, and requires its leaders (e.g., administrators) to take a second look at the strategic design, employing the theory of transformational leadership. According to one study, the transformative leader compels others to want to act on behalf of the organization (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). This happens through influence. By amending policy, school leaders (e.g., administrators) can improve both the teaching and learning experience because of their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions (Marion & Gonzales, 2013). In addition, the change-oriented teacher could introduce the combination of teacher-directed activity and student free choice in the classroom to increase the chances of early childhood learning (Goble and Pianta, 2017, p. 1035).

Background

To provide a substantive understanding of factors that impact the setting for this study, the following section provides a contextual background. According to the Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research (CCPPR) at Florida State University (FSU), the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) created the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting system (SESIR) in 1995 for lay staff to improve the accuracy and quality of data reported by schools (Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research, n.d.). The system grew out of the public's concern that children are safe in the school environment (School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting, n.d.). The intent was to compile complete and objective data from which to design interventions to improve the learning environment (School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting, n.d.). SESIR and discipline data were important for need assessment grant opportunities and for measuring the process and the results of those interventions (Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research, n.d.).

As early as 2005, The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) developed refinements of the SESIR system to strengthen school districts' ability to correctly code data used to report incidents that are against the law or represent serious breaches of the code of student conduct (FLDOE, n.d.). Currently, the SESIR system collects data on 26 incidents of crime, violence, and disruptive behaviors that occur on school grounds, on school transportation, and at off-campus school-sponsored events, during any part of the day and every day of the year (FLDOE, n.d.). Schools report incidents to the districts, which in turn provide the data to the Department of Education (FLDOE, n.d.).

According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), statutes and rules were established for student discipline, specifying a variety of offenses that may or may not be against the law (FLDOE, n.d.). Incident types for school reporting were also ordered in ranks, with Level I to Level IV incidents that vary in severity. Level I incidents are the most serious, and Level IV incidents are the least serious (FLDOE, n.d.). Based on these levels of reporting, the department of education developed codes and definitions of incidents that must be reported to the SESIR system and are expected to include consultation with law enforcement (FLDOE, n.d.). Secondly, FLDOE developed codes of incidents that are *not* expected to include consultation with law enforcement (FLDOE, n.d.). Some of these incidents (i.e. Level IV) require the involvement of School Resource Officers (SRO). SROs were also to be involved when incidents are severe enough to require law enforcement (i.e., Level I).

SESIR functions at the school level, the district level, and the state level (School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting, n.d.). Data from the schools are reported to the district and the district sends data to the FLDOE, which compiles all the data into an annual report (School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting, n.d.). Florida statute F.S. 1001.54 (3) states

that school principals must ensure that all school reports are accurate and timely, and the principals must provide necessary training for staff to accurately report school safety and discipline data (Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research, n.d.). The FLDOE released its most recent SESIR data for the 2017–2018 year, which found one-third of the incidents at schools across the state were reported to law enforcement (FloridaInsider.com, 2019). In the Central Florida county where the study will take place, 22 percent of the total incidents were reported (FloridaInsider, 2019).

In line with the statutes and rules of the FLDOE, the district of research in the Central Florida area has four levels of offenses summarized in the Code of Student Conduct (Orange County Public Schools, n.d.). The ordering of the offense levels is counter to the offense levels of the FLDOE. Level I incidents are the least severe in the district and Level IV are the most severe.

Each level of incidents has potential consequences from the least offensive such as parent contact to the most severe as expulsion from the school district. Parental contact is notification by staff or administration to individual students' parents (i.e., usually by phone) to inform them of a Level I offense (i.e., disrespect, obscene language, harassment) and the potential consequences. Expulsion from the school district for a Level IV offense can be a suspension from school for an annual period of ten (10) days or the removal of the student from continuing educational services in the district for a period of not less than one (1) full school year (Orange County Public Schools, n.d.). The district developed the Code of Student Conduct "to help students, parents, and school personnel understand the guidelines for maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment" (Orange County Public Schools, n.d.).

One of the major hurdles of addressing and managing student behavior is the absence of qualified teachers. The FLDOE has identified critical teacher shortages in certifications and in various subject areas (FLDOE, n.d.). According to Section 1012.07, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the State Board of Education is required "to annually identify critical teacher shortage areas based on the recommendations of the Commissioner of Education" (FLDOE, n.d., p. 1).

The critical shortages for 2018–2019 in Florida were determined by the number of courses taught by noncertified teachers in appropriate fields during 2016–2017, the number of current and projected vacancies by certification area for 2016–2017 and the number of students completing teacher education programs in 2015–2016 (FLDOE, n.d.). The data on teachers currently in the workforce and their area of certifications provide context for critical teacher shortages (FLDOE, n.d.). So as to identify the teacher shortages for 2018–2019, the state of Florida used the following information included in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 outlines the number of courses taught by Florida teachers not certified in the appropriate field of education during the 2016–2017 school year. This information is organized by the following certification areas: English, Reading, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English as a Second Language (ESOL), General Science, and Math. During the 2016–2017 school year, the state of Florida reported that ESE had the greatest number of courses taught by teachers that were not certified in the respective field. It was reported that statewide, the certification area of General Science had the least number of uncertified teachers teaching in the field and held the fifth rank based on difference.

Table 1

Number of Courses Taught by Teachers Not Certified in the Appropriate Field, by Certification Area During 2016–2017

Number of Courses Taught by Teachers Not Certified in the Appropriate Field, by Certification Area During 2016–2017				
Certification Areas	Total Number of Courses Reported Statewide	Total Number of Courses Taught by Teachers Not Certified in Appropriate Field Reported Statewide	% of Total Courses Taught by Teachers Not Certified in Appropriate Field Reported Statewide	Rank Based on Difference
English	35,181	4,498	11.56%	1
Reading	9,610	1,753	4.50%	2
ESE	64,812	5,277	13.56%	3
ESOL	8,523	1,006	2.58%	4
Science-Gen	9,804	923	2.37%	5
Math	36,066	2,626	6.75%	6

Table 2 outlines the number of current and projected vacancies in the state of Florida by certification area during 2017–2018, as well as the ranking based on projected vacancies. This information is organized by the following certification areas: Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English, Math, Reading, General Science, and English as a Second Language (ESOL). During the 2017–2018 school year, the state of Florida reported that the certification area of ESE had the highest number of current vacancies as well as the highest number of projected vacancies

for the same timeframe (2017–2018). The state reported the certification area of ESE also showed the highest percentage of projected vacancies.

Table 2

Number of Current and Projected Vacancies by Certification Area During 2017–2018

Number of Current and Projected Vacancies by Certification Area During 2017–2018					
Certification Areas	Current Number of Vacancies for 2017–2018	Percentage of Current Vacancies for 2017–2018	Projected Number of Vacancies for 2017–2018	Percentage of Projected Vacancies for 2017–2018	Rank Based on Projected Vacancies
ESE	416	25.24%	1,208	17.78%	2
English	90	5.52%	454	6.68%	4
Math	105	6.45%	444	6.53%	5
Reading	74	4.54%	271	3.99%	6
Science-Gen	60	3.68%	269	3.96%	7
ESOL	101	6.20%	248	3.65%	9

Table 3 outlines the number of students completing teacher education programs in the state of Florida during 2015–2016. This information is organized by the following certification areas: General Science, English as a Second Language (ESOL), Math, English, Reading, and Exceptional Student Education (ESE). During the 2015–2016 school year, the state of Florida reported the certification area of ESE held the highest number and percentage of students completing teacher education programs and ranked twenty-fifth overall.

Table 3

Number of Students Completing Teacher Education Programs in 2015–2016

Number of Students Completing Teacher Education Programs in 2015–2016		
Certification Areas	Number and Percentage of Completers Reported	Rank Based on Percentage of Completers Reported
Science-General	26 - 0.59%	14
ESOL	43 - 0.98%	16
Math	165 - 3.77%	20
English	207 - 4.73%	22
Reading	214 - 4.89%	23
ESE	689 - 15.76%	25

However, despite the critical shortages for the 2018–2019 school year, there have been gains in student achievement. The state of Florida ranked 4th in the nation for the K–12 student achievement index for the 2018–2019 school year (FLDOE, 2019). According to the annual report (Education Week's Quality Counts, 2019) that compares state-by-state data and trends related to achievement levels, achievement gains, poverty gap, achieving excellence, high school graduation, and Advanced Placement, the state of Florida maintained its 4th place in the nation for student achievement from the previous school year. According to the FLDOE, Florida's students continue to succeed, as witnessed by Florida's increasing graduation rate—up to 86.1 for the class of 2018 (FLDOE, 2019).

Nevertheless, a Central Florida district spokesperson acknowledged the district experiences 3,000 to 5,000 additional students every year, prompting the need to hire more teachers (Gargotta, 2019). In Central Florida, school district websites listed dozens upon dozens

of open teacher jobs, including approximately 35 open positions in one Central Florida county (Postal, 2019). Postal (2019) added that Florida public schools needed to hire 2,217 teachers, and that the teacher shortage is steadily growing, according to the statewide teacher's union. The most alarming shortage of teachers is in elementary education, and Florida has been wrestling with these shortages for the past several years (Postal, 2019). Teacher shortages have drastically affected student support. Maintaining a focus on students who need the most support is one of the success measures the FLDOE focuses on in its school grading system (FLDOE, n.d.).

Definition of Terms

A number of terms have been used to describe and explain the connection between disruptive behavior in the classroom, teacher stress and abandonment of the profession. Moreover, the terms help to describe coping strategies teachers could employ to handle classroom management and professional burnout. The terms below have been employed to grant a better understanding of how they relate to the research study.

Attrition. Teachers leaving the profession as an approach to dealing with challenging circumstances (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009)

Certification. (Florida Educator Certification) Professional qualification for highly effective instruction in public and private schools in the state of Florida.

Classroom management. Glossary of Education Reform (2014) defines the concept as a wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class.

Coping theory. Individuals' attempt to minimize the effect of stress.

Disruptive student behavior. Behavior considered inappropriate for the setting in which it

occurs, and a major learning inhibitor (Seidman, 2005). Consistent, if not best predictor

of urban teacher stress (Abel & Sewell, 2001, as cited in Schmidt & Jones-Fosu, 2019).

Elementary student. Student(s) in grades PreK–5 attending urban Central Florida elementary

school.

Evidence-based practice. Denotes an approach to various disciplines that emphasizes the

practical application of the findings of the best available current research.

Pedagogy. The theoretical concept that highlights the method and practice of teaching.

Predictability. Established by efficient routines, procedures, or patterns in the classroom

environment that help to control student behavior and allow teachers to spend time on

more meaningful instruction.

Principal. Coordinator and leader of school (i.e., elementary) who supervises administrators,

instructional support, and classified personnel, providing knowledge of organization and

management theory and practice.

School district. Local administration of schools organized by the state of Florida for a

geographical county located in the Central part of the state.

Social identity theory. A concept that highlights a person's sense of belonging based on their

group.

Teacher. State certified instructor who provides appropriate educational atmosphere and

encourages positive student learning. Participates in a dynamic setting with other

classroom teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, and other staff members in the

development and implementation of the school's programs and goals (Orange County

Public Schools, n.d.).

Teacher burnout. Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lowered personal

accomplishment (Aloe et al., 2014).

Teacher self-efficacy. A concept that predicts both teaching practices and student learning

(Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Teacher stress. Defined as physical and psychological negative responses to events pertaining to

a teacher's job as a result of imbalance (Haydon et al., 2019).

Urban. Area (i.e., schools) with predominantly minority and low-income students in high-

poverty communities (Ouellette et al., 2018, p. 495, 497).

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to determine how disruptive student behavior contributes to

teacher stress, burnout, and turnover (i.e., attrition). Elementary schools that serve students who

are low-income, of color, and low-achieving (e.g., inner-city demographic) are constantly under

the threat of encountering disorderly conduct in their classrooms. Teachers in the inner-city

schools have the monumental task of managing the classroom, increasing productivity, and

meeting the district standards, while simultaneously attempting to control unruly behavior.

Managing disruptive classrooms is a danger to teachers' needs for self-efficacy and sense of

belonging, which strengthens the importance of this study.

Chapter 1 of this study introduced and underscored the statement of the problem, purpose

of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, assumptions, limitations, and scope of

the analysis, and the rationale and significance of the study. Chapter 2 consists of the literature

review, as the researcher attempts to establish a deeper analysis of the research problem and

identify any gaps in previous studies. Additional chapters explore the methodology (Chapter 3),

results (Chapter 4) and conclusions (Chapter 5), which will include a summary of the research

findings, recommendations for action and for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior studies show that disruptive behavior in the public school classroom is a worldwide

dilemma that public educators are finding difficult to manage. This has been a source of concern

for many years (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). One of the most complex and expanding

phenomena of elementary education is the minimization of the effect of classroom management

caused by unruly conduct. Studies show that teachers are spending more time on behavior

management issues rather than on direct classroom instruction (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008).

Disruptive behaviors change the classroom dynamic, shifting instructor attention to distractions

and away from academic-oriented tasks (Parsonson, 2012).

Objective of the Literature

Chapter 2 situates this research study in the context of previous research and scholarly

material pertaining to teacher stress, teachers' needs, and coping strategies. It presents a

synthesis of empirical literature according to relevant themes and variables and justifies how this

research study has addressed a gap in the literature and outlines the conceptual framework of the

study. The literature in this study explored the link between unruly conduct of elementary

students, and the psychological well-being of teachers through the use of Maslow's hierarchy of

needs, the social identity theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), and Lazarus and

Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping.

Research has suggested that disruptive student behavior is the source of the highest levels

of stress among teachers and is a significant threat to the proper management of the classroom

and teacher self-efficacy (Dicke et al., 2014). Teachers consistently name disruptive student

behavior and disciplinary problems as major job stressors of the profession (Aldrup, Klusmann,

Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2018). Ryan and Deci (2001) argued that the absence of stressors and the presence of positive aspects builds teachers' psychological well-being and the confident feeling of self-efficacy (p. 142, 156). However, Dicke et al. (2014) noted there is still some disagreement on the causal relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and the stress of the job, particularly when trying to determine how the process of student disruptive behavior influences teacher stress (p. 570).

Evidence-Based Practices in Classroom Management

Classroom management involves a set of skills and techniques teachers use to control student behavior and the classroom environment, and also to produce effective academic achievements (Gaias, Lindstrom Johnson, Bottiani, Debnam, & Bradshaw, 2019). According to Evertson and Weinstein (2006), classroom management is defined as a comprehensive construct involving actions that teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates academic learning and social emotional learning (as cited in Ficarra & Quinn, 2014). "The ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behavior of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes" (Oliver & Reschly, 2007, p. 1). Techniques must be responsible and reflect best practice and theory (Ficarra & Quinn, 2014). Teachers who mindfully engage in evidence-based practices provide the tools needed to reduce and prevent disruptive classroom behaviors (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, & Wehby, 2009; 2010).

An Australian-based study conducted by Hepburn and Beamish (2019) revealed a repressing outcome concerning classroom management and the implementation of evidence-based systems that would be used to counteract disruptive behavior. In their systematic literature review to identify current knowledge in this area, Hepburn and Beamish (2019) found that "teachers underuse many evidence-based practices, but may over-report frequency of use"

(p. 82). The research determined there is a lack of teacher implementation of evidence-based practices for classroom management (Hepburn & Beamish, 2019).

However, classroom management is a critical skill. Teachers should be trained and supported in executing successful classroom management practices that are backed up by evidence (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008, p. 351). Educators who were identified in a study conducted by Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008) and who understood educational policy, law, and research, established and maintained a standard of pinpointing scientifically validated and evidence-based practices. The same standard has gained popularity in the past several years. Simonsen et al. (2008) searched literature and identified five categories of evidence-based practices in classroom management. The categories were: "
(a) physical arrangement of the classroom, (b) structure of the classroom environment,
(c) instructional management, (d) procedures designed to increase appropriate behavior, and
(e) procedures designed to decrease inappropriate behavior" (Simonsen et al., 2008, p. 352).

One of the leading authorities on classroom management and the responsive classroom is Harry K. Wong who has more than four decades of experience in classroom teaching. Wong (n.d.) stated that classroom management includes fostering student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities in an environment where teachers have organized space, time, and materials to produce successful learning. Wong (n.d.) also noted the number one problem in the classroom is a lack of procedures and routines, and not discipline. Procedures and routines facilitate classroom management and create an environment of fewer interruptions and advanced learning (Wong, n.d.).

Kerr and Nelson (2006) stated that most organizations agree that evidence-based practices for classroom management meet specific criteria. The criteria are: "(a) the use of a

sound experimental or evaluation design and appropriate analytical procedures, (b) empirical validation of effects, (c) clear implementation procedures, (d) replication of outcomes across implementation sites, and (e) evidence of sustainability" (Kerr & Nelson, p. 89, as cited in Simonsen et al., 2008, p. 352). Literature collected by Simonsen et al. (2008) described the results of evidence-based classroom management practices that are sufficient to be considered for classroom adoption (p. 351).

Structure and Predictability

The researcher was able to identify 20 evidence-based general practices in the literature. These practices were grouped into five categories (Simonsen et al., 2008). Simonsen et al. (2008) searched empirical literature for each topic and found that these categories met the evidence-based criteria identified by Kerr and Nelson (2006), and that they also connected to effective classroom management practices.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will highlight practices found in three of these categories. The researcher selected these practices because they were most directly associated with student behavior. The first method Simonsen et al. (2008) noted was the maximization of structure and predictability. In Simonsen's (2008) study, this practice focused on high classroom structure and the physical arrangement of the classroom.

Simonsen's (2008) study focused exclusively on evidence-based practices in classroom management and on considerations for research to practice. Simonsen et al. (2008) learned that classrooms with more structure have proved to increase positive academic and social behaviors. In researching studies conducted by Morrison (1979), Huston-Stein, Friedrich-Cofer, and Susman (1977) and Susman, Huston-Stein, and Friedrich-Cofer (1980), Simonsen et al. (2008) found that students in high structured classrooms (i.e., lower student activity/higher teacher

control) had greater task engagement, friendlier peer interactions, more helpful and attentive behaviors, and less aggression.

Huston-Stein et al. (1977) conducted research of 13 urban Head Start classes containing 141 children with ages ranging between 2 and 4. The purpose of the research was to explore the relation of structure to social and self-regulating behavior of preschool children. The researchers learned that in the evidence-based practice of high structure classrooms (i.e., teacher-directed activity), children engaged in less disruptive behavior than those in low structure classes (Huston-Stein, Friedrich-Cofer, and Susman, 1977, p. 908). Results found in the literature yielded similar results to the more recent study conducted by Simonsen et al. (2008). Although Simonsen et al. (2008) suggested that the need for additional research exists, the study addressed the gaps in the literature and recommended that researchers make follow up steps to update, validate, and expand upon past research (p. 369).

In a more recent study, Zaheer et al. (2019) added to the body of literature and found that creating structure and predictability also involved the physical environment of the classroom (e.g., walls, visual dividers, etc.). Zaheer et al. (2019) contributed to the literature by discussing the classroom's physical structure (i.e., set-up). Predictability is the means by which teachers can establish trust with students who may experience potential change (Rutgers Center for Effective School Practices, n.d.). The predictable classroom is an environment where students can confidently predict classroom structure and teacher behavior, which results in positive adjustments to their own behavior (Rutgers Center for Effective School Practices, n.d.).

Research on the physical layout indicated that when teachers organized their classrooms in a manner that matched their instruction (e.g., whole-class lecture, cooperative peer groups), there was a positive impact on student behavior (Webber & Scheuermann, 2008, as cited in

Zaheer et al., 2019). Results from this study showed that organized classrooms decreased disruptions, facilitated smooth instructional routines and transitions and maintained safety (Zaheer et al., 2019, p. 119). In contrast, the research suggested that disorganized and cluttered classrooms could possibly lead to behavioral problems (McGill, Teer, Rye, & Hughes, 2003, as cited in Zaheer et al., 2019). The Danielson evaluation framework, originally developed by Charlotte Danielson in 1996, and used as a mainstream framework to evaluate teachers, noted that establishing a classroom of rapport and respect is establishing a classroom environment where the teacher and students can interact with each other respectfully and where everyone can succeed (Danielson, 2013).

MacSuga-Gage, Simonsen, and Briere (2012) conducted a study that found that routines established by teachers were another means of creating structure and predictability in the classroom setting. The findings of MacSuga-Gage et al. (2012) also connected to Zaheer's et al. (2019) study. MacSuga-Gage et al. (2012) confirmed the findings in Zaheer's et al. (2019) study, indicating that teachers could establish routines and procedures to help students understand what to do in the classroom, increase student predictability and allow for more time to be spent on instruction (as cited in Zaheer et al., 2019, p. 118).

Actively Engaging Students in Observable Ways

Classroom management practices have a direct impact on the probability of success for students (Gage, Scott, Hirn, & MacSuga-Gage, 2018). Another evidence-based practice Simonsen (2008) found was the active engagement of students in observable ways, which included students' opportunities to respond (OTRs). Simonsen et al. (2008) argued that the classroom management practice of active student engagement increases the academic success of students by helping to decrease incompatible behaviors (e.g., talking out, out of seat, off task).

Greenwood, Horton, and Utley (2002) stated "Engagement is a general term that refers to how a student participates during classroom instruction" (as cited in Simonsen et al., 2018, p. 359), "and is comprised of passive (e.g., listening to a teacher) and active (e.g., writing, answering a question) behaviors" (Simonsen et al., 2008, p. 359).

Gage, Scott, Hirn, & MacSuga-Gage (2018) conducted an evidence-based classroom management study that focused on active instruction and supervision of students (i.e., teaching), opportunities for students to respond (OTR), and feedback to students (p. 302). The study examined the relationship between teachers' implementation of these evidence-based classroom management practices and student behavior in elementary school (Gage et al., 2018). The researchers employed the study's practices while observing classroom instruction. The participant sample was 1,242 teacher-student dyads from 65 elementary school districts in a southeastern state (Gage et al., 2018, p. 304).

Results of the study were similar to those found in Simonsen et al. (2008), in that the evidence-based practices had a positive effect on both student behavior and academic achievement. The results of the analysis suggested these practices in classroom management were directly related to student engagement (Gage et al., 2018). However, Gage et al. (2018) noted that the degree to which specific teacher classroom management practices impacted student success is still not clear and that further research should be conducted.

In another similar study, Simonsen (2015) narrowed the focus of the evidence-based practice of engaging students to teacher-directed opportunities to respond (TD-OTR). Simonsen learned that one effective instructional practice that had growing empirical support and also supported classroom management was students receiving *frequent* and *various* OTR (Lewis et al., 2004; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001, as cited in Simonsen, 2015). According to Simonsen

(2015), research confirms that increasing TD-OTR has favorable impacts on student outcomes. The results of Simonsen's (2015) study were consistent with previous reviews, confirming that behavioral and academic student outcomes were positive and classroom management was enhanced when class-wide TD-OTRs were increased.

Evidence-Based Practices to Support and Respond to Student Behavior

The study of evidence-based practices to respond to student conduct is a study that has undergone investigation. Disruptive behavior, which also includes aggression and defiance (Waschbusch, Breaux, & Babinski, 2019), has been defined as any behavior demonstrated by students that interrupts the flow of instruction or is disruptive to the on-task behavior of other students (Haydon et al., 2010, p. 31). These behaviors have presented considerable burden to schools (Waschbusch et al., 2019, p. 92). Therefore, decreasing students' disruptive and off-task behaviors in the classroom is an evidence-based practice that has become a research priority (Haydon et al., 2010).

One evidence-based practice used to address student behavior is coaching interventions. Hafen, Ruzek, Gregory, Allen, and Mikami (2015) conducted an evidence-based study of 1,195 secondary school students (570 male and 625 female) out of five schools in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, in which they were primarily from high school (89%), with the remaining students (11%) in middle school. The study consisted of coaching interventions that focused on teacher-student interactions that eliminate the negative impact of students' disruptive behavior on teacher perceptions (*MyTeachingPartner-Secondary* or MTPS-S).

Results of the intervention MTPS-S indicated that students who had more reported behavior problems in the Fall of the academic year were projected by teachers to have lower future educational attainment in the Spring of the academic year (Hafen, Ruzek, Gregory, Allen,

and Mikami, 2015, p. 426). Hafen et al. (2015) noted that students who exhibited problem behaviors in the beginning of the school year often evoked negative perceptions and expectations from teachers that they may struggle to change (p. 426). However, teachers who participated in the intervention projected better educational attainment for their students than those teachers who were in a business-as-usual control condition (Hafen et al., 2015, p. 426).

In addition, Waschbusch, Breaux, and Babinski (2019) conducted a study that examined school-based interventions for defiant and aggressive behaviors in students. The authors learned that the school interventions were often implemented at three levels. The three interventions were: *universal* interventions (also called Tier 1 interventions), which applied to all students; *targeted* interventions (Tier 2 interventions), which applied to a subset of students who did not adequately respond to Tier 1 interventions, and *indicated* interventions (Tier 3 interventions), which involved specialized and intensive interventions for students who did not respond to the first two tier interventions (Waschbusch et al., 2019, p. 93). The results of the study suggested that school-based interventions produced small positive effects on aggression and defiance (Waschbusch et al., 2019).

Classroom Strategies Assessment

Classroom strategies assessment is a system that was used by researchers Lekwa, Reddy, and Shernoff (2019) to show evidence for the validity of an assessment of teacher practices for student behavior in the classroom (p. 109). They conducted their study using a sample of 107 teachers and 2,000 students in 11 urban elementary schools that served a population in a severely impoverished community (Lekwa, Reddy, & Shernoff, 2019). Lekwa et al. (2019) noted that student achievement (e.g., student learning) is a combination of interrelated elements in the

learning environment. The elements of the classroom (e.g., learning environment) included curriculum, teacher practices and student behavior (Lekwa et al., 2019).

Lekwa et al. (2019) approached the study using the Classroom Strategies Assessment System-Observer form (CSAS-O; Reddy & Dudek, 2014, as cited in Lekwa et al., 2019) with student academic engagement as measured by the Cooperative Learning Observational Code for Kids (CLOCK; Volpe & DiPerna, 2010, as cited in Lekwa et al., 2019). CSAS-O is an observational assessment of teachers' use of specific instructional and behavior management strategies drawn from models of effective teaching (Lekwa et al., 2019, 111). CLOCK is a student academic engagement measure.

The analyses examined whether CSAS instructional and behavior management scores predicted classwide academic engagement (Lekwa et al., 2019, p. 109). The research study conducted by Lekwa et al. (2019) determined that there was a small correlation between the CSAS-O instructional and behavioral management strategy and student academic engagement (and less problematic behavior), but the research analyses found that kindergartners were more likely to exhibit academic engagement and positive behaviors. Likewise, similar findings in another study using similar strategies to CSAS-O and CLOCK were later reported for third graders, who also found greater student academic engagement in classrooms where teachers used a high quality of teaching strategies (Downer, Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 2007).

According to Lekwa et al. (2019), student behavioral functioning is associated with academic achievement. The results of Lekwa's et al. (2019) research study revealed that a high use of instructional and behavioral management strategies has a positive effect on student academic engagement and good behavior. On the other hand, the results from Lekwa's et al. (2019) research study also suggested the low-quality use of behavior management strategies by

teachers results in limited use of effective instructional strategies, which subsequently limits students' academic engagement (p. 116).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow first proposed his hierarchy theory in 1943, classifying basic needs into five categories: physiological, safety and security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Lester, 2013, p. 15). Maslow's hypothesis stated that basic human needs appeared in sequential order, with lower needs (i.e. bottom of the pyramid) being more powerful than higher needs (Lester, 2013). When explaining the framework of Maslow's theory, Boogren (2018) stated that Maslow chose the pyramid shape because each level is generally unavailable until the level below it is first satisfied (p. 16). When individuals' basic needs are satisfied, they experience psychological health (Lester, 2013, p. 15).

Disruptive student behavior in the elementary school classroom presents significant challenges to the basic needs and self-efficacy of teachers (Jackson, 2015). Recognized as a serious work-related stressor, disruptive behavior can cause teachers to feel inadequate at their professions, resulting in serious anxiety responses (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Long-term stress often leads to burnout and ultimate abandonment of the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). It has been well researched that retention of teachers in public schools in America is a prolonged crisis (Fisher & Royster, 2016, p. 993). Fisher and Royster (2016) conducted a study on stress and on the retention of mathematics teachers, employing a hierarchy of needs similar to Maslow's theory, which could be used to better support teachers (p. 993). The authors conducted the research to uncover measures teachers could use to find more support while being less stressed in their jobs (Fisher & Royster, 2016, p. 1004).

Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, and Bergen (2012) conducted an empirical study of Maslow's theory to discover the relationship among deficiency needs and growth needs. The authors' research focused on understanding the "deficiency needs" of children, in order to establish conditions that would maximize their academic growth (Noltemeyer, Bush, Patton, & Bergen, 2012, p. 1862). Noltemeyer et al. (2012) reported vast bodies of literature confirmed a relationship between the unmet needs of children and detrimental academic outcomes, suggesting their motivation to achieve academic excellence grows when their "deficiency needs" are satisfied (p. 1862). In agreement with Noltemeyer et al. (2012), Fisher and Royster (2016) suggested a better understanding of teachers' needs would help to establish a better support system for them, which would help to minimize their stress.

According to Shaughnessy, Moffitt, and Cordova (2018), Maslow's theory contended that *all* human beings have certain basic essentials that need to be met in order for them to survive. The study attempted to show that Maslow's ideas have relevance in today's world (Shaughnessy, Moffitt, & Cordova, 2018, p. 6). The authors' study focused on basic needs as they relate to training issues for the contemporary teacher. Shaughnessy et al. (2018) argued that the contemporary student brings an entirely different set of circumstances to the classroom than students did in previous years (p. 2). Shaughnessy et al. (2018) also stated that greater life stressors have an impact on students' levels within Maslow's hierarchy, which produces a greater challenge for teachers to meet their students' most basic needs.

Physiological Needs

The first tier of Maslow's pyramid included basic physiological needs: water, food, exercise, rest, and shelter (Boogren, 2018, p. 29). According to Maslow's theory, people will have difficulty functioning properly when these basic needs are not met (Boogren, 2018).

Research on teacher anxiety showed that stress manifested in teachers and had a significant impact on teachers' health (Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, & Spencer, 2011). For example, Haydon, Stevens, and Leko (2018) reported chronic stress is closely associated with exhaustion and negatively changes a person's biology (p. 99). Maslow stated one of the basic physiological needs is rest. Boogren (2018) appears to concur with Maslow and Haydon et al. (2018) in stating a lack of sleep (i.e., exhaustion) negatively impacts individuals, leading to heart and other health problems, depression, forgetfulness, and weight gain (p. 29). Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, and Spencer (2011) noted that urban teachers who took part in their study reported that occupational stress impacted their physical health, possibly due to their overwhelming desire to meet the physiological needs of their students over the more complex need of self-actualization and feelings of accomplishment (p. 66).

Safety and Security

The second tier of Maslow's pyramid included safety and security needs. Safety and security are defined as freedom from "risk of injury, danger, or loss" (Boogren, 2018, p. 43). Boogren (2018) referred to safety as that which reduces the potential for physical or emotional harm (p. 43). It has been shown that disruptive student behavior (i.e., stressor) can be a cryptic form of student bullying of teachers (SBT), a phenomenon that was examined by Finland researchers in the late 1990s (Garrett, 2018).

Garrett's (2018) research sought to highlight the phenomenon of SBT and to build an understanding of its nature. The study revealed that persistent disruptive behavior had been recognized as a form of indirect SBT (Debarbieux, 2003, as cited in Garrett, 2018, p. 19), which produced teacher stress and threatened teacher self-efficacy. Ozkilic's (2014) analysis revealed that teacher self-efficacy correlated with classroom behaviors, and the majority of teachers who

participated in the study and were bullied by their students, achieved moderate to low scores on a teacher self-efficacy scale (p. 260). Teachers whose safety and security needs were met (i.e., non-bullied) scored much higher (Ozkilic, 2014).

Belongingness and Love Needs

The third tier of Maslow's pyramid included the psychological needs of belongingness and love. A sense of belonging has been described as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment" (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992, p. 173). Feille, Nettles, and Weinburgh (2018) defined *belonging* as having a valuable place within a community that involves a shared and satisfying emotional connection (p. 39). In line with Maslow's third tier, Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns (2013) argued that administrators who fail to offer emotional support to teachers who undergo stress and burnout due to behavioral issues amplify the attrition problem. Teachers leave the profession for not having a sense of belonging. Emotional support from administrators demonstrates to teachers that they are appreciated, respected, trusted professionals and worthy of concern (House, 1981, as cited in Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013, p. 73).

Esteem Needs

The fourth tier on Maslow's pyramid included the psychological need of esteem. On this fourth rung, Maslow explained that everyone has a need to maintain self-esteem and a need to gain the esteem of others (Boogren, 2018). Price and Weatherby (2018) verified that retaining good teachers once they enter the profession has become a severe problem in the educational systems of the United States and around the world. Their study suggested part of the crisis was the perception of the global teaching profession itself (Price & Weatherby, 2018, p. 113). The

level of esteem ascribed to teaching was not enough to make teachers feel valued. The authors concluded that teachers feel valued when they experience job satisfaction, have better working conditions, are involved in school decision-making, and are recognized and accommodated for good work (Price & Weatherby, 2018).

Self-Actualization

Teacher stress was defined as an unpleasant emotional experience (e.g., moment) associated with environments that triggered feelings of anger, frustration, and tension, which resulted in job dissatisfaction (Ouellette et al., 2018). Self-actualization, the fifth tier on Maslow's pyramid of needs, demonstrated the opposite. It expressed teachers' capacity to experience satisfaction, the feeling of accomplishment or the realization of their fullest potential (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith, & Huang, 2019). Maslow's idea of the *peak experience* was the distinctive feature found in Boogren's (2018) research. The peak experience referred to the moment in life where everything was perfect and everything fell into place (Boogren, 2018, p. 87). Self-actualizing individuals had a clear perception of reality, full acceptance of themselves and those around them, and immense gratitude for the moment (Boogren, 2018, p. 89).

A study conducted by Arslan (2017) seemed to support Boogren's (2018) rationale. Arslan (2017) stated that the greatest predictor of teachers' self-actualization was the need for them to be having fun as educators. Arslan (2017) employed correlational research comparing two self-actualization scales. The study concluded by identifying the "fun need" as the most effective factor (p. 1045).

Social Identity Theory

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the ideas of "belongingness" and "esteem" correspond to a psychological theory introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979). According to Abrams and Hogg (1990), Tajfel and Turner (1992) developed the theory of *social identity* which highlighted the need for self-definition or social structure. The authors (Abrams & Hogg, 1990) conducted a study on the particular research tradition of what they named the social identity approach. The social identity theory underscored the relationship between the individual and a particular social group with some emotional and value significance in being a part of that particular group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Therefore, social identity theorists contend that individuals who are part of a group lose a sense of individuality as they accompany the emergence of the group identity (Huddy, 2001).

Abrams and Hogg's (1990) perspective differed from that of Boogren (2018). In working with beginning teachers, Boogren (2018) learned that teachers' sense of belonging to the school community is what made teachers more likely to keep teaching (p. 55). In citing Brene Brown (n.d.), Boogren (2018) highlighted the concept that belonging did not mean *fitting in* (p. 56). According to Boogren (2018), individuality was necessary to social identity because belonging to a particular group provided the means of an individual's ability to truly shine (p. 59). Price and Weatherby (2018) concurred by stating teachers feel valued when they have a legitimate and significant role within the school community.

Self-Categorization

According to another study, the social identity approach involves the closely related theory of self-categorization (van Dick et al., 2019). Self-categorization theory (SCT) is a philosophy that also emphasizes the sense of self-worth that derives from individual membership

in particular social groups (van Dick et al., 2019). When citing Turner (1991), van Dick, Crawshaw, Karpf, Schuh, and Zhang (2019) argued that social identity is the grounds of *social influence,* which states that people are motivated to conform their behavior to the activities of an organization when they perceive themselves to be a vital member of the group. Van Dick et al. (2019) stated that identification with the group (i.e., organization) fulfilled the sense of belongingness as described by Maslow (1943, 1954). The argument proposed by van Dick et al. (2019) seems to align with the rationale of Boogren (2018).

However, in Hornsey's (2008) study, his findings suggested that one of the cornerstones of the self-categorization theory was depersonalization (p. 208), which seemed to conflict with the argument proposed by Boogren (2018) and van Dick et al. (2019). Hornsey (2008) stated that proponents of SCT have argued that people consider themselves less than individuals and more of interchangeable models when representing their social groups (p. 208). A study conducted by Hogg and Reid (2006) seemed to underscore Hornsey's (2008) case concerning depersonalization. In their study, the authors contended that the group dynamic submerges uniqueness of individuals, and that the norms of the *group* reveal they are "context-dependent prototypes that capture the distinctive properties of the group" (Hogg & Reid, 2006, p. 7)

Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping

Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory of stress and coping (1984) has been instrumental in influencing decades of research on stress and coping (Biggs et al., 2017). The transactional model focuses on external stressors and their potential effects on psychological well-being (Spilt, Helma, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011, p. 458). Biggs et al. (2017) noted the stress experience could be categorized in four different ways: an external stimulant, a response, an individual/environmental interaction, and an individual/environmental transaction (p. 351). The

key concept of the transactional theory is the appraisal of stimuli, which generates emotions and results in potential stress (Biggs et al., 2017). Moreover, Biggs et al. (2017) noted that two primary features underscore the original Lazarus and Folkman's theory: *cognitive appraisal* and *coping*.

Cognitive Appraisal

Research has shown that cognitive appraisal has played a crucial function in ascertaining the impact of stress response (Alhurani et al., 2018, p. 206). Consistent appraisal of external stimuli, whether it is from the environment or from individuals, is the overall push of Lazarus and Folkman's theory (Biggs et al., 2017). Recognizing and defining external stimuli shapes the entire theory of cognitive appraisal. In line with the theory, Smith and Ellsworth (1985) claimed the "experience of emotion" closely associates with the appraisal of environments, and that by exploring further studies of the dimensions of cognitive appraisal, researchers will better understand the nature of emotional response (p. 817). For this study, Lazarus and Folkman's model is highly beneficial to understanding the teacher-student behavior in the classroom (Spilt et al., 2011)

Biggs et al. (2017) confirmed that Lazarus and Folkman (1984) "described two core forms of cognitive appraisal: *primary* appraisal and *secondary* appraisal" (p. 352). Primary appraisal evaluates meaning based on an environmental/individual transaction and determines how the transaction affects well-being (Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, as cited in Biggs et al., 2017). Primary appraisal judges whether an encounter is immaterial, positive, or stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 53, as cited in Miller & McCool, 2003). For example, it has been shown that unruly student behavior (i.e., individual stimuli) disrupts classroom management (i.e., environmental stimuli) and produces high levels of stress for teachers

(Ouellette et al., 2018). Primary appraisal attempts to assess the significance of the transaction and determines whether or not the disruptive behavior of students is a significant stressor that affects teachers' well-being (Biggs et al., 2017).

Coping

Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen (1986) defined coping as a constant changing of cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage "stressful encounters" that are appraised as taxing (p. 993). In the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) transactional stress model, *coping* was found to be closely associated with secondary appraisals. Secondary appraisals involve the evaluation of a person's ability to cope with stressors (Gomes, Faria, & Gonçalves, 2013, p. 352). Miller and McCool (2003) conducted a study on coping with stress in outdoor recreational settings, while employing the transactional stress theory. Their study focused on the relationship between reported levels of stress and the coping strategies found in their particular setting (Glacier National Park). The authors noted that secondary appraisals related to coping behaviors and they contained "a judgment concerning what might and can be done" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 53, as cited in Miller & McCool, 2003).

In line with Folkman et al. (1986), Dewe and Cooper's (2007) study stated that secondary appraisal determines how potential stressors are managed (as cited in Biggs et al., 2017). Gomes, Faria, and Goncalves (2013) seemed to confirm Dewe and Cooper's argument by stating secondary appraisals involve coping potential and heavily lean on an individual's feeling of being able to cope with stressors (p. 352). Teachers who are confronted with disruptive student behavior sometimes respond negatively to the coping aspect of the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model. In some cases, teachers have managed their stress and lack of self-efficacy by leaving the profession altogether (Dicke et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Several arguments emerged from the literature on disruptive behavior, classroom management, and teacher stress. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that teachers appraise their disruptive classroom environment (e.g., primary appraisal) and then employ a coping mechanism (e.g., secondary appraisal) to deal with the results of the stress. The Tajfel and Turner (1979) theory of social identity argued that teachers be "self-defined" in a social structure. Maslow's theory of needs contended that all human beings have basic needs that must be met in order for them to survive and to thrive.

This literature review demonstrated the importance of educators finding appropriate responses (i.e., coping) to the disruptive behavior that negatively affects the learning environment of elementary school students and the well-being of those who would instruct them. I would recommend that researchers continue to conduct extensive research into this area of study. Many of the studies found in research were conducted near the ten year mark. More recent studies are needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Survey data from a recent study suggests teachers, school administrators, and districts agree that disruptive student behavior creates significant problems in the classroom and obstructs teachers' ability to perform their jobs and students' ability to progress academically (Figlio, 2007, p. 377). Consequently, disruptive student behavior produces job-related stress for teachers who must contend with resistance and disorder in the classroom (Haydon et al., 2019). Biggs et al. (2017) argued that teacher burnout minimizes the effectiveness of coping strategies and stands as the most common reason teachers leave the profession (Bressman, Winter, & Efron, 2018, p. 164). The purpose of this study was to determine how challenges to classroom management in inner-city elementary schools contribute to teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. Distinctively, the study focused on unruly student behavior as a central factor that leads to unsuccessful classroom management. Researchers have identified negative teacher-student engagement, caused by challenging student behavior, as one of the topmost stressors that diminishes teachers' self-efficacy and creates teacher stress and burnout (Haydon et al., 2019).

The focus of this chapter is the evidence-based research design that was used for the study. The chapter will cover the proposed methodology, the setting, participants, data, analysis, participant rights, and potential limitations. The prevailing question that directed the research is: What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout? The research was grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the Tajfel and Turner (1979) theory of social identity and the psychological stress and coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

The research method for this study was the phenomenological design. According to

Creswell and Poth (2018), the phenomenological study "describes the common meaning of

experiences of a phenomenon (or topic or concept) for several individuals" (p. 314). The design

was used to analyze and record the individual and professional experiences of elementary school

teachers who have previously worked or presently work in one low performing public school in

the Central Florida area. The researcher analyzed teachers' perceptions of how disruptive student

behaviors contributed to their emotional well-being or psychological needs. The study looked for

ways in which the teachers perceived that teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher

stress and burnout. This study used the phenomenological approach to analyze teachers'

professional experiences, guided by the concepts (i.e., framework) of Maslow's hierarchy of

needs, social identity theory, and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological theory of stress

and coping. These frameworks addressed and underscored the psychological needs of teachers

who experience disruptive classroom environments.

Maslow's theory is a concept of human needs, beginning with the most basic and ending

with the highest need of self–actualization (Burger, 2011; Yoshihara, 2018). The social identity

theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is a concept that focuses on an individual's sense of identity

being shaped by a group. Biggs et al. (2017) found that the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) theory

enables individuals to draw meaning from their environment by appraising stimuli within their

environment, and when threatening or challenging behavior occurs, the ensuing stress prompts

them to employ coping strategies (p. 351–352). In examining teachers' lived experiences, this

study aimed to distinguish and to explore the fundamental nature of each participant's life

(i.e., career) inside disruptive classroom environments, laying aside the researcher's prevailing

understanding of the phenomenon in exploring the authentic experiences of the participants (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018, p. 35).

Setting

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that accessing a site is one of the key steps in the research process (p. 148). Selecting a site and establishing rapport with participants provides the means for collecting good data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The setting for this study was one urban PreK–5 elementary school. This site was chosen as it is one of the lowest performing urban schools in the state of Florida for the 2017–2018 school year (Florida Department of Education, n.d.). The Florida Department of Education classified the school as low-performing by employing a wide range of assessments to measure students' performance on specific standards (Florida Department of Education, n.d.). The data determined how the school scored. The campus is located in the inner-city and in the greater Central Florida area. Ouellette et al. (2018) found that teachers in urban schools reported high levels of stress and low levels of satisfaction, as well as high levels of disruptive behavior and challenges to classroom management (p. 497). These findings corresponded with the problem being studied (i.e., classroom behavior and teacher stress) and with the proposed research questions, validating the rationale for conducting research at this site.

Being associated with the site of choice, the researcher's access presented an ethical concern. The researcher had access to district personnel, administrators, principals, and elementary teachers in the county. It is understood that a study at one's own organization presents risk to the researcher, the participants, and the site (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 153). It raises questions about the validity of the data collected. To protect against these concerns, the researcher sought express permission to conduct the study using interview methods according to

strict and proper district protocols. The researcher also employed validation strategies proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018) to ensure accurate collection and reporting of the data. In addition, the researcher also employed an epoche or bracketing approach to mitigate any potential preconceived notions. The researcher discusses bracketing in greater detail in the data analysis and limitations sections of chapter 3.

Participants

Creswell and Poth (2018) argued that building rapport with potential participants is crucial to collecting good data (p. 148). One of the most critical tasks in the design phase of a research study is to identify appropriate participants (Sargeant, 2012). The participants the researcher recruited for this study were elementary teachers who presently teach at a low performing school where the study took place. Participants will have "experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 153).

The researcher recruited teachers with various years of experience to be selected for the study. Literature has supported exploring diverse stages of experience in the teachers' profession. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) conducted a meta-analysis that included 65 studies on diverse causes of stress for teachers who had a variety of years teaching experience. Years of teaching experience, however, were not used as a qualifying criterion for participation in this study, and the years of experience was collected in the basic demographics section of the interview. The research found a correlation between external stressors (i.e., disruptive student behavior) and negative teacher responses (Harmsen, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, & van Veen, 2018; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005).

Potential participants were initially identified through purposeful samples (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and they were selected based on their experience and their personal knowledge of the topic (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014, p. 473). The type of sample was the *criterion* sample, which seeks cases that meet a certain criterion and is useful for quality assurance (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). Participants for this study were specifically identified. Participants who were presently employed at the site held a valid Florida elementary-level teaching certification. Paraprofessionals, administrators, and noninstructional (i.e., teaching) staff were excluded from this study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research has a specific and extensively detailed focus (p. 158). The sample size was six well-selected homogeneous participants, who produced highly relevant data and who avoided generalization, while focusing on particulars and specifics (Cleary et al., 2014, p. 473; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The investigator recruited potential participants from the research site. Initial contact for onsite participants was a face-to-face meeting with the campus principal, requesting cooperation in identifying teachers who met the criteria. The researcher provided the principal with a recruitment letter (Appendix A), which requested potential participants to either call or email the researcher at the university email address if interested in the study.

After the initial attempt to recruit participants who had not yet responded, the researcher left a recruitment window open for three weeks. In an effort to secure their enrollment for the study, the researcher followed up once every week. The researcher sent out follow-up reminders to the on-site participants and also followed up with the campus principal. The investigator was in contact with the principal by face-to-face meetings.

Once interested participants were identified, the researcher invited them to participate in the study. The investigator first contacted participants directly by their preferred method of

contact (i.e., phone, email, or face-to-face meeting), taking extreme care to ensure participants did not feel pressured into participating in the study. The researcher also explained to participants that an informed consent form detailing the process would be sent to them if they chose to participate. Once approved by IRB, the informed consent letter appeared in Appendix B. If participants responded with the desire to proceed further, the researcher later mailed them an informed consent form (letter), which specified the reason for recruitment (research), the conditions for research (student disruptive behavior and teacher stress), procedures, foreseeable risks, benefits, and confidentiality. The letters were sent by email as an electronic attachment. Emails were marked as confidential in the subject line, and a confidentiality statement was placed in the signature line of the email. In the letter, the researcher detailed the purpose of the study and the procedures that were to be used to collect the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, the participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Informed consent letter(s), interview protocols, and all information pertaining to pending participant recruitment were organized in a single document and attached to the IRB application for UNE approval. Once the texts were approved by IRB, the researcher took the next step and contacted the site where the study would take place.

Data Collection

Qualitative study has a variety of data collection methods, the most common being interviews and focus groups (Chadwick, Gill, Stewart, & Treasure, 2008). Although researchers customarily employ one data collection method, it has become more common to use a variety, offering participants a design of their choosing (Heath, Williamson, Williams, & Harcourt, 2018, p. 30). Heath, Williamson, Williams, & Harcourt (2018) found that, depending on information

that will be disclosed, methods of collecting data can be important to participants, and not providing participants with a method of their choice can greatly impact the study. The researcher of this study offered participants the option of telephone interviews, in-depth face-to-face interviews, and Zoom or Skype.

Through multiple rounds of exploration, individual and collective interview data were collected, reviewed, and interpreted from approximately January to March. All participants opted to conduct interviews face-to-face. Per recommendation of Creswell and Poth (2018), one-on-one interviews were conducted in a secure room on the campus site away from school personnel, which included nonparticipant instructors, paraprofessionals, and students. The secure room was a classroom on the campus site, which was a windowless, locked room in the rear of the computer lab separated by an unoccupied hallway.

The researcher conducted interviews based on interview protocol (Appendix C), bounded by open-ended questions that invited the interviewee to open up about experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). With specific consent from the participants concerning the methods of data collection, the researcher collected and recorded the data using the voice recorder app of the Android phone, which was password protected, and the TENSAFEE 32GB Dictaphone Sound Activated Recorder (digital voice recorder) with USB connection. Interviews from the Android and digital voice recorder were transferred and encrypted to a secure terabyte jump drive.

The researcher has worked closely with elementary level school teachers and had prior interactions with selected participants, but sought to conduct the study void of preconceptions of and judgments about participants. The researcher employed the method of bracketing and meticulously set aside personal experiences while conducting the study. The researcher

conducted the study under the federal guidelines of Human Subject Research (45 CFR 46), following the mandate to protect the privacy of participants. Confidentiality of any personally identifiable information was maintained by the use of pseudonyms and all data collected were stored and encrypted on a secure terabyte jump drive.

During the study, the investigator maintained all documentation (interview notes) and locked them in a secure filing cabinet with a combination lock. The secure terabyte jump drive was also stored in the same secure cabinet. All documented participant information was also locked in the cabinet. To further secure documentation, the file cabinet was locked in a closet secured by a second lock. Documents stored on the hard drive of the researcher's laptop computer were password protected using a combination of numbers, letters and special characters.

This interview method aligned the research efforts with Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendations of multiple strategies of validation, making certain the research was accurate and insightful (p. 154). Studies confirm the use of methodological triangulation to collect data in different ways and from different sources "to obtain a richer and more detailed description of the phenomena" and to corroborate the evidence (Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, & Gonzalez, 2018, p. 72; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Analysis

The data analysis for this study was grounded in best practices associated with qualitative methodology. This included "organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 181). In the process of data analysis, the researcher took great care to protect participants due to ethical issues that may have arisen relating to participant harm

and disclosure of comprehensive findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher masked names or assigned pseudonyms and embedded member-checking strategies to secure protection (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The process included simultaneous analysis during data collection. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), data collection, analysis, and the writing of reports are not distinct steps in the process but are interrelated and they occur simultaneously during a research project (p. 185). During data analysis, the researcher prepared and organized the data, reduced the data into themes through coding, condensed the codes, and presented the data in either figures, tables, or discussion (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 183). The authors referred to this process as the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Each unit of data was assigned its own unique code (Saldana, 2013). A code is a word or short phrase that captures the essence of language-based or visual data (Saldana, 2016). "Coding connects the qualitative data collection phase with the data analysis phase of a study" (Rogers, 2018, p. 889). According to Charmaz (2001), coding is the "critical link" between data collection and exhaustive meaning (as cited in Saldana, 2013, p. 3). Saldana (2013) argued that coding was just *one* method of analyzing the data, but not the *only* method (p. 2). Although other methods of analysis are available, Saldana (2013) suggested that the researcher determine which approach was more appropriate for the study (p. 2).

Data were reviewed and examined in stages to look at the evolution of connections and relationships (National Science Foundation [NSF], 1997, p. 2). It was anticipated that the first stage of coding would provide a broad look at the data in their initial stages (Saldana, 2013). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested this stage would be the preparation and organization of the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts) for analysis (p. 183). In this stage, the researcher followed

Creswell and Poth (2018) and organized the data into digital files and created a file naming system (p. 185). This ensured the massive volumes of material were easily located in large databases of text (Bazeley, 2013, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018 p. 185). The researcher precoded words and short phrases by underlining, highlighting, bolding, or coloring rich or significant passages that were worthy of more attention (Layder, 1998; Boyatzis, 1998, as cited in Saldana, 2013, p. 19).

The researcher used the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method to examine how participants made sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2004). The purpose of the IPA is twofold: it allows participants to examine their personal experiences and perceptions, and it allows the investigator to make sense of the participants' personal world (Smith & Osborn, 2004). The researcher also employed transcription services (Rev.com and Temi.com) to transcribe the data collected from individual face-to-face interviews and to prepare the data for analysis (i.e., coding).

Once the data were transcribed, the researcher attempted to find and organize overriding themes. After review of data analysis, the researcher coded the data with methods that are less time consuming and less labor-intensive (Renz, Carrington, & Badger, 2018). To ensure better turnaround time, the researcher sought to utilize the coding and theme identification service of DeDoose, a qualitative analysis software that can make great research easier and that can better manage large data sets (Renz et al. 2018). Due to the complexity of the DeDoose database, it appeared that the use of the service would be more time consuming. Therefore, the researcher hand coded all of the data from the face-to-face interviews, while simultaneously documenting participant responses.

To mitigate the influence of researcher bias, the investigator employed the use of epoche or bracketing. The epoche was established by German philosopher, Edmund Husserl, who many consider to be the father of phenomenology (LeVasseur, 2003). Bracketing is the first step in the process of "phenomenological reduction" in which the researcher puts aside personal prejudices to best understand the experiences of the participants (Moustakis, 1994). The method of bracketing is often regarded as a way of indicating scientific rigor in the phenomenological approach (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 408).

However, because interpretations of data may incorporate assumptions the researcher could bring to a study, bracketing personal experiences may be problematic (van Manen, 1990, 2014, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 81). Tufford and Newman (2012) confirmed that a lengthy research endeavor could skew the results and interpretations because a study could be emotionally challenging for the researcher. In contrast, "the opportunity for sustained in-depth reflection may enhance the acuity of the research and facilitate more profound and multifaceted analysis and results" (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 2). Nevertheless, the researcher took great care in documenting participant experiences without skewing interpretations by interjecting personal experiences into participant responses.

There was no need for exhaustive data reduction, due to data sets not growing in great size and complexity. Information provided was related to the study and was evident in the data. Therefore, the use of reduction techniques was minimal. Namey, Guest, Thairu, and Johnson (2008) stated that this approach to analysis typically falls into one of two categories: content and thematic (p. 138). Content analysis refers to the identification of key words or repeated ideas and their frequency and saliency (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008). Thematic analysis moves beyond the identification of words and focuses more on explicit themes (Namey et al.,

2008). The researcher used both methods and made reduction decisions based on a clearly defined analysis objective and analysis plan based on the research questions addressed in the study (Namey et al., 2008).

To further support the credibility of the data, the researcher used peer debriefing. According to Spall (1998), a researcher preplans extensive discussions about the findings and progress of a study with an impartial peer. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the impartial peer "provides support, plays the devil's advocate, challenges the researchers' assumptions, pushes the researchers to the next step methodologically, and asks hard questions about methods and interpretations" (as cited in Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). Peer debriefing helps to minimize a researcher's biased approach to the study and contributes to confirming that the findings and interpretations are honest, worthy, and believable (Spall, 1998). By seeking the assistance of peer debriefers, the researcher added validity to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Participant Rights

Qualitative researchers face unique challenges in maintaining participants' confidentiality while presenting detailed accounts of their life experiences (Kaiser, 2009). Along with the consent letter, the researcher informed participants that they would be given a pseudonym to maintain their confidentiality. The researcher provided participants with a University of New England (UNE) adult consent form, informed them of their rights and of the protection of their identities and confidential information. The researcher also informed participants that both they and the researcher would need to sign the form, and that they would also receive a signed copy of the document.

Beginning and during participant interviews, the investigator showed and maintained a high level of respect for participants, remaining completely transparent. Participants were

informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and if they felt any level of

discomfort, they would be free to withdraw from the study without penalty. Participants did not

withdraw and continued with the study.

The investigator also gave the participants the right to examine and modify transcripts if

they needed to. Member checking, also known as participant/respondent validation, is a method

used to measure the trustworthiness of a study (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016,

p. 1802). In qualitative research, member checking is the technique used to explore the

credibility of results, making certain the researcher's personal bias does not dominate the

participant's voice (Mason, 2002, as cited in Birt et al., 2016). Interview transcript review by the

participants *enhances* the accuracy of the data (Birt et al., 2016, p. 1803).

While interviews were still fresh in their minds, the researcher quickly returned

transcripts by encrypted electronic mail (Birt et al., 2016). Transcripts were sent as an attachment

in pdf format with the word "confidential" in the subject line. The researcher informed

participants to send feedback to edit transcripts if need be, and to return the transcripts within

five to seven days, with the assurance that edits would be completed according to the

participants' request. Each participant responded within the allotted time frame and were

satisfied with the results of the transcripts, requiring no edits to be done.

Limitations of the Study

This study had limitations to consider. First, the researcher's relation to the site and

prospective participants could have potentially prejudiced the researcher. As an educator in the

public school system, the researcher had the potential of steering the study in a way that would

support personal prejudice. The researcher's relationship with participants and with stakeholders

held potential bias, which could have undermined the study. A conflict of interest could have emerged in the process due to the researcher's personal experience of stress in the classroom.

The researcher took great care in demonstrating objectivity when conducting the study. To maintain objectivity (i.e., avoiding bias), the researcher had participants of the study and peers review findings to determine researcher bias (Campuslabs, n.d.). In addition, the researcher again employed a bracketing method (epoche) to mitigate potential harmful effects to the research process brought on by preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 80).

Another limitation was the possibility that participants may have decided to withdraw from the study. Participant withdrawal lowers the sample of the population being studied (elementary school teachers in low-performing schools). However, all participants took part in the study.

To protect the integrity of the study, the researcher evaluated underlying personal biases through the process of reflexivity. The researcher's selection and justification of a certain methodological approach required a high degree of researcher reflexivity (Reid, Brown, Smith, Cope, & Jamieson, 2018). Reflexivity is described as a self-evaluation and conscious awareness of underlying beliefs and values (Reid et al., 2018). Once the investigator's biases were evaluated, the researcher employed the process of extensive bracketing, so as not to affect the research negatively by personal prejudice.

Bracketing is not a one-time occurrence of setting aside preconceptions, but a multi-layered process of self-discovery (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The researcher used a bracketing journal to bracket or code personal preconceptions, set aside knowledge from previous research studies on the topic and confirmed personal prejudices through engaging dialogue with fellow research peers (Flipp, 2014). Notes and memos were journaled consistently, a process to prevent

biases from foisting back into the research study (Flipp, 2014). The bracketing process helped to

prevent subjectivity in the research study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter details the lived experiences of elementary school teachers who teach or who have taught in inner-city schools. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to learn about and to understand the perspectives of elementary school teachers who experienced stress and burnout from teaching in the disruptive environment of the inner-city elementary school classroom. This chapter outlines the specific research questions that were investigated. Table 4, "Research Questions and Data Sources," presents a summary of the research questions and data sources. Table 5, "Conceptual Framework and Data Sources," provides an overview on the elements of the conceptual framework and its data sources.

This chapter provides an overview of the participant and data collection processes, which were outlined in chapter 3. Participants in this study who may have experienced stress and burnout from disruptive student behavior will be described in detail in this chapter, which includes participants' demographics. Chapter 4 also describes the coding procedures that provide a thorough examination of the data analysis procedures employed to address and to answer each question. In addition, this chapter includes the presentation of results by the participants, which correspond to the research questions and the corresponding themes.

Research Questions Investigated

Disruptive student behavior is one of the major contributors to high levels of teacher stress (Ouellette et al., 2018). This study was guided by one overarching question and two supporting questions. The specific research questions included:

Leading question: What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?

a. Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout?

b. Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?

The researcher developed a phenomenological study to examine these questions and shows the alignment of the interview questions in the table below. The research questions also aligned to the study's conceptual framework. Table 4 outlines the leading research question, supporting questions and specific data sources that guided the study.

Table 4

Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Questions and Data Sources	
Research Questions	Interview Questions
What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?	Question 6–7, Questions 13–14
Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout?	Question 8, 15–16
Supporting question: How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?	Question 1–3, Questions 4–5, 9–12, 17

In addition, the researcher also developed a conceptual framework using three critical elements. The conceptual framework is the overarching argument of the study (Ravitch &

Riggan, 2016). Table 5 provides a basic overview of the conceptual framework and data sources for this study, showing how the elements of the conceptual framework align to the specific interview questions.

Table 5

Conceptual Framework and Data Sources

Conceptual Framework and Data Sources	
Elements	Interview Questions
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Question 1, 2, 3, Questions 11–14, 17
Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory	Question 4, 5, 15, Questions 16
Lazarus & Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress & Coping	Question 6–10

Participant Consent Process

Participants for this study were selected using a criterion sample. The researcher focused on participants who had experienced the phenomenon of teacher stress and burnout as it related to disruptive student behavior. Potential participants for this study received a participation recruitment letter (Appendix A) from the researcher.

Prior to a recruitment letter being sent to prospective participants, approval to conduct the study at the research site was obtained from the school district and the site's principal. Once the criterion was assessed and participants identified, a recruitment letter was emailed by the principal to 26 prospective participants who specifically included instructional staff. The initial email was sent to the participants shortly before the school's winter break, December 2019. Follow-up with participants occurred at the commencement of the 2020 Spring semester, which began during the second week of January, 2020. A follow-up email was sent to all 26 prospective

participants by the researcher on two separate occasions during the first week of the Spring semester. Some participants had requested to have another email sent due to the inadvertent deletion of previous correspondence. Participants had one week to respond to the follow up email.

Prior to the winter break, ten participants responded to the recruitment letter and confirmed their interest in contributing to the study. One participant signed and returned the consent form before the break. However, only five participants further responded by signing and returning their consent forms after the winter break. Once the consent forms were received, one-on-one interviews were scheduled and the dates and times were confirmed.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process began once the researcher had obtained all of the participants' signed consent forms. The researcher used one-on-one interviews in a secure room to collect the data for the study. The research site of the participants was a single school setting that served approximately 350 students. However, due to participants' choice, two interviews occurred offsite, each of which took place in a secure room at another site agreed upon by both the researcher and the participants.

Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher provided interview protocol (Appendix C) for participants and informed them the interview would be audio recorded. The purpose of using an audio device was explained to the participants and that purpose was to engage in an attentive conversation. The participants agreed and granted the researcher permission to record.

Participants were informed that their identity would be protected and their responses would remain confidential. Participants were informed of the purposes of the interview. The purpose was twofold. The objective of the interview was to learn about their experiences in

teaching elementary students in a disruptive environment and to learn how the factors of disruptive student behavior impact teacher stress and burnout.

The participants were then asked a series of interview questions (Appendix D), beginning with basic demographic information. The researcher conducted all interviews before initiating the process of transcribing the data.

Description of Participants

Participants for this study consisted of six elementary school teachers who had previously taught or who currently teach grades PreK–5 at the research site located in an urban region of Central Florida. All the participants in this study were of African American descent consisting of five females and one male. Their respective years of teaching ranged between 8 and 22 years. Participants' years of teaching in the district ranged from 2–22 years and participants' years of teaching experience in grades K–5 ranged from 6–22 years. The ages of the participants ranged from early twenties to late forties.

All the participants took part in individual, face-to-face interviews. Each participant was given a pseudonym (Participant) and a number based on the order in which they were interviewed (Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). At the time of the interviews, two participants who had previously taught at the site were employed at other schools in the district. The other 4 participants were still employed at the research site. Table 6 provides an overview of the demographics for each of the interview participants. The demographic information is organized by participant and self-reported years of teaching experience, years in the district of current position, and years of experience teaching in grades K–5.

Table 6

Demographics of Interview Participants

Demographics of Interview Participants			
Interview Participant	Years of Teaching	Years in District or Current Position	Years of Teaching in Grades K–5
Participant 1	22	22	22
Participant 2	8	3	8
Participant 3	18	2	12
Participant 4	8	3	7
Participant 5	6	6	6
Participant 6	13	13	13

Participant 1

Participant 1 is an African American female who reported that she has been teaching in the elementary school system for 22 years and is well acquainted with the phenomenon of teacher stress that is produced by student disruptive behavior. For the same number of years, Participant 1 has worked for the same Central Florida district. During her tenure as an elementary teacher, Participant 1 has taught third grade and has worked for two schools. Passion for children and for teaching is what motivates Participant 1 to continue teaching in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. During the initial questions of the interview, Participant 1 confirmed the idea of enjoying the challenge of teaching.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is an African American female who, during her interview, reported that she loves to teach Yoga and has an extreme passion for the discipline. Participant 2 has been

teaching at the elementary level for 8 years. During her eight year tenure in elementary education, Participant 2 has worked for two districts in the state of Florida. Participant 2 has worked for 3 years in the district where the study was conducted. Participant 2 has taught K–3 for five different schools and indicated that she is thoroughly familiar with teacher stress and burnout due to disruptive student behavior. If given the chance, Participant 2 would love to introduce Yoga into the classroom setting as a means of relaxing students and coping with stress and burnout.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is an African American male with 18 years teaching experience. The participant's specialty is in classroom coaching. Not only does Participant 3 love coaching students, but he has a passion to coach faculty members as well. Participant 3 has worked in two Florida districts. During his tenure, Participant 3 taught in elementary education for 12 years. He has taught 2 years in the same district where the study was conducted and he has occupied his current position since joining the district. In his 12 years of teaching elementary school, Participant 3 has taught for nine different schools and has extensive knowledge of the phenomenon of teacher stress produced by disruptive student behavior.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is an African American female who has gained 8 years of teaching experience while working for two Florida districts. Participant 4 loves coaching basketball and uses her love for the game to connect with as many students as she possibly can. During her tenure, Participant 4 taught at the elementary school level for 7 years. Participant 4 has worked the past 3 years for the Central Florida district where the researcher conducted the study.

Participant 4 shared that she has an exhaustive understanding of the impact that disruptive student behavior has on teacher stress and burnout.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is an African American female who has 6 years teaching experience. She loves and enjoys Harry Potter books and Netflix movies. In all 6 years, Participant 5 has taught at the elementary school level. During her tenure, she has taught exclusively in the Central Florida district where the researcher conducted the study. Participant 5 reported that she has a passion for teaching and is thoroughly aware of the impact that disruptive student behavior has on teachers and their well-being.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is an African American female who has 13 years of teaching experience. Other than teaching, passions for Participant 6 include working out in the gym, intense cardio, and bike riding. In all 13 years, Participant 6 taught exclusively for the same Central Florida district where the researcher conducted the study. Participant 6 also exclusively taught at the elementary school level for all 13 years. During her tenure, Participant 6 has taught at three different schools. In the course of her teaching experience, Participant 6 noted that she has been fully acquainted with the phenomenon of disruptive student behavior and teacher stress. Yet, her love for children motivates Participant 6 to continue in the teaching profession.

Analysis Method

The data collection process for this study consisted of 6, 30–45 minute individual, face-to-face interviews. The duration of each individual interview and its respective total word count are included in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Individual Interview Duration and Word Count

Individual Interview Duration and Word Count		
Interview Participant	Interview Duration (minutes)	Interview Word Count
Participant 1	00:43	7,205
Participant 2	00:27	4,472
Participant 3	00:37	5,717
Participant 4	00:26	4,715
Participant 5	00:25	4,438
Participant 6	00:34	4,712

The researcher conducted these interviews to collect basic demographic information about each participant and to better understand their experiences as teachers in a disruptive academic environment. After all of the individual data were collected, the interviews were transcribed through transcription services Temi.com and Rev.com. Transcriptions were emailed to participants to finalize approval for analysis, and participants were given two days to respond in person, or via email, text, or phone. The transcribed interviews were emailed to offer participants an opportunity to indicate whether or not they wanted revisions to their transcriptions through the review process. After receiving the participants' transcription approval, the researcher hand coded the data for organization and analysis.

Coding

Each participant's individual transcription data was organized and hand coded so as to analyze the data and better understand its implications for this study. Pseudonyms and numbers were given to each participant and the numerical order transcription review, organization, and

analysis was based on the order in which interviews were conducted. Tables were formatted in a Word document with the appropriate code(s) in one column and the applicable responses to the interview questions in a corresponding column. Highlighted text and font colors were used to organize and identify specific codes and to associate the data with inherent corresponding themes. Once the commonalities of the codes were determined, they were combined into themes. Five generalized themes were identified as a result of the individual and comprehensive analysis of the transcription data: (a) perception of esteem, (b) perception of disruptive student behavior, (c) perception of stress and coping, (d) perception of administrative support, and (e) perception of student learning.

Presentation of Results by Participant

The results of the study will be presented by individual participant, followed by a discussion by theme. Participant responses are reported based on the order of the interview questions that were asked during the individual interviews. All participants responded to each interview question except for Participant 5, who did not provide an answer for interview question 9. The individual face-to-face interviews included open-ended questions that were designed to have participants share their personal experiences in dealing with disruptive student behavior in the elementary school classroom.

Participant 1

Participant 1 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 43 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 1 noted that destructive (i.e., disruptive) student behavior impeded classroom learning because it prevented the teacher from instructing other students. Participant 1 provided an example of how a student's behavior disrupted the class and drew students' attention

away from the teacher. Participant 1 stated that the student cried for most of the day, and when the behavior was ignored, the student cried louder. Participant 1 noted that the loud crying continued until the student induced extreme vomiting and interrupted classroom instruction. Participant 1 stated this behavior negatively affected learning for that day.

In contrast, Participant 1 reported that constructive behavior was behavior that assisted the teacher and assisted other students as well. Participant 1 added that constructive behavior was behavior that changes the dynamic of a chaotic classroom and transforms the classroom into a center for "on task" functionality and high levels of academic learning. Participant 1 noted student interaction that supports the teacher is ideal constructive behavior. The example Participant 1 provided was the assistance of students who were able to translate language to other non-English speaking classmates. This student-to-student level of support and interaction provided to the non-English speaking students afforded Participant 1 the time to focus on lesson plans instead of spending significant time searching Google to translate needed information.

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. During this time, Participant 1 noted that her level of esteem is extremely low. Participant 1 stated that anxiety over certain situations that are out of control builds considerable frustration. When unable to redirect students' disruptive behavior, Participant 1 said, "I get upset with myself and I always beat myself up about it." Participant 1 noted that her personal esteem is greatly affected, and she attempts to manage the stress by taking deep breaths, walking away, and trying a different way to interact with the students. Participant 1 said, "Because I feel like I can't get them to become constructive, we're going downhill really fast and I can't stop that train."

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 1 reported that her esteem level was much higher than when she is unsuccessful in redirecting students to better behavior. Participant 1 noted feeling better about herself, adding that the esteem even positively affected the inflection in her voice and stabilized her blood pressure. In addition, Participant 1 stated that anxiety decreases significantly when other students assist in getting the students who are disruptive back on the right track in the classroom. Participant 1 further reported that successful redirecting of disruptive students causes the classroom to run smoothly.

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burn out confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 1 reported having a feeling of relief knowing that she was not the only teacher experiencing the same effects of disruptive student behavior, and that many of her colleagues felt the same way. Participant 1 stated that having other colleagues to "bounce their frustrations" off of is very refreshing. Participant 1 also stated that she feels empowered to "press a little bit further" because she understood she was not the only one dealing with the pressure of the job. In addition, Participant 1 reported that the connection to her colleagues often leads to a sharing of techniques and management strategies for the classroom in a supportive way. She stated the camaraderie is necessary because it relieves a great deal of the pressure.

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Participant 1 confirmed that her perspectives have indeed been minimized. Participant 1, who is African American,

reported that in many cases, her perspectives have been minimized by those of other ethnicities (i.e., White). Participant 1 stated that when struggling to try to de-escalate situations in the classroom, her White colleagues countered her perspectives on the disruptive students' behavior with extreme apathy. Participant 1 reported that when trying to solve the class management issue with her White colleagues, her requests have been dismissed. Participant 1 stressed the idea that her colleagues had apathetic attitudes toward the problem of disruptive behavior and towards her personally.

Participant 1 also reported that the minimization of her feelings or perspectives has caused her to speak out less about escalating problems in the classroom and about tangible methods to solve those problems. Participant 1 shared that her voice has been "shut down" numerous times when she expressed concerns about the lack of academic proficiency due to disruptive behavior. Furthermore, Participant 1 noted that administration (i.e., principal) had encouraged "expression" and desired that Participant 1 voice her opinions more often and that she strongly voiced her concerns to administration and to the teachers as well. Participant 1 shared that the inability to express her thoughts increases her stress level, because she holds in the anxiety due to her fear of minimization and backlash. Because of anxiety attacks in the past (i.e., holding in frustration), Participant 1 reported that it is important that she get past her fear of expression or finds another way to handle the anxiety.

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Participant 1 noted that a lack of parental guidance is a major contributor to disruptive student behavior. Participant 1 reported that one student told a colleague, another teacher, that no one says anything to him at home because he can do whatever he wants to do at home, and the student brings the same attitude to school. Moreover, Participant

1 noted a chronic condition, alleging that many teachers have allowed the "attitude" and corresponding disruptive behavior to occur for so long, that when they finally decide to take corrective action, the disruptive student will not respond accordingly.

Participant 1 also stated that another major contributor to disruptive student behavior is the attention students receive from their peers. Participant 1 said, "They're trying to show out for their friends because they want to be part of the 'in crowd,' and they are still trying to gauge how far they can take their disruptions with certain teachers." Therefore, these students are labeled as "bad" groups of students due to their collective and chronic disruptive behavior. Because of the "group" dynamic being a contributor to disruptive behavior, Participant 1 noted that administration should separate them from each other when they advance to the next grade level. However, administration places them together in the same classroom(s) because they are of the same age and the same grade level.

Participant 1 reported that a third major contributor to disruptive behavior is students' inability to connect to the work as they advance to higher grade levels. Participant 1 stated that the jump between grades Prek–5 comes with big changes in the curriculum the higher the student advances. In addition to more challenging and rigorous curriculum, Participant 1 noted that students also struggle with getting to know new teachers.

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. Interview question 7 drew extensive feedback from Participant 1. Participant 1 reported that student disruptive behavior would have less of an impact if teachers had the support they needed from the leadership team and from administration. Participant 1 noted that on a few occasions, she had observed students throwing desks and chairs, and when the leadership team was summoned to rectify the situation,

they removed the students from the classroom temporarily, only to have them return to class after a short "cool down" period.

Participant 1 also reported that the disruptive behavior of students who experience little to no discipline significantly impacts those students who would otherwise exhibit constructive behavior. Participant 1 said, "The good kids feed into the bad behavior, and the dynamic of the classroom changes to disorder." According to Participant 1, one of the destructive behaviors the "good kids" fed into was the disorderly students cutting the hair of other students in the hallway while waiting in line. No disciplinary action was taken other than the "typical" scolding. Participant 1 reported that the incident in question carried over into the classroom, because the on-task students tried to duplicate the incident because it drew so much attention from students and staff, and there were no consequences.

In addition, Participant 1 noted that the death of a student's family member makes an impact on the behavior of other students because of the teacher's reaction to the grief. Participant 1 provided an example of the snowball effect of the disruptive behavior. She noted that when one student "acted out" because of grief and she responded by "cuddling" the student, the other students observed the attention and responded with reckless behavior because they wanted the cuddling from the teacher as well. According to Participant 1, she was also impacted by the reactionary behavior because the "attention seeking" was so intense that it increased her stress level considerably. Participant 1 also pointed out that attention seeking is a major source of disruptive behavior, which escalates a great deficiency in student learning.

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. Participant 1 noted that student disruptive behavior has one of the greatest effects on her concerning her

family. Participant 1 stated that she carries the frustration home due to her being unable to handle the stress of classroom chaos and would oftentimes take out her frustration on her husband and her young daughter. In that, she stressed the importance of stepping away from the disorder (i.e., school environment) and capturing a "woosah" moment in a quiet place to de-escalate before interacting with her family. Participant 1 noted that the stress would be so severe sometimes, she would need to pray, sit still, and read.

In relating disruptive behavior to burnout, Participant 1 said, "If this is how I am going to feel, I don't even want to deal with it. I can find me something else to do that doesn't require all this stress." Participant 1 questioned whether or not the profession was worth it anymore, and if feeling burned out from the behavior could lead to apathy and potential attrition. She continued and said,

> So if I don't feel right, that's the first thing that comes to my mind. I'm done. I'm like, is it really worth it? Is this really worth it? Yes. You like teaching the youth and helping them, but the stress that comes along with it, with it, it's not worth it.

Interview question 9 asked participants to describe the ways that they might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior. Question 9 also asked participants to provide examples if possible. Participant 1 reported that her coping mechanism was to eat a lot of chocolate, stating that she has to eat it to calm down. Participant 1 stated that eating chocolate is the alternative to binge snacking because binge snacking is one of the key indicators that her stress level has increased.

Participant 1 also reported that another form of coping with stress is binge watching mindless television or talking to friends. Participant 1 stated that binge watching mindless television helps her mind to escape from the harsh realities of the classroom. On the other hand,

she stated that she talks to friends because she wants them to talk her through her anxieties and to help her get it together. Participant 1 stressed that talking with friends really helps to cope with the stress because it provides an outlet where a listening ear actually "hears" her voice. Participant 1 strongly affirmed that she also talks with many of her colleagues in the profession because of their familiarity with the causes of stress and burnout in the classroom. She said, "Those outside the field will have you walking off of a ledge because they don't know why you're doing that (teaching) anyway."

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. Participant 1 noted that teachers are in need of more support from administration and leadership. She noted that teachers need more support groups where they are gaining support, instead of the groups just being a session to air out complaints about the behavior. Participant 1 also stated that stress and burnout can be reduced by teachers working on methods to compartmentalize the "anticipation" of disruptive behavior. She noted that merely anticipating disruptive and unruly student behavior triggers more episodes of stress and can lead to burnout. Participant 1 stated, "So, I know if something's going to happen, I do get stressed because I'm waiting on it. It might not even happen, but because I think it will, I'm stressing myself out."

Participant 1 also noted that stress can be reduced by having more support from students' parents. According to Participant 1, teachers desperately need support coming from the home, and that it would be helpful if parents who do not know how to help their children or to discipline them would make a serious and strong effort to learn how. Participant 1 noted that students severely lack social skills, and their abruptness and brashness due to a lack of parental guidance and direction increases teacher stress. In addition, Participant 1 stated that many

parents show their lack of support for the teacher in simple areas such as not providing their children with necessary supplies (i.e., pencils, notebooks, etc.).

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as elementary teachers in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 1 reported that her capacity to experience satisfaction was near 50% or lower due to the decrease in student learning because of disciplinary intervention. Participant 1 noted that because the students are misbehaving, it draws attention away from her, and the other students who watch them and even egg them on participate in the destructive behavior. She further reported that the intensity of disruptive behavior causes a distressing lack of student attention and deficiency in learning.

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 1 reported the need for administration to either lighten the load (i.e., paperwork and extensive duties) or to provide additional people to address the administrative needs of the teachers. Participant 1 also noted the need for administration to provide a means for teachers not to be caught in the middle of an administrative predicament that takes away from instructional time. Participant 1 reported that stress increases when teachers are being placed in a predicament by administration (i.e., administrative work) which causes work in the classroom (i.e., students' work) to be placed on hold, which also affects the teachers' ability to keep up with current lesson plans. Participant 1 stated that when leadership and administration switch plans midstream it has drastic effects on learning and it increases teacher stress.

Participant 1 also stated it would be helpful for administrators who have been out of the classroom for extended periods of time to maintain a consistent schedule of being present in the

classroom to better measure disruptive behavior and its corresponding effects. Participant 1 further noted that administrators who have been absent from the classroom so long have little to no idea anymore of what it takes to manage a classroom and to teach disruptive students.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Participant 1 reported that she enjoys a challenge and that the challenge involves reaching students. Participant 1 stated that it was important for her to reach at least one student and to touch that student's life because she may be the one person the student needs to constantly see. In addition, Participant 1 stated that ever since she was in the third grade, she knew that her passion was teaching. She stated that she loves to teach and she loves to help children reach their greatest potential. Participant 1 noted that making a difference in children's' lives is very rewarding.

Interview question 14 asked the participants to explain in what ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. In dwelling on the anticipation of disruptive behavior, Participant 1 stated not wanting to report to work at all. She expressed that her motivation can be affected so much that she would not care about the lesson plans but focus more on self-preservation. She said, "Taking care of me is most important when I think about disruptive student behavior." Moreover, Participant 1 reported not wishing to talk or do anything, which is a valiant attempt to cope with anxiety. Participant 1 reiterated what she had previously said about the behavior affecting her home life. Participant 1 reported that stress and anxiety of disruptive student behavior affects home life with her husband and children.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. Participant 1 reported that she puts forth the extra effort and moves forward, because in the end, it is all about the student. Participant 1 stated that

she often goes over the top in everything she does because that is who she is and she does not believe in giving a half-hearted effort in teaching. She also noted that she performs at a high level in spite of the misconceptions about her sense of pride, which she says is often confused by some of her peers as conceit. Participant 1 said that she loves teaching and she takes it seriously and has a great pride in her job and in her work ethic.

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 1 reported that student growth is the contributing factor to the sense of belonging in the profession of elementary school teaching. As an example, Participant 1 reported seeing a few students in the beginning of one school year who were extremely low in reading because they did not know their letters, but as time progressed, became familiar with at least 10 letters in the alphabet. Participant 1 reported this as extreme growth, considering the student demographic at the site location. The sense of belonging for Participant 1 rests on the notion that as an elementary teacher, she is laying the foundation for future scholars, preparing them for middle school, high school, and ultimately college.

Participant 1 also noted that another factor that contributes to her sense of belonging was student growth in the area of disciplinary action because some students show deep gratitude and appreciation for discipline. Participant 1 reported that several students whose disruptive behavior was challenged and corrected embraced her as one of their favorite teachers, offering her the tightest of hugs. Participant 1 stated that these students' growth did a lot for her and made her feel strong enough to continue teaching. Although she could not see the growth from the beginning because of the disruptive behavior, Participant 1 noted that perhaps she was seeing things from a different "set of glasses" than what the students were wearing.

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 1 reported that more understanding by colleagues and administration when trying to improve the school and push the students forward (e.g., verbal or written input) would greatly help to improve teachers' value. Participant 1 stated that oftentimes she can become defensive in communication, which could be cause for her colleagues misunderstanding her intentions. Participant 1 noted that sometimes when she makes suggestions, colleagues take her approach to the issue the wrong way, which results in them not coming to an agreement on the necessary changes. Participant 1 stated she believes her value could be improved if she and her opinions were not dismissed due to a simple misunderstanding of her.

Participant 2

Participant 2 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 27 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 2 noted that destructive (i.e., disruptive) student behavior would be off-task behavior, such as students calling out, yelling out, or maybe answering out of turn. Participant 2 also noted that when she is trying to teach a lesson, students are playing with things inside their desk, playing with the student next to them or just not focused on the task of learning. Participant 2 also noted that the disruptive behavior consistently takes her attention away from teaching because she has to bring the class back under control. Participant 2 noted that constructive behavior is behavior that students engage in that increases their learning. Concerning constructive behavior, Participant 2 said, "Students doing what I ask them to do that has to do with the lesson. Students prepared, wanting to learn, wanting to give effort when doing their work. Just engage with the lesson and wanting to learn."

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 2 reported feeling overwhelmed and frustrated because she is unable to teach and to increase learning. According to Participant 2, the level of her esteem decreases because she feels she should be able to redirect the students to learning but continues to struggle with making the redirection happen. Participant 2 stated, "I have a lesson to teach and there's so many things that you have to do in a day, in a span of time. And when even five or 10 minutes of that time is wasted, it just takes away from all the other students' learning. And that is frustrating."

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 2 stated that when she is able to get her students back on task, she feels a sense of momentum. Participant 2 also noted that when students are engaged, she feels "amped up" and ready to proceed with teaching. As an example, Participant 2 described how her esteem was once boosted when discussing two students who were in the corner of the classroom playing with pencils. She stated that when she was able to get them back on task quickly, it helped her move more smoothly through the lesson. Participant 2 stated she had a feeling of accomplishment when she could redirect disruptive behavior to constructive behavior.

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burnout confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 2 reported that her feelings of stress and burnout are confirmed by other teachers almost daily. She noted that when her stress level is up, her colleagues can sense that she is having a stressful day and they will attempt to console her by identifying with her

feelings. Knowing that her colleagues understand her condition, Participant 2 questioned whether the profession was worth it, considering that her colleagues were feeling the same pressures of the job. In addition, Participant 2 reported that the morale of the team is disrupted because of the disorderly student behavior and everyone feels it. She added that it is never good to be stressed out, but it is even worse for everyone to notice the stress.

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Question 5 also asked the participants to describe the experience if they could. Participant 2 reported that some colleagues and even administrators minimize her feelings about the disruptive behavior she encounters by placing more responsibility on her than just merely teaching. Participant 2 added that administrators and some colleagues have informed her that as a teacher, she has to come to work and deal with disruptive behavior, regardless of how she feels, because the "kids" have a tough life in their home environment. In that, Participant 2 stated that colleagues and administrators confirm that she has to be the one who acts as the counselor and the parent. Participant 2 said, "They expect me to raise them."

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Participant 2 reported that the greatest contributor to student disruptive behavior is the lack of parental involvement. Participant 2 noted that students have a difficult time dealing with their emotions, and they act out because of what is happening in their home life. In addition, Participant 2 noted that she was unsure if parents actually care for the children or if they (parents) struggle dealing with disruptive behavior themselves. According to Participant 2, some parents have dealt with the behavior for so long, they have become lethargic in redirecting the children to more constructive behavior, so they ignore the disruptive conduct.

She added that some parents do actually redirect their childrens' disruptive behavior, but they redirect in the wrong way, which adds to the chaos and disorder.

Participant 2 further added that due to a lack of consequences and their cavalier attitude toward discipline, the student behavior adds to the stress of the teacher. Participant 2 said, "I can tell them I'm calling your mom, and they would brush it off, because they don't care and there are no consequences that will follow." Participant 2 noted that the kids will come to school more disruptive than before mom and dad were notified. She added that the children feel emboldened because they realize their parents are not going to do anything to them to correct the behavior and that their parents are too busy to even pay attention to them.

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. Participant 2 reported that when students are being disruptive, it just takes away the learning opportunities for all the other students. Participant 2 added that 5 disruptive students out of 19 total does not seem like a large number, but the 5 disruptive students do take away from the learning experience because the teacher can no longer teach. In taking all of her time to deal with disruptive behaviors, Participant 2 stated that she is an unwilling participant in the learning deficiency of the students who care about their education.

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. Participant 2 reported that when she's in a classroom of 19 students and she's just having a really hard time trying to get them settled or to get them calm, it is obviously taking away from the job that she is supposed to be doing, and that is to teach them. Participant 2 added that the stress affects the body and the mind because she is working so hard in attempting to teach the lesson. Participant 2

further noted that the stress increases with additional duties from administration coupled with a lack of student growth. Participant 2 reported that the additional duties placed on teachers from administration, such as mandatory School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings and after hours school activities (e.g., noncontractual), usually have nothing to do with teaching, which impacts her job as a teacher because she is having a difficult time handling lesson plans and causes a spike in stress levels.

Participant 2 states having a difficult time de-stressing because of a combination of things in the workplace. She noted that alongside the disruptive behavior, administration switches daily plans frequently, which throws the teachers off track and puts them behind. Participant 2 further stated the stress level increases because the workload piles up every time there are changes to the daily and weekly plans. Participant 2 reported that when she tries to de-escalate or de-stress (i.e., work out, run, or Yoga), she can't because her energy has been depleted from the workday, the stress of the job has compounded and all she wishes to do after dealing with the behavior is sleep. She notes that her body suffers from fatigue, a lack of energy, and she does not feel as strong as she usually would, had she not had to deal with disruptive student behavior.

Concerning the potential for burnout, Participant 2 reported getting to the point where she does not want to teach anymore in an environment that could lead to her potential burnout. Participant 2 noted that the stress brought on by the students' disruptive conduct isn't worth risking her health. Participant 2 stated that she understands that teachers get into the profession to make a difference because they love to teach and because they love kids, but at some point, it isn't worth dealing with the chronic classroom conditions that lead to stress and burnout.

Interview question 9 asked participants to describe the ways that they might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior. Question 9 also asked participants to

provide examples if possible to support their response. Participant 2 reported that for her, the attempts to cope with stress are through Yoga classes. Participant 2 clarified that this was extremely important for her as these classes include breathing exercises. In addition, Participant 2 noted that her breathing exercises help her to take her mind off of the day, and in fact, they help her to empty the entire day. In addition, Participant 2 also noted that she attempts to relax by sitting in silence and sometimes reading order to cope with the stress related to the profession.

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. Participant 2 reported the need for the students' parents to be more involved, and for the parents to have more of a presence in the classroom. Participant 2 also noted the need of resources for social, emotional learning, and character education for the students. Moreover, Participant 2 stressed teacher morale, and noted that administration should let teachers know they are appreciated for their hard work, because she feels sometimes that teachers are not really appreciated for all they do. Participant 2 noted that it feels as if the administration does not care about their faculty and that administration implies that part of a teacher's job is to manage disruptive students in the classrooms. In her mind, Participant 2 did not believe administration valued their teachers. Although she said, "I'm kidding," Participant 2 did reference that a raise would be nice.

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as an elementary teacher in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 2 reported that when she first started teaching, she felt excited about the profession. She stated that she felt excited to try different things, energized to show up every day and to do all she could to help the children. Participant 2 stated, however, that four years into her career, she began feeling extremely stressed every day that she would work. She noted feeling

burned out, even though her career was relatively young and not as advanced as some of her colleagues. Participant 2 noted that she is much closer to burnout than stress and is completely over the profession. Participant 2 said, "When I first started teaching, I was excited about it. Energized and ready to go. Loved the profession. After about 4 years of teaching, I started feeling stressed and burned out almost every single day."

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 2 noted two ways that would better establish a means of support for teachers: 1) valuing teachers more, and 2) implementing programs that would motivate parents to participate in their students' education. Participant 2 also stated that she understood that parents' work schedules often prevent them from participating as often as they would like to, but she believed that administration should make parent interaction a priority and not an afterthought in response to disruptive behavior.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Participant 2 noted that what keeps her working as an elementary school teacher is the fact that teachers may be the students' only hope. Participant 2 stated that the majority of her students do not have support at home, and that is why she feels it is important to continue teaching in a disruptive environment. In reflecting on the question, Participant 2 said, "After teaching for a while and coming to know my students intimately, I came to understand that I'm possibly their only hope. The kids need someone because they have no one at home."

Interview question 14 asked participants to explain the ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. Participant 2 referred back to the earlier question of burnout, and she stressed how burned out she feels, stating that student

disruptive behavior is not what she signed up to do. Participant 2 stated, "I didn't sign up to be misdirecting behavior and putting out fires all day." Participant 2 reported that in dealing with disruptive behavior all day, every day, she wonders why she is a teacher, because she seldom gets the opportunity to teach.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. Participant 2 said, "I believe it is important to take pride in your work, regardless of the situation, and to know that as a teacher, I am helping to shape the minds of young students." However, Participant 2 also stated that sometimes she doesn't always feel like what she is doing is working or having any effect on them because of the chronic disruptive behavior. Participant 2 further noted that it is important to take extreme pride in her work, as long as she remembers that her primary objective is her focus on her students' growth.

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 2 reported that the sense of belonging depends. Participant 2 stated that she has worked at schools where the students' behavior was challenging, but she still enjoyed going to work because teachers were valued and she had good rapport with her co-workers. In contrast, Participant 2 reported that she has worked at other schools where she felt she was on an island by herself in dealing with disruptive students, and everyone else (e.g., colleagues) were in their own classrooms and on their own "islands" dealing with their students. Participant 2 stated that a lack of support by team members and administration makes it very difficult for teachers to feel as if they belong.

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 2 reported that teachers need a great deal more support from administration. In reflecting on administrative support, Participant 2 said, "Help us! Please get us what we need to teach these students in the best way." Participant 2 also stated that the teachers' value would improve if the behavioral support team would be more visible and more expeditious when they are requested to handle disruptive students. Participant 2 further noted that her value could be improved if administration would give her the authority to deal swiftly with the disruptive students herself, instead of waiting for the behavioral team to show-up. Participant 2 stated she would use breathing exercises and Yoga strategies to help the students cope with the emotional problems that may be causing the disruptive behavior.

Participant 3

Participant 3 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 37 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 3 noted that destructive (i.e., disruptive) student behavior is any negative behavior that goes outside of what is outlined in the teachers' classroom management plan that he or she has already addressed with the class. Participant 3 also noted that any behavior that is detrimental to the safety of the classroom, or the students, or interferes with the teacher's teaching and student(s) learning is considered destructive. In contrast to destructive behavior, Participant 3 defined constructive behavior as students being able to work with each other, also working with the teacher, understanding that the role of the teacher is to teach and their role as a student is to learn. Participant 3 added that constructive behavior is students working together,

displaying positive behavior, self-control and having a sense of classroom camaraderie where they are working together for a common good.

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 3 noted the disruptive behavior would decrease his esteem only if the conduct affected the classroom learning as a whole. Participant 3 stated that if one single student is acting out and affecting only his or her learning and the behavior does not negatively affect the classroom dynamic (e.g., academic learning), the behavior would not necessarily cause his esteem to diminish.

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 3 stated that when he is able to get students to change their behavior from something negative to something positive and that positive behavior becomes long term, the redirection gives him very high esteem and a good feeling about himself.

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burnout confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 3 reported that the confirmation of stress and burnout by other teachers is twofold. First, Participant 3 stated it is reassuring to know that his feelings are confirmed because it isn't just him experiencing stress and burnout in the classroom, but other teachers are feeling the same stress and burnout on the same level. Second, Participant 3 stated he thinks the support of his colleagues helps to build a sense of camaraderie. In reflecting on the camaraderie, Participant 3 said, "We're in this together and we have to encourage each other,

help each other get through the feeling of being burned out and stressed." Participant 3 noted the camaraderie helps to keep him from feeling isolated.

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Participant 3 responded by stating minimization happens often, and the majority of the time his feelings or perspectives are minimized by administration, and not so much his colleagues. Participant 3 further noted that administration is more of the "just deal with it the best you can" mindset, rather than offering teachers the support they need. According to Participant 3, administration is more focused on data than on how teachers are feeling. Participant 3 noted that he has to somehow look past his feelings of being minimized and do the best job that he can.

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Participant 3 stated that he honestly believes it starts at home. In reflecting on what contributes to disruptive behavior, Participant 3 noted that it depends on the environment from which the students come. Participant 3 further noted that in his experience, children who generally come from a more organized and structured environment, where there are guidelines set at home and expectations on how they should act, the students typically bring those same expectations to school. Participant 3 stated that children from a structured home usually have an easier time adjusting to the "structure" of the school. On the other hand, Participant 3 reported that children who come from nonstructured homes where parents may be unruly and aggressive, typically act out in school. In addition, Participant 3 reported that when meeting many of the parents of disruptive students, he could immediately discern why the students act the way they do. However, Participant 3 stated that this theory (e.g., students from

nonstructured homes) is not always 100% accurate, but he based his hypothesis on his

observation and his experience.

Participant 3 also noted two more contributors to disruptive student behavior: 1) low self-

esteem, and 2) inability to engage in the work in the classroom. Participant 3 stated that many

disruptive students are low performers academically. He noted that many of the students act out

in attempts to defer from doing school work because they struggle with the curriculum, whether

it is reading (e.g., student cannot read) or math (e.g., student cannot perform operations of math).

Moreover, Participant 3 reported that disruptive behavior could stem from a lack of management

or relationship on part of teacher to student. Participant 3 stated that perhaps the teacher has not

established a relationship of trust with the students, which is needed to reach them, or maybe the

teacher has not set up the classroom in such a way that misbehavior or disruptive or destructive

behavior would be minimized.

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of

disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. In reference to the impact of

disruptive student conduct, Participant 3 reported that the impact is major, because many

elementary students are followers. Participant 3 stated that students may see one child acting out

and then feel it is easy for them to connect to the behavior. In addition, Participant 3 stated that if

the "followers" do not have the proper training, they follow suit. Participant 3 also noted that

oftentimes, because the school is dealing with so many children in a certain type of setting and

from similar backgrounds, even a small disruption can turn into a volatile situation when one

student sets off and sparks a chain reaction. Participant 3 believes the impact of disruptive

student behavior is detrimental to the classroom, with the understanding that one student can ruin

an entire class.

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. Participant 3 reported that disruptive behavior ranks very high and right alongside the high and many expectations that teachers already have on them. Participant 3 also noted that teachers come to work dealing with their own lives and they come into the school setting and must deal with the lives and disruptive behaviors of 18 students or more. As Participant 3 pondered the question, he reported that he comes to school with the job on his mind, but he has rowdy and disrespectful students working against him, and it occurs day in and day out, causing a heavy degree of stress.

Participant 3 also reported that at the end of the school year, the state of Florida wants teachers to have taught students, prepped them to achieve high scores on the state examination, and prepared them to move to the next grade level. He continued by saying, however, the state does not realize that students have so many disruptive behaviors that hinder students from learning. Because of the state's demands, Participant 3 noted there is no burden on the students, and with the constant day-to-day disruptive behavior, along with the state oversight, he stated that out of 180 days of school, he may be stressed out for at least 100 of them. In reference to burnout, Participant 3 noted that every day he comes to work already stressed out, so the burnout is not very far behind.

Interview question 9 asked participants to describe the ways that they might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior. Question 9 also asked participants to provide examples if possible. Participant 3 stated that as the adult, or as a teacher, coping with the stress requires the teacher to have thick skin. He noted that teachers cannot take it personally, otherwise they will lash out at the students. Participant 3 also stated that prior to the beginning of the school day, he tries to put myself in a mindset that is calm and peaceful. In addition,

Participant 3 added that he has a habit of meditating in the morning, keeping low stress level, having meditation music or classical music playing in the room, and something solid to keep the environment peaceful.

Participant 3 further suggested that another way to deal with it is pulling students aside and talking to them one-on-one to get a better understanding of what's causing them to display disruptive behaviors. After pondering the question more, Participant 3 noted that another way he copes with stress is to pray and to spiritually ask God to help him mentally and emotionally to deal with the stresses the students place on him. Lastly, Participant 3 noted that another major way he copes with stress is to give himself space by calling in the behavioral team or his colleagues to intervene by removing the student from the room for a short cool down period. According to Participant 3, the intervention is so that he will not crack under the pressure of the student's disruptive behavior.

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. Participant 3 stressed the idea of accountability. After Participant 3 gave critical thought to the interview question, he stated that first, it is important the administration hold the parents more accountable for what their children do at school.

Participant 3 noted that stress and burnout can be reduced if the school or the district were to reach out to the parents of students who are repeatedly disruptive, to persuade them to participate in their own childrens' learning and to discipline them at home on how to conduct themselves in the classroom. Participant 3 reported that so much of the burden falls on the teacher to teach, to mentor, to counsel, to discipline, to do everything (resulting in stress and burnout), and there is no accountability on the part of any other stakeholders. He further noted that chronic disruptive behavior occurs when students are getting a mere "slap on the wrist" and

are permitted to continue attending class, which leads to repeat offenses due to no student accountability. Participant 3 stated that stress and burnout cannot be reduced when there are no consequences for unruly behavior.

Participant 3 ended his analysis on this interview question by stating that the teaching profession itself comes with its own set of stresses. He noted that more expectations are put on the teachers, but they are provided less time to reach them. Participant 3 argued that because of the constant barrage of meetings, teachers are unable to complete their tasks. According to Participant 3, having less expectations would decrease the stress and burnout.

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as elementary teachers in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 3 stated that his confidence in himself provides the means for him to manage classroom disorder. He stated that because of his makeup, he has a good way of handling disruptive students. Participant 3 further noted that in an environment where students tend to be disruptive, he feels he is still capable of diffusing unruly situations so that the other students can learn. When further thinking on his capacity to experience satisfaction, Participant 3 noted that he works hard at establishing rapport with students, and that relationship provides him opportunities to diffuse many problems that would come up in the classroom. "By making that connection," Participant 3 said, "I have the capacity to be successful." He noted that building relationships with students helps a great deal when confronting disruptive conduct.

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 3 reiterated that teachers definitely need more support from the school administration, but he stressed that support must start with the school district itself. Participant 3 noted that acknowledgment from the

district and administration would show there was an established means of support, particularly in acknowledging the needs of urban and inner-city school teachers. Participant 3 stated that inner-city schools do have good students, but they tend to have more disruptive students. He noted that acknowledging that fact and providing the resources needed to help teachers deal with the overwhelming disruptive behavior would show "good faith" and an established means of support. Participant 3 noted that it would be supportive of the district and the administration to simply acknowledge that these issues (e.g., disruptive student behavior) exist and to make the mental strain of teachers a top priority by not sweeping the issues under the rug.

According to Participant 3, inner-city teachers must respond to the same expectations as other schools, but the district and administration would do well by acknowledging that inner-city teachers are working with a different set of players and they need much more support. Concerning more challenging schools, Participant 3 stressed that the district should look closely at historical data, referral data and suspension rate data and quickly determine that urban school teachers need more support than other schools. Participant 3 suggested that the district perhaps initiate a 10 minute stress free zone block out of each day, just so that teachers can diffuse and have 10 minutes to themselves apart from mandatory meetings or their lunchtime. He stated the district and administration should realize that teachers need at least 10 minutes per day to decompress, having a special or a designated place in the school where they can go to reduce their stress, and not have to worry about being called into a meeting or having to deal with an unruly student.

Participant 3 noted that even the most seasoned teachers still struggle with students who chronically disrupt the classroom. Participant 3 expressed that the district should take a deeper look into having a more consistent means of support and not to focus more on just a week out of

the school year where they highlight the mental health and stress that teachers experience daily. He highlighted the importance of district and administrative support, because teachers have to manage students who are directly opposed to them performing their job, which increases the stress to extreme levels. Moreover, Participant 3 restated the idea of accountability and said that if the district and administration would sternly hold disruptive students accountable, it would go a long way in establishing support and relieving stress.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Participant 3 took a moment to think and then stated the question was a very good one. Participant 3 stated the reason it is important for him to teach in a difficult environment is found in his purpose or higher calling. Participant 3 noted that every teacher needs to feel called to teach, because the profession is not one where individuals can wake up in the morning and decide they want to be a teacher. He continued by stating that teachers have to feel a "higher purpose" in wanting to make changes in the culture, the community, and also the school, and they would have to be patient in trying to reach one student at a time.

In reflecting on the importance of teaching, Participant 3 stated his purpose is to show students (e.g., inner-city) there is another way of doing things. In talking to students, he would say, "Just because you are from a certain place, doesn't mean you have to act a certain way." Participant 3 also noted that he feels that sense of purpose to be there, to do the work, and to labor on behalf of the children and their children's children and their children's children. Participant 3 stated that his purpose is not to simply teach students at their desks, but to teach multiple generations that will follow them.

Interview question 14 asked the participants to explain in what ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. Participant 3 responded by stating that disruptive behavior does affect his motivation because he often questions whether he would return to the teaching profession the year following. In thinking about the question, Participant 3 referred back to his statement about having a sense of purpose. Although his motivation is often affected by student disruptive behavior, Participant 3 said, "Again, but when you feel that sense of purpose, you say, that's what I'm here for." With his purpose in view, Participant 3 noted that he believes he is built a certain way to deal with it. He further noted that he could look elsewhere and discern how easy teaching could be, but because of his purpose, he recognizes he is not called just to do what is easy, but he is called to do what has purpose and meaning. However, Participant 3 added that disruptive behaviors definitely contribute to his thought of not returning the following year.

Participant 3 agreed that student disruptive behavior decreases motivation. However, Participant 3 reported that he redirects his focus when a student he has taught returns to him and shows him that he or she is a changed person and that he (i.e., Participant 3) was a major factor that brought positivity into his or her life. Participant 3 noted that "returning students" make his staying in the disruptive environment worth it and that those students help to increase his motivation.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. Participant 3 reported having a great sense of pride in doing what he does. Participant 3 reported that his sense of pride and self-esteem in his work began in middle school and he carried that sense of worth with him into elementary school. Participant 3 stated he wanted to be a role model for students while they were young, because he

recognized the importance of influencing them sooner than them becoming middle schoolers. Participant 3 reported he observed that middle school students were coming into middle school lost, not knowing who they were or what they wanted to be. Participant 3 stated that catching students while they were young and redirecting their path to something positive is what gives him a great sense of pride.

Participant 3 further noted that what gives him a great sense of pride and self-esteem in his work is when students walk the halls and want to "high five" him or hug him because they feel a sense of security whenever they are with him. Participant 3 also stated the self-esteem increases because the students are eager and motivated to learn from him because he has put in the work to make them feel that they are worth the time and effort. In dwelling on his experiences with some teachers in the same predicament, Participant 3 stated he has heard teachers stress to disruptive students that they (i.e., teachers) were getting paid regardless of whether or not they learned. Participant 3 stressed that he approaches his work differently, and he reiterated his sense of purpose, stating that he wants every student to be successful. When he reflected on those "success stories" and the appreciative students, Participant 3 stated that his pride and motivation are lifted.

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Concerning the factors that contribute to his sense of belonging, Participant 3 reported the sense of belonging as an elementary teacher depends on the team that one has to work with. Participant 3 noted that his sense of belonging is solid, considering that he works with a very good team of teachers and with some administrators. Participant 3 also noted that along with the help of his colleagues and some administrators, his being involved with the

many projects that focus on the students are things that help him feel like he belongs. Participant 3 listed projects such as My Brother's Keeper, and the SECME Program (e.g. Science, Engineering, Communication, Mathematics & Enrichment), which is an alliance of PreK–12 schools, universities, industry, and government that foster enrichment opportunities for students.

In that, Participant 3 stressed that although he appreciates his relationship with the other teachers, he understands his "sense of belonging" is found in everything he is doing for the students. Participant 3 stressed, "Everything I do is not about me, but it is all about the children." According to Participant 3, his sense of belonging is strong when doing something as simple as helping a student to add, subtract, multiply, or divide. Participant 3 noted a sense of joy and achievement when students who were frustrated prior to his interaction are now having a sense of confidence in their work and in themselves or they are making better decisions based on his guidance.

Participant 3 also stated that being a father figure to his students and helping them work through their problem-solving gives him a sense of belonging. Moreover, Participant 3 added that many of his students do not have dads at home and being the person whom students can come to for answers when they have questions increases his sense of belonging and sense of satisfaction. Participant 3 emphasized his feelings about his connection with his students by saying, "This is family and that's what it feels like. These are my kids."

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 3 reported that when one values something, one does his or her best to take care of it. After reflecting on the question, Participant 3 voiced his concern and questioned whether the district and the school administration valued him as an elementary teacher. Referring

back to the idea of support, Participant 3 again stressed that district and school personnel should consider acknowledging the work teachers are doing, considering the challenges of working in a school where there are chronic and challenging behaviors. Participant 3 noted that he would simply like to hear the gatekeepers say, "I know it's tough. I know it's hard but we value you. We value the work that you're doing."

In addition, Participant 3 noted that teachers' value sometimes is only measured based on the grade of the school where they work. Participant 3 argued that teachers get treated that way, meaning that if one is a teacher at an F school, he or she gets treated like F teacher, or vice versa concerning A schools. However, Participant 3 clarified that A schools might have F teachers and F schools might have A teachers, and the district would never know because they look at a school grade instead looking at personnel. Furthermore, Participant 3 stated that a monetary reward would be nice, but most of all, he prefers that district and school administrative personnel visit him and the other teachers where they work to get a "feel" for what teachers endure, and then let them know they have leadership's full support. Participant 3 noted that leadership simply taking time out of their schedules to visit their teachers would go a long way in building teacher morale and increasing their value.

Participant 4

Participant 4 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 26 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 4 reported that destructive behavior (e.g., disruptive) is behavior that is a constant distraction. Participant 4 stated that destructive behavior is when a student goes above and beyond to be the distraction. In reflecting on specifics, Participant 4 noted there were instances where she has had a student walk into class, slam down his book bag and start kicking

the wall, and the disruption lasted for the duration of the class period. In contrast, Participant 4 defined constructive behavior as positive behavior or a decrease of disruption that occurs once the student has been redirected, even if that redirection is minor.

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 4 stated that unsuccessful redirecting of students only motivates her to find another way of making it happen. Participant 4 articulated that there is no "one size fits all" method when trying to redirect students because every student is different and responds differently to interventions. In dwelling on unsuccessful redirection, Participant 4 noted the necessity of needing to better observe specific students, thinking that perhaps she could attack a student too much with a redirection like the student may have experienced in an abusive home. Participant 4 stated certain students respond in ways that are defense mechanisms. Moreover, Participant 4 does not deem an unsuccessful redirection as unsuccessful, but as a means of going back to the drawing board and finding another technique.

The answer Participant 4 afforded stimulated a follow up question: If you find *that* to be unsuccessful, what do you do at that point? Participant 4 stated that if her follow up approach was unsuccessful, she would seek the best course of action by asking her peers, her colleagues or administration who have been in the environment longer than she has and may have alternative methods that would be successful. Participant 4 stated she is always around seasoned personnel and has a wealth of knowledge to draw from.

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 4 stated she loves it because it is not only a success for her in the immediate sense,

but it is influential with the other students who have watched the intervention work for an assertive student. Participant 4 noted the quieter students are thankful and their attention has been redirected away from the disruptive student and back onto her. Participant 4 also noted the other disruptive students in the class have redirected their attention back onto her because they have taken notice that she had not dismissed the disruptive student who had been "acting out" for attention, but instead paid attention and remedied the problem.

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burnout confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 4 reported that feelings of stress and burnout are mutual between her and other teachers who feel the same effects. Participant 4 also noted that feelings of stress and burnout were confirmed by her principal. Participant 4 reported that last year (2019) her principal gave the teachers a mental health day because not only did she (e.g., principal) see it, but it is possible she felt it too. Although teachers are stressed, according to Participant 4, there is even more stress on principals, especially at a Title 1 school.

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Participant 4 noted that she did not think she ever experienced her feelings being minimized, at least not in a direct manner. Participant 4 stated that she receives looks and responses that seem to suggest in so many words that stress and burnout are realities that she signed up for and that she must do what she needs to do to handle every stressful situation. Nonetheless, Participant 4 affirmed that it did not influence her to react in the negative. Participant 4 said, "It doesn't bother me because technically they're right. It's the slap on the back I need to get back into the game. It is what I

signed up for." Furthermore, Participant 4 articulated the leadership's perspective, saying, "You can do it. You've been doing it, so let's refocus and get it back together."

Participant 4 stated that if her concerns were not heard, she would take leadership's "unspoken rebuke" and recharge to fix problems that would arise in the classroom. In addition, Participant 4 noted that if she cannot get a situation under control, she has never been afraid to reach out and ask her colleagues for assistance.

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Participant 4 took a moment to ponder the question and then responded by stating the disruptive behavior could be caused by a plethora of things. Participant 4 noted the key contributors could be the home environment, students' medications or lack thereof, or the bullying by their peers. Furthermore, Participant 4 stated there are a lot of bad things happening in elementary schools and with elementary school students, especially since social media has commanding influence and elementary students have cell phones to record incidents and to view hateful commentary and videos.

Participant 4 provided a hypothetical example of "bullying" that some students may endure while on an elementary school campus, and she has seen similar incidents occur. Participant 4 stated that if a male student, who has one friend, and he likes playing with her at recess, and other students persuade her to not play with him, the male student loses his only friend on campus. Participant 4 stated the incident results in a "good" student turning into a disruptive student because he is now being ignored by the one friend who gave him attention. In addition, Participant 4 connected the scenario of the one friend ignoring the student with the same type of neglect the student may receive at home. Consequently, Participant 4 noted the same student who would usually sit in the front row in class now sits in the rear of the classroom

with arms crossed and ready to disrupt. In reflecting on the scenario, Participant 4 said, "If I'm getting ignored at school and I'm getting ignored at home, the only way to get attention is for me to act out."

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. Participant 4 described the impact of disruptive student behaviors as a trigger to more disruptive student behaviors. In describing the impact, Participant 4 stated, "It's monkey see, monkey do." Participant 4 noted that disruptive students "feed" off each other and mimic behavior. For example, Participant 4 stated that if one student stands on a desk, begins loud talking in class, or begs to go use the restroom, then another student mimics the conduct and stands on a desk, begins loud talking in class and begs to go use the restroom. Participant 4 noted that for this reason, an orderly classroom can turn chaotic very quickly.

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. Participant 4 prefaced her full response by first stating that "teachers are like superheroes" and classic superheroes cannot help their desire to save everybody. In that, Participant 4 added that she gets so distraught when she cannot pinpoint why a student is being disruptive, will not work on his or her assignments, and will not follow the rules of the classroom nor cooperate with her. Participant 4 stated that her wish to "save everybody" can cause her to take the stresses of the classroom home with her, because her students are her children and teachers are genuinely concerned about their surrogate children. Participant 4 stated, "So the stress comes home from not knowing what to do. I've tried everything and nothing seems to work." Moreover, Participant 4 stated that the high level of stress that occurs from not knowing what to do causes a plethora of

emotions that often lead to burnout. Participant 4 added, "It bothers me to the point I'm angry, aggravated, and sad. It's everything rolled into one because it consumes so much of my thoughts."

Interview question 9 asked participants to describe the ways that they might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior. Question 9 also asked participants to provide examples if possible. Participant 4 responded by saying, "My best coping mechanism is reading." Participant 4 stated that reading, specifically at home, redirects her and takes her to a place where she can wind down from a tiring day. In addition, Participant 4 stated that another means of coping with her stress is talking with her son, who is also in elementary school and needs the same attention that many of her students in the classroom need. Participant 4 placed emphasis on the pronoun *my* when she said, "I go home and talk with *my* son who is a growing boy and very excited about school." Participant 4 stated her son's enjoyment of school reminds her that there are still children in elementary school who can be enjoyable. Participant 4 stated that her son's excitement about school gives her "a renewed energy" to go back to class and to continue trying to be the "classic superhero" for students who may not get the same attention from their own homes.

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. In reflecting on the interview question, Participant 4 took a short moment to think about ways stress could be reduced. Participant 4 stated, initially, that she honestly did not know how stress and burnout could be reduced. In a playful jest, Participant 4 stated, "You can't ask for less bad kids in your classroom." Participant 4 took a moment again and said, "That is a really tough question and I honestly don't know." Participant 4 stated that

one of the greatest stressors for a teacher is wanting to pull the highest potential from students, and she did not want to "dial back" any of her efforts to do so.

After thoughtful reflection, Participant 4 noted that administration providing a "mental health" day for the teachers was perfect. Participant 4 stated the principal had taken notice of the stresses and offered it at random. Participant 4 stated that while teaching fifth grade at the time, her principal called everybody into the office because it was close to testing time (e.g., state examination) and the students had failed this test before. Combined with test preparation, Participant 4 commented that teachers were drawn from their classrooms for a series of meetings. Participant 4 also stressed that she did not have a true lunch period because of being hauled into consecutive meetings.

According to Participant 4, the random provision of the mental health day gave her an opportunity to step back and to breathe. Participant 4 said, "That mental health day was good. It leveled me out." Understanding that the mental health day was a day she did not have to go to the school, Participant 4 said, "I don't have to go in today. I can look back. I can reflect. Now, I can game plan." Participant 4 suggested that a mental health day once per month would be perfect for teachers who deal with stress on a daily basis. Participant 4 stated the mental health day would be a welcomed break at times that normal school breaks (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break, etc.) are few and far between.

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as elementary teachers in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 4 stated, "I am extremely satisfied when I can get a group of kids to grasp a concept or a standard because that's the ultimate goal." Participant 4 added that on a scale of one to ten, she feels that she is an eight. Participant 4 noted that she feels she is an eight when

she can get her students where they need to be and they are getting their subject matter and grasping key concepts.

Participant 4 named these (e.g., getting subject matter, grasping key concepts) as "small victories," and small victories are the contributors to her satisfaction in performing her duties. In addition, Participant 4 noted that if she could get one student who never listens in class to write at least one sentence or get one student who is always yelling to be quiet, these are small victories she is willing to take, and that adds to her satisfaction. Furthermore, Participant 4 noted that if she could gain these small victories on the same day, other students feed off the exchanges and make the day even more productive. Participant 4 stated that students feed off good behavior in the same manner they feed off disruptive behavior, and she will take any small victory she can get from them.

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 4 stated that encouragement is always a plus. Participant 4 noted that when administrators, colleagues, or the district recognizes her for working hard, she is very appreciative that they seem to appreciate what she brings to the table. Participant 4 said, "When I'm having one of those days, and one of my administrators tells me I am doing a great job, it feels good. And I must say thank you for that, because I needed it."

Participant 4 noted that recognition is big, and as a basketball coach and teacher, she practices using recognition with her students. In that, Participant 4 expects the same approach from her superiors when evaluating her job performance. When administrators are showing appreciation for her in her job performance, Participant 4 said, "That's good for me, because that is exactly what I'm doing with my students." Participant 4 further noted that support has a

trickle-down effect and it boosts her morale. Consequently, Participant 4 stated she is excited to come to work because she knows someone is paying attention to her, and she is not just doing a job in vain. Participant 4 reported that knowing someone cares about her and her performance excites her to perform ever better.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Participant 4 reported she feels it is important to continue teaching in a disruptive environment because many of the students are the forgotten students. Participant 4 said, "You can't forget about them, because they are crying out for help. They just don't know how to ask for it." Working as a teacher in Miami, Florida, Participant 4 reported having extensive experience working with inner-city children and noted that the children are not really bad children, but they are often misunderstood. Participant 4 used an illustration of seeing a student in the hallway rolling around on the floor, and she has come to understand that much of the activity is attention-seeking. According to Participant 4, what often works is the giving out of "free hugs" for the day. Students affirm they do not need affection, but Participant 4 noted that when the attention they seek is given, the disruptive behavior often stops.

Participant 4 reported that her "free hugs" is a technique that has caught on with other teachers. Participant 4 noted that when her colleagues noticed disruptive behavior declining somewhat, they wanted to know what she was doing to make it happen. Participant 4 said, "I just give them hugs, because that's all they're looking for." In addition, Participant 4 stated that her open sign of affection and acceptance of her students has also caught on with other students with whom she has no relationship. Participant 4 said, "Yes, they want hugs too." Also, Participant 4 stated the students always remember that she embraced them when they were having a bad day.

Participant 4 noted that disruptive students have been written off too soon and that all the students want is to know that someone cares.

Interview question 14 asked the participants to explain in what ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. In dwelling on the anticipation of disruptive behavior, Participant 4 stated that her motivation is drastically affected when the disruptive behavior is constant, relentless, and when the students won't let up. Participant 4 stated that many of them don't care, because they have often heard someone else stress a lack of care for them.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. Participant 4 immediately responded and said, "It's very important. If you don't take pride in your work, you don't care. So you're another person in their eyes that doesn't care." Participant 4 noted that some students who disrupt one class may be attentive and engaged in another. Participant 4 stated the disparity in their behavior occurs because one teacher has given up on them, while the other teacher continues to show his or her concern for them. When teachers no longer take pride in their job, Participant 4 noted that students recognize their lack of passion and respond with disruptive behavior.

Participant 4 stated that pride in the job shows when teachers walk around the classroom letting students know they are doing a good job when they are engaged and working or letting them know how proud they are of them for fighting to perform. Participant 4 noted that students embrace those "snippets" of encouragement and those snippets push them to be better than what they are. According to Participant 4, students respond with smiles and engaged attitudes. Participant 4 stated that sometimes teachers need to dial back and talk to the students, instead of always focusing too hard on district and administrative standards. Participant 4 said, "Sometimes

you have to drop what you're doing and talk to the students." Participant 4 continued by saying, "Hey, let's talk. Yes we have these standards to cover. Yes we have this test coming up, but what's up? Why are you acting like that?" Consequently, when teachers show that kind of concern, Participant 4 stated they learn the underlying truth to the disruptive behavior.

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 4 immediately responded by saying, "I love kids. I'm around kids from the time I wake up to the time I go to sleep and I never get tired of it." Participant 4 noted that she knows this is her purpose, and it is her love for children that reveals to her that her "calling" is to encourage students. Participant 4 also reported that in carrying out her purpose, she understands that not everyone cares anymore like they used to. When it comes to students, Participant 4 stated that she is always concerned. In her deep concern, Participant 4 reflects and then questions why students do not know phonics coming out of kindergarten, and why the state and the district wait until second grade to teach them the necessary standards, when third grade is the year they begin standardized testing. Participant 4 stated that it bothers her and she is working very hard to improve their knowledge.

For this reason, Participant 4 stated that she knows elementary education is where she belongs. Although it is tireless work and can sometimes be tedious, Participant 4 noted that she is not worried about any of that. Participant 4 noted that she did not see the daily tedious work as overwhelming, but she sees the daily work as another day to figure out how to fix what is broken. Participant 4 stated having a deep sense of belonging as an elementary school teacher because it is her purpose, her passion and her calling.

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 4 stated her value increases by how many students she can reach. According to Participant 4, an underlying argument or standard is to just reach one student and one can consider their job as a success. Participant 4 said, "If I reach two, then my value increases. If you can get to one, that is amazing. Imagine two or three?" Participant 4 stated that the value for her is reaching four to five, because in the inner-city, reaching four or five students and pushing them to their potential is massive. Besides that, Participant 4 noted that in reaching four to five students, those four to five lives that have been redirected, and that is a huge value increase for her.

In reflecting on what provides the best feeling for her, Participant 4 noted that if she could reach a student who hates school and wants to drop out at 16, but now wants to be a part of the STEM program (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) because of her redirection, it is all the value she would ever need. In addition, Participant 4 stated, "We know our inner-city students must learn a trade to survive, and STEM is that hands on trade they need, but they have never been exposed to it." Participant 4 stated that her value is increased by exposing inner-city students to new opportunities they never dreamed of. Participant 4 noted that she has placed herself in a position of extreme value when she can expose students to opportunities they will enjoy (e.g., building robots, drawing, designing toys, etc.) and opportunities that will provide a means of a living for them, particularly when they never thought progress was even possible.

Participant 4 closed the interview by stating, "When you show them there's more to life than being an athlete, getting in trouble, or being a musician and there's actually things they can be great at, my value increases."

Participant 5

Participant 5 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 27 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 5 noted that destructive student behavior (e.g., disruptive) would be behavior that is disrupting the class, making it harder for other students to learn and making it harder for her to teach. In addition, Participant 5 stated that destructive behavior could also consist of students doing nothing because they are hurting themselves. Participant 5 defined constructive behavior as working together and collaborating with other students and with the teacher, participating, and trying, even if something is hard to do. Participant 5 also noted that constructive behavior is being compliant, but not just for the sake of compliance, but for the sake of actively learning.

Participant 5 provided an example of constructive behavior and described how one student collaborated with her and other students. Participant 5 stated that last year she had students who were very good in math, so one of my students would finish her math early and instead of sitting there and doing nothing, she would always ask if she could help a struggling student. In reflecting on that example and on how the student was progressing, Participant 5 said, "If you can teach somebody, you're learning better as well."

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 5 provided limited answers; however, after reflecting on the question, Participant 5

stated that her unsuccessful redirection of students is stressful. Participant 5 said, "It is very stressful and very frustrating." Participant 5 noted the stress level from her not being able to succeed in changing behavior is very high.

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. For question 3, Participant 5 also provided limited answers. Participant 5 stated that her level of esteem is very good when she is successful in redirecting her students. Participant 5 said, "It is actually very rewarding." When thinking of the redirection of disruptive behavior, Participant 5 noted that her esteem is lifted when she is able to turn the behavior around or when she at least gives the students a way to deal with their own anxieties.

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burnout confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 5 noted that since she started her current position (six years), her stress level has caused her to vent to her colleagues almost daily. Participant 5 noted that her feelings of stress and burnout are confirmed by colleagues on a weekly basis. After allowing herself to reflect more on the question, Participant 5 added that many of her colleagues have identified the same causes of stress that she experiences in her classroom and they always confirm how she is feeling. In addition, Participant 5 stated, "So six years of daily frustration between teachers feeling the same or very similar way."

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Participant 5 stated that her feelings have been minimized and by administration, mostly. One follow-up question

requesting more clarification on how administration minimizes her feelings was asked of Participant 5. Participant 5 responded and stated, "Administration would say things along the lines of me knowing where I was at and I have been here long enough, so I should know what to expect." Participant 5 noted that because she was working in an inner-city school, administration expected her to know what kind of students she would be engaging and know that disruptive student behavior was more of a norm than an irregularity.

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Interview question 6 drew extensive feedback from Participant 5. Participant 5 reported a lack of accountability is a major contributor to disruptive student behavior. Participant 5 said, "They know they can do it without much consequence or if they do have a consequence, it's something they couldn't care less about." In addition, Participant 5 stated that sometimes a consequence is something they want when they act out, because they struggle to do the work and they are frustrated they cannot complete or even understand their assignments. Moreover, Participant 5 stated that despite students not understanding the work, administration, the district, and the state continue to push the students forward to higher grades.

Participant 5 emphatically noted a possible solution to the issue of student frustration and advancement to higher grade levels. Participant 5 said, "I feel a lot of the times, if we could stop that earlier (e.g., pushing forward), like in kindergarten and first grade, they might be frustrated but they're not so far behind that they can't catch up." Participant 5 stated that pushing forward those students who cannot do grade level work increases the likelihood of chronic disruptive student behavior. Moreover, Participant 5 noted that their behavior will only get worse.

Participant 5 also stated that parental influence adds to student frustration. In explaining this contributor to disruptive student behavior, Participant 5 noted that one of her students

believes she is slow because her parents told her that she was slow. Participant 5 confirmed the parents reveled in the idea the entire family was slow, and they passed it on to her student. Participant 5 noted the student claimed she has failed every single grade, and the only reason she is in the fourth grade is *because* she is slow and that she is ESE (Exceptional Student Education). Furthermore, Participant 5 stated she acts out in class because she believes she cannot do any of the work. And since she cannot do the work, Participant 5 reported the student pesters other students during class time causing major disruptions.

Alongside parental influence, Participant 5 also stated there is a lack of parental involvement. Participant 5 reported that some parents do not even know the names of their children's teachers because they refuse to get involved in the academic lives of their children and do not seem to care. Concerning involvement, Participant 5 stated, "If I'm a parent and I'm concerned about something, I can call the teacher and say, 'What is my child doing?' I believe parents should show more care when it comes to the education of their child." Participant 5 stated that perhaps if parents were asking more questions about their day at school or their homework assignments, the students would feel they are cared for and would not disrupt the classroom as much.

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. Participant 5 stated that disruptive behavior heavily impacts her ability to teach. In reflecting on the question, Participant 5 noted that one student who is disruptive can make the classroom seem as if 50 to 60 disruptive students are involved. According to Participant 5, it only takes one student being disruptive before it affects the entire classroom. Participant 5 noted she could only ignore the disruptive behavior of one student for so long, because it can become a major issue when other students feel

they can join in on the disruptions, and that leads to more stress. In that, Participant 5 confirmed that her addressing the behavior interrupts the flow of her teaching.

Another impact of disruptive student behavior Participant 5 noted was the perception of administration. Participant 5 stated that oftentimes administration does not ask about what is going on when they enter into a room and observe students disrupting the class. Participant 5 reported that administration merely assumes the teacher does not have control of her classroom, but they never ask her. However, Participant 5 noted that the behavior of the students may have already been addressed multiple times before administration entered the room. In addition, Participant 5 noted that there is only so much she could do, and she cannot physically remove the students from the class because that leads to herself being disciplined by administration and the district. Besides that, Participant 5 stated that administration will critique her classroom management proficiency and conclude that she cannot manage her class. Consequently, Participant 5 stated the impact of disruptive behavior and the lack of administrative support leads to higher levels of stress.

Participant 5 also added the "no suspension" standard in the district adds to the impact of disruptive student behavior. Participant 5 said, "I guess I've read the study that suspension doesn't work, but they've got to do something. Even if it's not suspension out of school. Don't even call it suspension, call it something else. Just do something." Participant 5 noted that although she has read studies that allege suspension does not work for students, she believes the standard should not be used across the board. However, Participant 5 stated that if suspension does not work, the students should be made to do something they do not like doing. An example Participant 5 used was if a student is reprimanded for writing on a wall, perhaps that student should be made to clean walls or to do something similar. Participant 5 stated when there are no

consequences or accountability, disruptive student behavior increases, and so does its impact on teachers as well as other students. Participant 5 ended her responses by saying, "Teacher frustration, I think when a student is misbehaving consistently and disrupting consistently and it's a daily thing, the frustration is high."

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. In relation to potential burnout, Participant 5 stated that disruptive behavior contributes a lot because if she is stressed out about making students behave, she is equally stressed out about making them learn. Participant 5 provided a list of stressors that has the potential to lead to burnout: 1) student struggling to learn the content and her job is to help her learn the content; 2) cannot help the student due to addressing behavior issues; 3) responsible for 20 other students who need help preparing for testing; and 4) administration asking her what she intends to do to fix academic issues with her students.

As she pondered over the issues in the list she provided, Participant 5 stated that she often wonders how she can prepare students for growth when she cannot even get them to sit down and to be still. Participant 5 noted that administration demands to know students are progressing in their math and reading but has a horrible time of trying to get them quiet and to listen. In addition to the behavior, Participant 5 reported that administration wants to see her behavior plans for each disruptive student, as well as her lesson plans and small group plans she has no time to prepare. Besides that, Participant 5 noted being put behind in preparing her plans because she has to attend several consecutive meetings with administration. Participant 5 said, "All this leads to teacher burnout, quickly, and honestly I've been teaching for six years and I feel like I get burned out every year."

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. Participant 5 answered quickly and stated that doing away with state testing would be a huge lift for teachers and would significantly reduce stress and burnout. Participant 5 continued and noted that less emphasis on the test and more focus on learning would help teachers cope with the stress related to disruptive behavior because several standards would no longer need to be met. In addition, Participant 5 stated that state testing is all the students talk about and it stresses them out, which in turn, stresses out the teachers. "Students are only 9, 10 and 11," Participant 5 said, "And they should not have to endure that kind of stress. I'm a grown up and it bothers me."

After reflecting on the state testing issue, Participant 5 revisited the commentary she made about parental involvement. Participant 5 reiterated that administration, the district, and the state should place less emphasis on testing and more on parental involvement and their communication with teachers. Participant 5 noted there should be a rule where the parents are required to make consistent visits to the school to check up on the progress and behavior of their children. Participant 5 clarified her thoughts and said, "You [parents] have to take off work or whatever you're doing to come in every time your child has a meltdown. If you can't come, neither can your child." Participant 5 stated she recognized that rule would be difficult to enforce, but she would push for it, because disruptive students who have no consequences ruin education for themselves as well as for other students. In the process, Participant 5 stated that teachers are being stressed out and have no way of figuring out what to do.

Moreover, Participant 5 noted that having administration "off their backs" would also help to significantly reduce stress and burnout. Participant 5 also noted that having less meetings would be a huge lift, and it would give her ample time to plan out all of her lessons. Participant 5

stated that teachers have a meeting every single day, and they do not even have any time to meet with their teammates to discuss lesson plans. If she wanted to discuss lesson plans, Participant 5 stated she would have to do it outside of school, which also interferes with the quality time she would spend with her own son. Therefore, Participant 5 suggested having more planning time for herself, during school time, so she would not have to type out her classroom plans over the course of the weekend at home. In addition, Participant 5 also suggested that perhaps the school could go to a 4-day work week, which would also provide time for her to carry out her duties. Consequently, Participant 5 reported that all of these factors together lead to teacher burnout, and many things need to be done in order to reduce it.

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as elementary teachers in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 5 had limited feedback concerning her capacity to experience satisfaction in performing her duties. Participant 5 reported that it is hard to experience satisfaction in your job because there is rarely a day where she could say it was a great day and it is all because of the disruptive student behavior. Participant 5 noted that disruptive behavior, combined with all of the administrative standards and duties, causes her not to feel content with performing her job as an elementary school teacher.

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 5 reported that more support from administration would be helpful, in the sense of administration actually listening to teachers' concern about disruptive behavior. Participant 5 argued that if she were to inform administration about a student who continues to disrupt the class, she expects administration to take the classroom and classroom instruction into consideration, instead of

trying to appease the student. Participant 5 suggested that perhaps the student who is disruptive should be placed into another classroom setting or in a small group setting. Participant 5 voiced her frustration for not knowing exactly what intervention would work.

Participant 5 also reported that administration needs to have more support for the other students who are not disruptive in class. In reflecting on ways of support, Participant 5 noted that oftentimes groups and clubs are set up for disruptive and "bad" students and the good students are left with nothing. Participant 5 stated that overemphasizing accommodations for disruptive students could trigger the attentive students to act out in response. Participant 5 highlighted an example and pointed out that during Christmas, gifts were given out to the children, and many of the gifts were primarily given to students who had behaved badly. According to Participant 5, they were the worst behaved students and some of her better behaved students received nothing. Participant 5 said, "I feel sometimes we reward bad behavior and that doesn't help the teachers at all, because we tell those students they can misbehave and still get rewarded. Why would they need to change?" Participant 5 stated there needs to be change concerning that.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Participant 5 immediately responded and noted that although it is difficult to teach in some environments, there are very good children within those environments who need support, and it is up to their teachers to provide it. Participant 5 stated that many of the good students are brushed off and ignored because there is too much focus on disruptive students. Participant 5 noted the good students need somebody to look out for them because they deal with so many misfortunes. Participant 5 said, "They live in this neighborhood [near the school], they have nowhere else to

go and no means of transportation even if they did. They need somebody. And that's why it's important to me."

Interview question 14 asked the participants to explain in what ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. Participant 5 voiced her thoughts on leaving the profession. Participant 5 sighed deeply and said, "Every weekend I go home and fill out an application to do something else." Participant 5 noted that "she's not going to lie" but disruptive student behavior tremendously affects her motivation to continue being a teacher. Participant 5 stated she would not care if the pay was less than what she is making as a teacher, because coping with the stress of disruptive students isn't worth the little bit she is getting paid now. Participant 5 stated that her check might be a lot smaller if she chose to leave, but she emphasized that she would not have the same headache every day or be stressed out after dealing with disruptive students. Participant 5 reported that on a scale from 1 to 10, her motivation would be a 1.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. Participant 5 stated she guessed that as a teacher, she should have pride and esteem in her work, but she also stated she could not answer that question definitively. After reflecting on the frustrations, Participant 5 settled on the fact that she really did not know how important pride and self-esteem are in elementary teaching. Participant 5 said, "I'm sorry, but that is as close as an honest answer I can get."

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 5 noted that it depends on who you work with. Participant 5 reported that teachers' acceptance and humility contribute to her sense of belonging. Participant

5 said, "Teachers, I would say not necessarily administration, but teachers here are good people overall. Nobody makes you feel bad or like they're above you. Everybody shares and collaborates." Participant 5 reiterated that she believes the contribution to a sense of belonging depends on who you work with. Participant 5 stated that in the school where she works, if there were no people as friendly as the colleagues she works with, she would hate her life.

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 5 stated that administration acknowledging her value and acknowledging teachers' individual traits specifically would improve her value. Participant 5 reported that her assistant principal does send out a weekly newsletter acknowledging teachers, but never highlights the reasons why they are being acknowledged. In reviewing the newsletter, Participant 5 noted that teachers' names do appear but everyone is clueless to the accomplishments or achievements made that warranted the name being picked in the first place. Participant 5 was asked a follow up question about whether the acknowledgment gives her a push to continue doing what she does. Participant 5 said, "I think so. One hundred percent. Just a little quick, 'You're doing great' as you pass by me in the hallway goes a long way."

Participant 6

Participant 6 engaged in an individual interview that lasted for 34 minutes in total duration. Interview question 1 asked participants to define both destructive and constructive behavior. Participant 6 stated that destructive student behavior for her would be a student who is not allowing him- or herself to be a part of the classroom environment. Participant 6 noted an example of destructive behavior (e.g., disruptive) is a student who is not academically engaged and involved in learning, the process of learning, or the school classroom culture. Participant 6

also noted the student's lack of engagement could be willing or unwilling, due to other factors beyond the student's control that allows for destructive behavior. Participant 6 elaborated and said, "I feel because they are children and if they're not taught how to cope with things outside their abilities or their control, they are automatically destructive because they don't know how to deal with situations."

Participant 6 stated that her idea of constructive behavior are students who are actively trying to engage themselves in the classroom culture and actively trying to learn. Participant 6 took a few moments to reflect, and said, "They may not exactly be the brightest of students, but they have the mindset to learn, become a part of the classroom environment, and to allow the teacher to teach them." Participant 6 noted that she does not believe it has anything to do with being overly smart, but it is the mindset to want to learn, and that is what supports the constructive behavior in the classroom.

Interview question 2 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *unsuccessful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 6 stated that it bothers her and it sometimes makes her feel like a failure. Participant 6 continued and noted that she feels like sometimes she has done something or hasn't done something right and missed the mark in redirecting the student. Participant 6 noted that although she has been to multiple training sessions, where she has learned different strategies and techniques on handling disruptive behavior, she feels that sometimes she does not have the right tools to redirect students or to handle whatever underlying issues there could be that trigger the behavior. During her reflection on the lack of having the right tools, Participant 6 stated, "I should have known, *that* child was the attention seeker, or *that* child was the one who was verbally abusive because he didn't know how to express himself. I should clearly see these

things." Therefore, Participant 6 noted that when she cannot figure out how to get a student back on track, or why the student is disrupting the classroom, she gets upset with herself, with the student and with the parents. When thinking of a possible breakdown in the family, the question Participant 6 would ask is, "Why is the child acting like that? There has to be a breakdown somewhere, and I need to figure it out."

Interview question 3 asked participants to describe the level of esteem they feel when they are *successful* in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior. Participant 6 chuckled, and said jokingly, "Sometimes I think it's a stroke of luck, honestly." Participant 6 noted that she feels great about getting back to the business of student learning, which is the primary objective of her teaching. Participant 6 stated, however, that she is also fearful, because there is always the potential the redirection is short-lived and the disruptive behavior can happen again. Participant 6 noted that she must frequently deal with disruptive behavior and she is unsure if what she has done that was successful will be successful every time she attempts to do it. Participant 6 stated that each student is different and the method of redirection is not a "one size fits all" method. Nevertheless, Participant 6 stated the short victories of redirection do boost her esteem.

Participant 6 also noted that her level of esteem would be great if the students could redirect themselves. However, Participant 6 emphasized that she has "mixed emotions" because *her* redirection has the students back on track, but the students' direction may lead them back into disruptive behavior. During her reflection on self-direction, Participant 6 said, "Why don't they have the skills they need to just cope with stuff and deal with it? We wouldn't need for me to even redirect them."

Interview question 4 asked participants if they ever had their feelings of stress and burnout confirmed by other teachers. Interview question 4 also asked participants to describe how they felt when their sense of stress and burnout was confirmed by other teachers who felt the same effects. Participant 6 reported that over the past 13 years, she has had many conversations on teacher burnout, in which the teachers vent to one another about students, the disruptive students, the students who do not have coping mechanisms or coping skills. Participant 6 also noted that she and her colleagues would discuss how the lack of these things (e.g., coping mechanisms, coping skills) make a big impact on their behavior and learning.

Participant 6 emphasized having a feeling of relief, knowing there were other teachers who suffered from the same issues in their classrooms. When reflecting on the confirmation of teachers feeling the same effects, Participant 6 said, "It makes me feel like it's not just me. I'm not the worst teacher in the world who can't get students to behave." Participant 6 also said, "But why are there so many of us? Why are we all experiencing the same burnout because of these situations?" Participant 6 noted that it seems stress and burnout from disruptive student behavior is getting worse and worse every year. Participant 6 described how she felt, saying it bothers her to see the great and amazing teachers she has the pleasure of working with, having to deal with one or two disruptive students who throw off the entire dynamic of the classroom because they have serious behavior issues. In addition, Participant 6 added that dealing with the behavior issues is exhausting, and as teachers, they deal with the disruptive behavior alone because administration will not give them the support they need.

Despite the camaraderie with other colleagues, Participant 6 also noted that sometimes she feels like she is all by herself, and in reality, she would like to put the disruptive student in a corner because she can't deal with the frustration. Because she has a classroom of other students,

Participant 6 feels disruptive students need to keep their distance from her because their behavior is too much all the time. Participant 6 noted having mixed emotions about the behavior, the stress and the potential burnout.

Interview question 5 asked participants if they had ever experienced their feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others. Participant 6 stated that she does feel that her perspectives and feelings are minimized and she also feels that administration does not believe she is competent enough to deal with the disruptive situation(s) in her classroom. Participant 6 also stated the minimization in her perspective makes her feel as if she is by herself, and if anything bad were to come out of classroom situations, she would get the blame for it or get beat down for it. Participant 6 stated the minimization of her feelings makes her feel that her concerns are of no value to administration.

Participant 6 stated that she feels administration overlooks her perspective and feelings because of the reality that "everybody has problems" and everybody should be able to navigate through their own issues and to deal with their own problems the best way they can, because administration has bigger problems to deal with. In reflecting on the administration's approach to disruptive student behavior, Participant 6 stated, "They say it's *your* classroom, *your* students and *your* issue, so *you* deal with it." Participant 6 reported that her perspective and feelings are minimized when there is a breakdown in the classroom and she receives blame, even after she has repeatedly tried to get administration involved. Moreover, Participant 6 stated that at the most crucial point, a downward spiral occurs and the "blame game" oftentimes begins and ends with her.

Interview question 6 asked participants to explain what they felt contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students. Participant 6 stated, emphatically, "I am 'an everything begins

at home' kind of person." Participant 6 stated that she believes a lot of things contribute to the disruptive behavior, but she believes it first starts with the home. According to her perspective, Participant 6 strongly believes many of her disruptive students are not taught the same values that were passed down to her. Participant 6 noted that the home environment is crucial to her students' development. While thinking of the issue, Participant 6 provided a personal example, and said, "When my sister had kids, she said, she would never have them to say 'yes ma'am or no ma'am, because that's how we were raised. They won't have to say that to anybody." Hence, Participant 6 stated she feels that as each generation has gone by, the value system has gone down, and we are at a place where there are no values in the home at all.

In addition, Participant 6 noted that many of the parents she comes in contact with are younger than she is. Participant 6 emphatically stated that in many cases, she is an *elder* to the parents of those students she teaches. In that, Participant 6 noted that many of the parents do not know how to parent and do not have a system of foundational values, because they are so young themselves. For this reason, Participant 6 noted that many of the parents are trying to live their best life (i.e., reference to the song "Smile" by artist Lil Duval), going out and doing whatever, having boyfriends or girlfriends and the children are not as important. Participant 6 stated that if the children have not had any training, any love, or any attention at home, she gets the residual effect of that 7.5 hours per day.

Moreover, Participant 6 noted that she teaches fourth grade, and she is the recipient of everything her fourth graders have received from every other teacher from kindergarten to the third grade. In addition to the effects of prior grades, Participant 6 stated that she gets the residual effects passed down to her students from every other adult. Participant 6 concluded that she really feels the children are not loved and not valued. Participant 6 stated that with all of

these issues the students face, it is hard for them to focus on learning. Participant 6 stated that although the classroom is a sane environment, her students do not know how to cope in the environment because the environment they come from is so chaotic and they have no coping skills. Participant 6 concluded, therefore, that she would love to teach her students coping skills, life skills and social skills and to nurture the "whole" child, but she believes that falls on the responsibility of the home.

Participant 6 wanted to conclude the interview question by stating that because of the deficiencies in the home, she has had to take on roles that she never intended to take on. In slight frustration, Participant 6 said, "I didn't go to school to be a counselor. I didn't go to school to be a therapist. I didn't go to school to be any of that. And I am not their parent." Participant 6 stated that she loves the children and she cares about them, but she should not be the first person or main person they get love, attention, or affirmation from. "That should be their parents," Participant 6 said. Participant 6 also voiced the concern that she is expected to be the second parent to the students, but she does not wish to be anyone's second parent. Participant 6 stated she wants their parents to be their parents and to give them the love and attention they need. Participant 6 reported that the environment the students are coming from causes her to have to meet every emotional need and she is only one human being. Participant 6 concluded that the contributors to disruptive behavior are mentally, psychologically, and physically exhausting. Participant 6 then said, "It's a home environment and societal mentality that is now left on the teacher's back to fix and it's unfair."

Interview question 7 asked the participants how they would describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary school classroom. Participant 6 stated the impact can go both ways. Participant 6 reported having strong students who come from families that

have nurtured them in an environment that did not feed into disruptive behavior; so they ignore the unruly conduct that occurs in the classroom. On the other hand, Participant 6 reported there are students who come from a disruptive environment, and they use disruptive behaviors to get attention. Participant 6 stated that the disruptive behavior then feeds other students' desires to have the same attention needs, and they respond by being disruptive. Because ringleaders get all the attention, Participant 6 stated their unruly behavior influences other students who feel they need attention to compete, to disregard learning and instruction, and to act unruly.

Participant 6 provided an example of disruptive behavior that occurred in her classroom at a previous school where she worked. Participant 6 stated the impact of disruptive behavior was more significant with her boys. Participant 6 reported a new student was once placed into her class, who before even knowing anyone, immediately connected to the most disruptive boy in the classroom, and he had created chaos regularly. Participant 6 reported they fed off the disruptive behavior of the other on a daily basis, and they were both seeking that attention from her that she knew they needed from their parents. Participant 6 reported that both mothers of the boys provided no attention to them, one being out of the picture completely, and the other more occupied with too many other children, a husband, and a boyfriend. When the new student understood what it took to get the attention (while watching the other disruptive student), Participant 6 stated, "He learned the game and tried to suck more life out of me."

Interview question 8 asked participants to describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress and to report if it contributes to potential burnout. Without hesitation, Participant 6 distinctly said, "Sucking the life out of me is what I feel like. After a day or a week, I'm drained, I'm exhausted and I have no time for even my own child." Participant 6 stated that she does not even want to talk to her own child because when she comes home, she is

angry and exhausted. Participant 6 also said she has a tendency of placing all her built up anger on her daughter, who has no idea what is happening with her mother. In addition, Participant 6 stated she carries a great deal of weight home from work and it seriously affects the relationship she has with her daughter. Participant 6 noted that she works very hard on trying not to bring the trauma and drama of the classroom home with her, because she does not wish for her own daughter to be a disruptive student because her familial needs are not being met. Participant 6 stated it bothers her that *other* students in her experience could be the cause of her daughter becoming a disruptive student.

Interview question 9 asked participants to describe the ways that they might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior. Question 9 also asked participants to provide examples if possible. Participant 6 got a laugh out of the question and responded by saying that she might get a stiff drink. During her moment of laughter, Participant 6 continued and said, "Sometimes I feel I have to walk into a Walmart on a Friday and pick up an extra large bottle of something just to get my mind off of the drama to woo-sah myself." Participant 6 also stated she tries not to care anymore, although she knows how horrible that sounds and how horrible it is to think that way. However, Participant 6 noted that the more she cares, the more weight she has to carry, the more she has to think about the stress and the more she has to react to the chaos that occurs in her classroom, the lack of support from the students' parents, the expectation to meet every student's need, and the lack of support from administration.

Besides that, Participant 6 noted that she puts up an invisible wall between herself and the disruptive environment. As she reflected on the question, Participant 6 stated that she will continue to do her best to make sure her students learn, feel safe in the classroom environment, and feel comfortable knowing that she does care. Nevertheless, Participant 6 stated she will

simultaneously continue to place herself behind the "invisible wall" because the stress and burnout is too exhausting.

Interview question 10 asked participants to describe ways that they think or feel teacher stress and burnout can be reduced. Participant 6 stated that stress and burnout for teachers can be reduced by putting more pressure and expectations on the parents and families. In addition to her thoughts on the parents, Participant 6 noted that lately, she has been feeling like the teacher is expected to be everything to students. With strong emphasis, Participant 6 stated, "A doctor is expected to be a doctor to a patient. A lawyer is expected to be a lawyer to a client, and a therapist is expected to be a therapist to a patient." After taking a deep breath to gather herself, Participant 6 then said, "However, as an educator, I'm expected to be the doctor, the lawyer, the therapist, the judge, the jury, the mother, the father, and the friend to these students." Participant 6 stressed that the expectations placed on her are not fair to her.

Participant 6 stated that being a parent herself, she understood that parents have their own set of challenges in their individual lives. Participant 6 stated, however, that her first priority is to her daughter and she believes parents' first priority should be *their* children. Participant 6 noted the more the teacher is expected to be all things to his or her students, the more the pressure and expectations of responsibility are removed from the parents, grandparents, guardians, or whomever they live with. Participant 6 stated that she feels as if parents dump their children at school and demand that their teachers "deal with it" and take care of them and be responsible for them, and if something goes awry, it is always going to be the teachers' fault. As an example, Participant 6 reported that she has students who do not even bring a pencil or other necessary supplies to school, because parents expect the teachers to supply all necessary materials, even though teachers have no budget to work with.

Participant 6 continued and noted there have been students whose parents she has never seen in her life. Moreover, Participant 6 noted that she has gone an entire year at certain schools, working 7.5 hours per day and she has never seen some parents. According to Participant 6, the type of absence from the parents tells her that parents believe their children are the responsibility of the teacher, which she finds confusing. Participant 6 stated that parents need to be held more accountable for being the parent and providing certain things before their children even enter a classroom.

Interview question 11 asked participants to describe their capacity to experience satisfaction in performing their duties as an elementary teacher in an environment that can be disruptive. Participant 6 did not spend an extensive amount of time answering question 11. However, Participant 6 did say that on a scale from 1 to 10, she would like her capacity to experience satisfaction in performing her duties at a 10.

Interview question 12 asked the participants to describe ways in which there can be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress. Participant 6 stated that because the home seems to be all over the place, with children having severe emotional needs, she feels the district should hire more psychologists and trained professionals to deal with situations that require their expertise. According to Participant 6, the one liaison the school has is not enough to deal with the volume of disruptive behaviors the teachers encounter on a daily basis. Participant 6 reported that these students need a lot of help that she is not trained to do, but she is blamed if something goes wrong or something happens. Therefore, because of the need for more trained professionals, Participant 6 stated the best means of support for her would be to hire more psychologists to help deal with disruptive behavior.

Interview question 13 asked participants to explain why it is important for them to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach. Immediately, Participant 6 said, "Because of the students I serve, if I don't, who will?" Participant 6 had no other responses to the question, except her saying, "If not me, who? Who wants to do it?"

Interview question 14 asked the participants to explain in what ways they believe that student disruptive behavior affects their motivation as elementary teachers. Participant 6 had limited responses to question 14. When reflecting on the question, Participant 6 stated that at this point in her career, student disruptive behavior affects her motivation close to ninety percent. Participant 6 noted that even after 13 years of teaching in the education field, it is getting harder and harder to do her job effectively and to minimize her stress level.

Interview question 15 asked participants to describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as elementary teachers. With emphasis, Participant 6 said, "It is extremely, extremely, extremely important to have pride and self-esteem in my work." Participant 6 stated that she is very proud to be a teacher and she is a teacher because of her own elementary school experience. Participant 6 reported that as a student herself, she had the best elementary school teachers and they were some of the best human beings she had ever met in her life. Participant 6 noted that her elementary teachers took great pride in their profession and they passed down that same pride to her. In that, Participant 6 said, "How my teachers made me feel is the exact same way I want my students to feel about me as their teacher."

Interview question 16 asked participants to explain the factors they believe contribute to their sense of belonging as elementary teachers. Question 16 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 6 noted that she works among peers who love being teachers and who love molding young minds, and Participant 6 believes that is one of the things that helps

her to do what she does and to get through the challenges of being an educator. A follow-up question was posed and Participant 6 did confirm that she feels like she belongs in the field of education based on the camaraderie and what she and her colleagues have shared together. Their sole purpose, according to Participant 6, is to make certain their students are successful.

Interview question 17 asked participants to describe ways they believe that their value as elementary teachers can be improved. Question 17 also asked participants to provide examples if they could. Participant 6 noted that her value could be improved when those who are in position (e.g., administration) listen to her perspective and her concerns. When explaining what she meant by listening, Participant 6 reported that when she voices concerns about students and their disruptive behavior, based on her professional observations, she expects those who have the authority to make the necessary changes to the classroom culture to listen to her, to act accordingly, and to help her deal with the issues that cause chaos in the learning environment, instead of blaming her for not being able to manage her classroom. Participant 6 said, "Hearing me. Listening to me and having my observations as a professional valued. That is what will raise the bar for me and improve my value." Participant 6 strongly reiterated the need for administration to help her deal with disruptive issues, so that she can continue to do what she enjoys doing, and that is teaching.

The following section presents the collective participants' results of this study with respect to five primary themes. Based on participants' responses and the coding process, the themes that emerged were (a) the perception of professional esteem, (b) the perception of disruptive student behavior, (c) the perception of stress and coping, (d) the perception of administrative support, and (e) the perception of student learning. These themes were identified as a result of the data collection process, which included individual face-to-face audio recorded

interviews that were transcribed. The researcher prepared and organized the data, which involved coding the data and reducing the data into themes. The results are organized with the most prevalent theme presented first, followed by the secondary, tertiary, quaternary, and quinary themes.

The Perception of Professional Esteem

As the participants responded to the interview questions, the most prevalent matter of the perception of professional esteem, or work satisfaction, became apparent through data analysis. All six interview participants mentioned that as elementary teachers, their professional esteem has often been challenged and overlooked by those who occupy administrative positions. The participants noted that they often get upset with themselves when they cannot access the resources and tools from administrators and district personnel to get a better handle on disruptive behavior in their classrooms.

For example, Participant 6 stated, "A lot of times, I'm dealing with bad behavior alone, because the administration won't help but they expect me to handle it." In addition to the response of Participant 6, Participant 5 voiced her displeasure at how administration diminished her work and her professional esteem on numerous occasions. Participant 5 stated, "Administration would say things along the lines of me knowing where I was at and I have been here long enough, so I should know what to expect."

On the other hand, the participants noted that when they are able to redirect students from disruptive behavior to more constructive behavior, they feel better about themselves. Participant 4 provided rich feedback on the professional esteem she feels when she is able to successfully redirect students' behavior. Participant 4 said, "I love it because it is not only a success for me, it's influential with the other students who have watched my intervention work." In addition, all

six participants stated that their professional esteem would increase if they were offered more assistance and more appreciation from administration. Participant 2 stated, "Teacher esteem would increase if administration would value their teachers more and perhaps pay them more."

The Perception of Disruptive Student Behavior

The secondary theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the perception of disruptive student behavior. All participants noted that one of the greatest stressors of being an inner-city elementary school teacher is having to deal with the type of chronic disruptive behavior that alters the dynamic of the learning environment. Each participant stressed their frustration with the reality that disruptive behavior affects their ability to teach. Participant 2 stated, "The main problem with the disruptive student behavior of some students is that it interferes with other students' ability to learn." Each participant noted their main focus and their sole objective is to increase students' learning by teaching them, and that student disruptive behavior drastically hinders that objective. For example, Participant 4 noted that one of her students hindered her objective on multiple occasions by coming into class and repeatedly kicking the wall until she stopped teaching and addressed him. Participant 6 stated that student learning is her only "business" and her only reason for showing up on campus every day, and that disruptive behavior stops her from conducting her business.

The Perception of Stress and Coping

The tertiary theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the perception of stress and coping. Finding a way to cope with the stress that results from unruly behavior was important and the idea was mentioned by five of the participants when they responded to the interview question. Participant 5 did not provide an answer for the question. Each participant noted that student disruptive behavior in the classroom is a major contributor to high levels of

teacher stress and eventual burnout. The resulting stress the participants highlighted was the inability to teach because redirecting disruptive behavior had taken priority over classroom instruction. In answering the question about stress and the effects of disruptive behavior, Participant 5 said, "How can I get these children to read or do math, when I can't even get them to sit down and be quiet?" Each participant noted that after each day of dealing with disruptive behavior, they make it a priority to decompress from their high levels of anxiety.

The Perception of Administrative Support

The quaternary theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the perception of administrative support. According to participants, administrative support is vital to them being able to do their jobs effectively. In reflecting on classroom management practices and disruptive student behavior, all participants stressed that their perspectives and feelings have often been minimized by those who work in administration. Participant 3 elaborated on the question of teachers' feelings and said, "The minimizing of feelings and perspectives comes mostly from administration, more so than from any of my colleagues. Past administration focused more on me dealing with bad behavior instead of focusing on my feelings about it." Participants also reported that because the state of Florida focuses more on test scores and moving students to the next grade level, administration expects teachers to bear the weight of disruptive behavior and to ignore their own feelings. Participant 4 said, "Administration's mindset is that it's what you signed up for, so do your job."

The Perception of Student Learning

The quinary theme that emerged from the data was the perception of student learning. According to their responses, the participants' intrinsic value is rooted in children learning. All participants stated that their objective as elementary teachers is to teach students and to make the

students grow as intellectuals and scholars. In contrast, the participants stated chronic disruptive student behavior is one of the greatest obstacles to student growth and their personal safety. The participants noted that *any* behavior that is detrimental to the safety of the classroom, or students and interferes with the teachers' ability to instruct is a hindrance to student learning. Participant 1 stated, "When students are not behaving correctly, it draws attention away from me. Other students are now watching and teaching has come to a halt, until I can get it under control."

Summary of Holistic Results

Before conducting this study, the researcher had a limited understanding of the effects of student disruptive behavior on the professional esteem or work satisfaction and motivation of elementary school teachers. However, the problem of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition was significant enough to provoke a study of the phenomenon. Results of the participants' responses determined that chronic disruptive student behavior affects teachers' ability to teach and other students' ability to learn. The results also determined that student disruptive behavior, along with a lack of support from administration, affects teachers' motivation, reduces their professional esteem, and increases their stress.

The interview questions focused on the participants describing their own experiences with disruptive student behavior and describing how those experiences affected their professional esteem and their ability to perform their duties. The participants' responses were rich and compelling. Each participant argued that they experience high levels of stress because (1) disruptive student behavior is prolonged and without consequences, (2) teaching is a secondary priority to controlling unruly behavior, (3) administration devalues them and minimizes their professional esteem, and (4) parental support is severely lacking.

Participant 6 provided the most compelling response that summed up the feelings of all the participants who provided feedback. In reflecting on the stress and burnout that builds from chronic disruptive behavior and the continued lack of support (e.g., administration, parental), Participant 6 stated that she tries not to care anymore about the profession because to continue caring is to continue carrying weight that is too exhausting. In addition to the responses of Participant 6, each participant hinted that the teaching profession may no longer be worth the effort if teachers are not permitted to do what they entered the profession to do. According to the participants, chronic disruptive behavior and the continued lack of support are encouraging new and tenured teachers to leave the profession because the resulting stress, which leads to burnout, is too heavy a price to pay.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Certified, elementary-level teachers in an inner-city school in Central Florida were the focal point of this study due to the widely acknowledged challenge of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition in the state of Florida and the greater United States (Postal, 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to learn and understand the perspectives of inner-city elementary school teachers who experienced stress and burnout from teaching in a disruptive classroom environment. In addition, this research study was conducted to determine the impact disruptive student behavior has on teacher attrition. The researcher used a qualitative research study design, with a criterion sample to collect data through individual interviews from certified teachers who served a population of inner-city students.

In this chapter, three three central research questions were examined:

- What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?

- How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout?

- How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?

A total of six elementary-level teachers certified in the state of Florida participated in individual, face-to-face interviews. The results of this research study are summarized and interpreted in this chapter. This chapter discusses the specific interpretation of the research findings, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, and limitations of the study. The conclusions that are drawn from the results complete the chapter.

Research Findings

This section of chapter 5 discusses the findings that emerged from the data collected from the six participants in this research study. The results of the research showed that across all six participants, the most prevalent finding in the data was the perception of professional esteem. The data showed that disruptive student behavior and the lack of administrative support contributed to the decline of the participants' perceived professional esteem or satisfaction in the elementary-level, school-based workplace. The results of this study reflect one element of the worldwide dilemma associated with disruptive student behavior that has been a source of concern in the field for many years (Oliver et al., 2011).

In addition, the perceptions of the participants connected to the role of disruptive student behavior and demonstrated how it contributed to teacher burnout and stress. Moreover, the data across all six participants in this study showed that teacher self-efficacy could be improved by reducing stress and burnout. This section connects the three central research questions to the literature on disruptive student behavior, teacher stress, burnout, and attrition.

Results of Research Question 1

The first research question that guided this study was, "What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?" The participant responses primarily focused on how disruptive student behavior made them feel as teachers in the inner-city elementary school classroom. The researcher conducted a thorough analysis of the responses the participants provided in chapter 4 to answer the question.

All six participants' responses presented a clear pattern regarding their perspectives associated with their professional esteem or satisfaction with their employment as an elementary education at an inner-city school. For example, under the theme of the perception of disruptive

student behavior, all six participants indicated that disruptive student behavior played a significant role in causing teacher stress and burnout. Concerning professional esteem, each participant hinted at feeling like "a failure" when unable to manage and redirect disruptive student behavior in their elementary classroom. The participants argued that disruptive student behavior considerably affects teacher stress and burnout because the behavior is one of the greatest obstacles to manage in the classroom so that they can effectively teach and so that students learn. All six participants added that teachers' performance, including self-efficacy and efficiency, heavily impacts student learning. In addition, the participants underscored that disruptive student behavior hinders the other students' academic growth. In their responses, each participant reflected on the consideration to leave the profession to pursue professional interests that they perceived were significantly less stressful.

A review of recent literature indicates that the results from this study associated with research question one correspond with existing studies. For example, the specific theories proposed by Ouellette et al. (2018) stated that teacher stress has a negative impact on the efficiency of teachers in the classroom, and it contributes to poor teacher-student rapport. In addition, there is a pattern in the corresponding literature that emerged alongside the work of Ouellette et al. (2018). The literature concerning stress, burnout, and attrition was presented in a study conducted by Ryan et al. (2017). Ryan et al. (2017) confirmed that stress and burnout due to disruptive student behavior can cause teachers to leave the profession. Ryan et al. (2017) also indicated that in the United States, the greatest challenge that faces the profession is teacher attrition. This nationwide fallout as discussed in this study and the recent literature confirms that disruptive student behavior in the classroom environment is directly connected to stress, burnout,

and job dissatisfaction on behalf of educators. In addition to the nationwide fallout, the state of Florida is affected by its own crises, which are critical teacher shortages.

Another pattern emerged during the researcher's analysis of the participants' responses to research question one as participants considered what contributed to elementary students' disruptive behavior. The pattern of participant responses highlighted that one of the perceived causes of student disruptive behavior and magnified the role of the teacher was the factor of parental involvement. All six participants reported that they felt that the lack of parental involvement in the lives of their students bolstered students' unruly conduct in the classroom setting. For example, Participant 6 summed up the collective argument by saying, "I am an everything begins at home kind of person and I think values taught at home or the lack thereof are passed down to the children." However, when reviewing the literature in chapter 2, there was no literature that corresponded to this information or specific research finding. Further research into the lack of parental involvement as a contributing factor to student disruptive behavior in the classroom setting could be beneficial in order to provide additional data to determine the impacts of parental involvement.

Although there is limited research about the contributing factors of parental involvement as it relates to the classroom environment, there is more research around the role of parental involvement and the development of children. A study in Belgium reported that parents play an important part in adolescents' life and significantly contribute to youngsters' academic success (Thomas, Muls, De Backer, & Lombaerts, 2019). This research noted that the perceptions of students and parents regarding parental involvement and how it related to school achievement and student wellbeing have been poorly researched. Therefore, the study conducted by Thomas,

Muls, De Backer, and Lombaerts (2019) was to determine if there were any differences or similarities in the perceptions of students and parents (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 1).

The results of the Thomas et al. (2019) study indicated parallels in the perceptions; however, they also indicated that parents' perceptions regarding parental involvement were higher than the students' perceptions. For example, parents scored higher in the interest of what happens at school and what the students learn at school (Thomas et al., 2019). On the other hand, students scored higher regarding their parents' knowledge of their grades that they scored on tests and assignments (Thomas et al., 2019). Both parents and students indicated lower scores in having clear expectations of students' achievement and participation in school activities (Thomas et al., 2019). Although the effects were small, parental involvement impacted student achievement and overall wellbeing (Thomas et al., 2019).

Although it was a compelling study on parental involvement, the results of the Thomas et al. (2019) research study indicated no connection to classroom disruptive behavior. The research study discussed the importance of parent involvement as it related to student achievement and wellbeing, but it did not indicate how that involvement contributed to the culture of the classroom. More studies on how parental involvement contributes to behavior are recommended.

Results of Research Question 2

The second research question in this study was, "How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout? In reflecting on this research question of how inner-city elementary school teachers described the effects of student behavior as it relates to stress, all six participants noted that disruptive student behavior affects them in ways that challenge their personal lives outside of school. All six participants' responses were connected to their feelings of frustration in dealing with student

behaviors that they believed contributed to their stress. As previously discussed, Participant 3 believes that teachers come to work dealing with their own lives and come into the school setting to deal with the lives and disruptive behaviors of 18 students or more in a classroom setting.

In conducting a thorough analysis of the participants' responses related to research question two about the effects of disruptive student behavior, the first pattern emerged in the responses of four out of the six participants. In reflecting on the ways disruptive student behavior contributed to teacher stress, four participants (Participants 1, 4, 5, and 6) reported that after trying to correct behaviors during the work day, they bring the stress of those efforts home with them. These participants perceived that this increases their stress level because of its effect on their personal thoughts and on their familial relationships, particularly with their own children. All four participants emphasized that the classroom stress carried over into the personal relationships with their own children and affected the wellbeing of both teachers and their children. For example, Participant 1 reported that she takes her frustration out on both her husband and her daughter. In addition, Participant 6 emphatically said, "It's sucking the life out of me is what I feel like. After a day or a week, I'm drained, I'm exhausted and I have no time for even my own child." In contrast, the other two participants (Participant 2 and Participant 3) do not have children and did not report high stress levels that transfer to their personal life. Nevertheless, all six participants who participated in this study stated they do carry the stress with them and they work hard at decompressing after a work day.

In the review of the literature, one particular study confirmed that teacher stress, coupled with the lack of classroom management, affected teachers' wellbeing. A Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) study reported that classroom behavior management and teacher stress are well researched, and the investigation into the phenomenon concluded that disruptive behavior in the

classroom affects teacher stress and wellbeing. In addition, Richards (2012) reported results of a national survey that revealed student disruptive behavior problems frustrated 1,201 K–12 teachers who participated in their respective survey. Richards (2012) reported that teachers who took part in the survey were accessed from two university databases across various states whose master's programs in education are offered online. Participating teachers shared the survey with other teachers in their schools (Richards, 2012). The study reported that frustrated teachers identified disruptive behavior as a cause of stress leading to a reduction of their effectiveness (Richards, 2012, p. 301).

The second pattern that emerged was the act of teacher attrition, which is the perceived result of stress and burnout. All six participants questioned the validity and worth of the profession, as they reflected on the ways student disruptive behavior was making them feel, both mentally and even physically. The participants strongly emphasized that disruptive student behavior makes them want to quit teaching. As indicated, Participant 5 stated, "Every weekend I go home and fill out an application to do something else."

When reviewing the literature, the attrition rate in the United States confirmed the feelings of stress and burnout proposed by Participant 5, as well as the feelings of the other study participants. Akdağ and Haser (2016) reported that the attrition rate of teachers is extremely high, with a national annual rate of 8%. However, one study seemed to contradict the notion that stress and burnout *exclusively* causes attrition. Yet, this research study reported that burnout was *part* of the reason why teachers leave the profession. Aloe et al. (2014) reported that burnout along with job demands and lack of self-efficacy contributed to teachers abandoning the vocation. On the other hand, Aloe et al. (2014) also noted that repeated disruptive student conduct prevents teachers from achieving the objective of actually teaching students and

fostering student growth. Disruptive students challenge teachers' ability to perform and produce stress and burnout. Therefore, the burnout that is a *part* of the reason for teacher attrition can be caused by the disruptive student behavior as it heightens teacher stress.

In addition to research conducted by Aloe et al. (2014), studies conducted by Hayes et al. (2019) and Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) noted that common reports show the teaching profession is extremely stressful and it contributes to poor retention and teacher shortages. As indicated, for example, the state of Florida identified critical teacher shortages as a major hurdle to managing disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Likewise, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) reported that disruptive student behavior is one of the significant causes for increased teacher stress and abandonment of the profession. Furthermore, Cancio et al. (2013) argued that administrators who fail to offer emotional support to teachers who endure stress and burnout due to disruptive conduct issues strengthen the attrition problem.

Results of Research Question 3

The third research question in this study included the conceptual framework of Maslow's theory on hierarchy of needs (1943), Tajfel and Turner's theory of social identity (1992), and Lazarus and Folkman's psychological theory on stress and coping (1984). The third research question that was addressed in this study was, "How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?"

In view of the most prevalent finding in this study, professional esteem, the researcher analyzed the participants' responses and connected them to the central theory that guided the study: Maslow's theory on hierarchy of needs (1943). Each participant in this study heavily underscored the need for support in their professional positions. All six participant responses

revealed that stress and burnout intensify when there is a lack of support from students' families and from school administration. In addition, participants' responses revealed that their stress and feelings of burnout could be reduced if administration would value them more and put standards in place that would better help them to gain more control of their classrooms. Participants also stated they desperately need parents to become more involved in corrective action. Participant 1 stated, "Teachers desperately need support from the home, and it would be helpful if parents who don't know how to help or discipline their children, would make a serious and strong effort to learn how."

Another finding that was revealed from the analysis of participants' responses was state testing being a contributor to teacher stress and burnout. Out of the six participant responses, Participant 5 stressed the impact that state testing has on the stress and burnout levels of the teachers. When responding to the question of what would reduce teacher stress, Participant 5 reported that doing away with state testing would be a huge lift for teachers and would significantly reduce stress and burnout. Participant 5 also noted that state testing is all the students talk about and it stresses them out, which in turn, stresses out the teachers.

Physiological Needs. According to Boogren (2018), at the base of Maslow's (1943) theory of hierarchy of needs is physiological needs, which include water, food, exercise, rest, and shelter. Additionally, Haydon et al. (2018) reported that chronic stress is closely associated with exhaustion and negatively changes a person's biology (p. 99). The prevalent pattern that emerged in this study of disruptive behavior and teacher stress was the level of perceived exhaustion related to the profession. For example, when responding to the question about coping with stress, Participant 6 said, "I will simultaneously continue to place myself behind an invisible wall

because the stress and burnout is too exhausting." Each participant reported that dealing with disruptive behavior was tiring and stressful.

Research by Shernoff et al. (2011) showed that when stress manifests in teachers it has a significant impact on their health. According to Shernoff et al. (2011), a significant contributor that affects teachers' health is stress. Inner-city teachers are burdened physically and mentally with engaging high numbers of students who have complex learning and mental health needs and inner-city teachers have reported high rates of job dissatisfaction when compared to their suburban and rural counterparts (Shernoff et al., 2011, p. 59). Some inner-city schools lose up to 40% of new teachers within the first few years of teaching due to attrition or migration because of overwhelming physical stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction with the teaching profession (Shernoff et al., 2011). Besides that, Shernoff et al. (2011) also reported that although inner-city teachers are at risk of experiencing work-related stress, studies on urban teacher stress have been neglected in much of the research literature.

Belongingness and Love Needs. All six participants were asked if they felt a sense of belonging in their work environment. This interview question was aligned with Maslow's third tier on his five-tiered pyramid that includes the psychological needs of belongingness and love. Maslow's third tier corresponds to Tajfel and Turner's theory of social identity (1979). As previously indicated, the theory of social identity highlights the relationship between a particular social group and an individual with some value and significance in being a part of that group (Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

In the literature, Feille et al. (2018) defined *belonging* as having a valuable place within a community that involves a shared and satisfying emotional connection (p. 39). The results of this study showed a commonality and a contrast with the work of Feille et al. (2018). Four

participants (Participants 1, 2, 5, and 6) reported they felt a sense of belonging when their feelings were confirmed by their colleagues. In contrast, two participants (Participants 3 and 4) stated that they felt like they "belonged" in the school environment when they were influencing students' success. Participant 3 agreed that colleague support was needed, and he appreciated the relationship he shared with his colleagues, but he stated his sense of belonging is found in everything he is doing for the students.

In addition to the participants' responses about colleague support and student growth, all six participants stressed that administrative support was crucial to their sense of value and teacher efficacy. Participants' feedback on their need for administrative validation also connected to the literature, which the researcher reviewed. A study conducted by House (1981) stated that emotional support from administrators demonstrates to teachers that they are appreciated, respected, trusted professionals and worthy of concern (as cited in Cancio et al., 2013, p. 73). House (1981) noted that emotional support is demonstrated when administrators maintain open communications with their teachers, take interest in their teachers' work, and consider teachers' recommendations (as cited in Cancio et al., 2013). Moreover, according to Cancio et al. (2013), previous research has identified administrative support as a factor that has influenced teacher attrition and level of satisfaction (Albrecht, Johns, Mounsteven, & Olorunda, 2009; House, 1981).

Esteem Needs. The fourth tier of Maslow's theory includes the psychological need of esteem. According to Boogren (2018), Maslow explained that everyone has a need to maintain self-esteem and a need to gain the esteem of others. All six participants were asked how they would describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in their work as an elementary teacher. Each participant's response was a twofold answer, with one answer narrowed down to their own

self-esteem and teacher self-efficacy, and the other answer focused on gaining the esteem of others. All six participants found their own increased self-efficacy in the success and growth of their students. For example, Participant 2 said, "I think it's important to take pride in my work, regardless of the situation, and to know that as a teacher, I am helping shape the minds of these little kids." The responses of all six participants demonstrated that they perceived that they had great esteem in being a teacher.

Concerning the gaining of esteem from others, the researcher again referenced House (1981) when reviewing the corresponding literature. House (1981) stated that teachers feel appreciated and respected as trusted professionals when administrators give them the emotional support they need (as cited in Cancio et al., 2013). In that, five out of the six participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6) noted their stress levels would be reduced if they received more support and appreciation from administration. In contrast, Participant 4 stated that her value and esteem are increased when she can expose inner-city students to new opportunities they had never dreamed of, and also when she could influence 4-to-5 inner-city students to grow academically. When questioning the concern of administration, Participant 3 stated, "When one values something, one does his or her best to take care of it." As previously noted, Participant 6 stated that when she voices concerns about students and their disruptive behavior, based on her professional observations, she expects those in authority to listen to her and to make the necessary changes to her classroom. Participant 6 noted that when administration listens, her value is improved.

Stress and Coping. In reviewing the literature, the researcher connected Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological theory on stress and coping to the participants' responses on the question about teacher stress and burnout being reduced. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory

focuses on external stressors and their potential effects on psychological well-being (Spilt et al., 2011). According to another study conducted by Biggs et al. (2017), the key concept of the transactional theory is the appraisal of stimuli, which generates emotions and results in potential stress.

During face-to-face interviews, all six participants understood and agreed with the nature of the study. All six participants appraised their own experiences and made it clear that the external stimuli that produced stress and decreased teacher efficacy was the disruptive student behavior in their classrooms. Jackson (2015) conducted a study that confirmed the participants' feelings. Jackson (2015) reported that disruptive student behavior in the elementary school classroom presents significant challenges to the basic needs and self-efficacy of teachers. Besides that, a study conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) revealed that lowering the level of burnout produces high levels of self-efficacy. In addition, a Klassen and Chiu (2010) study reported that eliminating teacher stress may lead to increased teacher self-efficacy.

When asked how teacher stress and burnout can be reduced, a common pattern emerged in the responses of four participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, and 6). These four participants reported that administrative support, such as valuing teachers and parental accountability would greatly reduce their stress and potential burnout. Moreover, Participant 4 stated that her stress level would be greatly reduced if administration would approve of a mental health day once per month. Furthermore, Participant 5 stated that her stress level would be greatly reduced when administration provides less testing and less oversight and demands more parental involvement. After reflecting more on the question, Participant 5 said, "Administration off our backs, and having less meetings." Although there were slight contrasts between the participants' responses,

the common theme was that administration needed to play a more vital role in reducing stress and increasing teacher self-efficacy.

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this research study reveal that disruptive student behavior and a lack of administrative support have a detrimental impact on teachers' esteem and motivation. In addition, the findings determined that teacher stress and burnout significantly increase when teachers are not able to perform their jobs in the classroom because of administrative bureaucracy. The data from this study revealed that teachers feel overwhelmed because they have to wear "too many hats" and with limited support from administration.

One recommended action is that the administration, the district, and the state place less emphasis on state testing. Participant 5 reported that state testing "smothers" the teachers and the culture of the classroom because state test preparation does not allow teachers to actually teach. The standards for testing also require that certain lesson plans be completed by certain calendar dates. Participants voiced their concern that disruptive student behavior does not provide them the luxury of "staying on schedule" because the majority of their school day involves addressing behaviors. Eliminating the state standardized test may greatly improve the classroom culture and reduce teacher stress. A research study on standardized testing published by the National Council of Teachers of English revealed that a participant in the study was asked what the primary thing was that pushed her away from education, to which she answered, "Testing" (Laughter, 2016). The study revealed that every year teachers leave the profession because of the overwhelming force of standardized testing (Laughter, 2016, p. 273).

Another recommended action is the need for administration and teachers to develop strategies that could be used to promote and foster students' parents to become more involved in

their child's education. For example, administrators and teachers can have parents and students come together for workshops, family night, and off-site field trips. In addition, teachers and administrators could influence students to play a role in getting their parents excited about school happenings (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Participants in this study heavily stressed the need for administration to work on plans to have much more parental involvement across the organization. Participants argued that without having the support of parents in correcting disruptive behavior, the conduct issues in the classroom may not change. Participants noted that teacher stress and burnout will remain and even increase without administration and the students' parents being a part of the solution.

It is also recommended that administration communicate more with teachers and to place more value on them and on their job performance. In that, a recommended action that would place value on the teachers would be to incorporate a daily and weekly time in the schedule for teachers to decompress, and preferably a designated time slot that does not include their lunch period. Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers are given more training and professional development and resources in order to better address chronic disruptive behaviors, so that they can create a culture of learning in their classrooms. For example, teachers should be provided professional development in the area of producing effective behavioral management plans. In a review of the literature in chapter 2, a study conducted by Collier-Meek, Sanetti, and Boyle (2019) reported that many teachers labor to produce behavioral management plans that do not succeed. In contrast, while conducting this study, there were no participant references to evidence-based classroom management theories that they may have tried.

Participants 3, 4, and 6 indicated that much of the disruptive behavior they encounter stems from students crying out for help to deal with their internal pain. As a result, it is

recommended that the school district provide educator training and strategies for teachers in the area of trauma-informed pedagogy. Such training would strengthen teacher practices to support students who have severe traumatic backgrounds (Brunzell, Stokes, & Waters, 2019). Trauma-informed pedagogy is the practice of developing curriculum and teaching strategies that build a positive classroom space in order to educate students who are vulnerable and who struggle in school due to their history of trauma (Brunzell et al., 2019). The National Child Traumatic Stress Network reported that nearly 40% of students have been exposed to detrimental childhood experiences that compromise healthy stress response (as cited in Brunzell et al., 2019). Trauma-informed pedagogy bolsters teachers' capacity to support students who suffer from emotional stress (Brunzell et al., 2019).

In a review of the literature, the research of Hepburn and Beamish (2019) determined there is a lack of teacher implementation of evidence-based practices for classroom management. As previously indicated, the Hepburn and Beamish (2019) study found that "teachers underuse many evidence-based practices but may over-report frequency of use" (p. 82). Therefore, future and more widespread research into determining the impact of evidence-based practices may be needed. In addition, future research into investigating and developing better management strategies that are specifically designed for inner-city elementary schools could also be useful. These recommendations are in an effort to decrease the teacher attrition rate in public schools in the United States. These recommendations also are in an effort to reduce teacher stress and burnout, and to increase teacher efficacy.

Recommendations for Further Study

According to previous studies, the worldwide dilemma that public educators are finding difficult to govern is disruptive student behavior in the public school classroom. In conducting

this study, the researcher learned that in elementary education, teachers are spending more time managing disruptive behavior in the classroom than instructing students and producing academic growth. The results provided compelling insights into what inner-city elementary teachers felt about disruptive student behavior and how it affects their stress and professional esteem, as well as what they are feeling about administrations' response to teachers' lack of self-efficacy. Based on the research findings that emerged in this study, recommendations for further research have been made.

This research study has areas that necessitate further analysis. While conducting the study, the researcher did not anticipate a heavy emphasis placed on the aspect of teacher stress that involved perceptions associated with administrative oversight and indifference. As indicated in chapter 4, administrative support is vital to teachers being able to do their jobs efficiently. Participants voiced their concerns about administrative support in dealing with disruptive behavior; however, they did not provide a substantial and prolonged method of how administration could support them. Therefore, future research could be conducted to address standards and practices that administrations could develop to better support their teachers. For example, administrations could develop the practice of providing their teachers with a scheduled "stress free zone" block out of each day. As indicated, Participant 3 stated, "The district perhaps should initiate a 10 minute stress free zone block out of each day, just so that teachers can diffuse and have 10 minutes to themselves apart from mandatory meetings or their lunchtime." In addition, as indicated, Participant 4 stated that administrators could develop the practice of providing teachers with a mental health day once per month.

Second, the researcher anticipated that participants would point out classroom management strategies they may have used to better control disruptive behavior; however, the

participants hinted that *no* classroom management strategies were routinely effective. All participants reported that a good portion of their stress comes from *chronic* student disruptive behavior. As previously indicated, the teachers spend an exorbitant amount of time trying to manage the unruly behaviors of multiple students who act out simultaneously. All six participants noted that disruptive student behavior changes the dynamics of a classroom from a learning environment to an environment filled with chaos.

Third, the research study had a sample size of only six Black participants, and five of them were female. Although their lived experiences were rich and compelling, the researcher recommends future research be conducted with a larger participant base, with more male participants and more participants from other ethnic backgrounds. The larger and more diverse sample would provide a higher confidence level and would lead to more detailed results.

Fourth, the researcher conducted a qualitative study at one inner-city elementary school campus in the Central Florida area. As indicated, however, disruptive student behavior in the public school classroom is a worldwide dilemma. The researcher recommends widening the scope and conducting a quantitative study that focuses on multiple inner-city campuses. In addition, the researcher also recommends broadening the research to include participants who teach higher grade level students such as middle and high school teachers.

Fifth, the researcher did not anticipate a pattern that emerged concerning the perceived causes of disruptive student behavior. Participants reported the primary source of unruly student conduct is the lack of parental involvement in the lives of their children. To get a deeper understanding of the causes of disruptive behavior that could benefit in improving teacher efficacy, the researcher recommends future studies on inner-city communities, which would include parents, students, and other stakeholders (e.g., staff members, district leaders,

administrators, social workers, community members, local business leaders, elected officials, law enforcement) to better understand prospective correlations and relationships.

In addition, the researcher recommends future studies on the phenomenon of social and emotional learning (SEL). Generally, students learn in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the encouragement of their families (Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg, & Schellinger, 2011). Student learning heavily involves relationships, which also involve a variety of emotions, and these sensibilities can either enhance or impede students' academic success. Elias et al. (1997) noted that because relationships and emotional processes strongly affect student learning, schools and families must address these aspects of the educational process. Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg, and Schellinger (2011) found that SEL programs did yield significant positive effects on social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others and school (p. 417). Durlak et al. (2011) also stated SEL programs improved behavior and academic performance.

Limitations

This section of the study restates the limitations and discusses the transferability of the study's findings to broader populations or other settings and conditions. The scope of the study included a small sample size of only six participants; therefore, the small sample size limited the results of the study. Another limitation related to this study was the restriction of the research site. The scope of the participants permitted to be interviewed had to be currently employed at the site location of the study based upon site approval restrictions. This restriction narrowed the prospective participant pool. In addition to the site restrictions, the study was also limited because it did not include other regions in the state other than the Central Florida area. Furthermore, the Central Florida region included only one major district, and did not include the

other districts in the Central Florida region. Moreover, the study was limited because the research included only the perspectives of elementary-level teachers. With the inclusion of only one elementary school for research, other schools at grade levels 6–12 were not a part of the research study. Finally, the study was also limited because the participant pool consisted of all African Americans, and only one of the participants was male.

Conclusions

Disruptive student behavior in inner-city elementary schools is a phenomenon that has an overwhelming impact on teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. Because disruptive student behavior in the classroom produces high levels of stress and diminishes teacher self-efficacy, the potential threat of teachers leaving the profession continues to grow. Nevertheless, despite the high national attrition rate in public schools in the United States, results from this Central Florida inner-city research study showed a compelling contrast. Although the participants from this study reported their experiences of stress and burnout and have contemplated leaving the profession after every year of teaching, they felt a strong need to return to teaching and to continue to try to make a difference in the lives of students who exhibited challenging behaviors in their classroom. Based on the participants' responses, administrators in the public school system must provide teachers more access to professional development and training related to the use of evidence-based practices to reduce disruptive student behavior and increase the value of their teachers in order to reduce their stress and to increase the rate of retention.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

DATE

Dear PARTICIPANT,

In addition to my professional responsibilities as Reading and Math Tutor, I am also a doctoral student in the University of New England's Transformative Leadership program. I am conducting a research project titled: *Examining The Relationship Between Teacher Stress and Disruptive Student Behavior*. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study, which will be conducted with a sample of 6 to 10 teachers who serve elementary students in the inner-city. The purpose of my study is to determine the factors that prevent instructors from effectively supervising their classrooms, highlighting the factors that counteract teachers' ability to adequately address disruptive behavior in a manner that promotes teachers' self-efficacy and minimizes teacher stress, burnout, and potential attrition.

Research in this area is limited; and, as a result of my research, I intend to pose the following questions:

What perceptions do inner-city, elementary-level teachers have regarding the role of student behavior and teacher stress and burnout?

How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which student behavior contributes to teacher stress and burnout?

How do inner-city, elementary-level teachers perceive the ways in which teacher efficacy can be improved to reduce teacher stress and burnout?

The information could prove helpful in more clearly identifying the classroom and environmental factors that contribute to teacher stress and burnout. Further analysis of the above

data may encourage more training opportunities for teachers to develop coping mechanisms associated with the profession. I am inviting you to be a part of this research study based on your classification as an elementary school teacher in the inner-city. You will be asked to participate in an individual interview that includes questions related to the following topics:

- Disruptive Student Behavior

- Teacher Stress & Burnout

- Teacher Self-Efficacy

All information will be kept strictly confidential. At the end of the study, a report will be generated to communicate the findings of the research. Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary. Your participation in the individual interview is your informed consent to participate in my research study. The information gathered from this study will be published as group results and cannot be traced back to one professional. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete and there is no penalty if you choose not to participate. You may choose to stop the interview at any time, or not to participate at all. You can decide not to participate, and your decision will not affect the benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled in any way. Your participation will be kept anonymous and confidential. Pseudonym(s) of your choice will be used during the interview. No names of students, educators or schools will be included in the interview, interview transcripts, or the final research report.

If you have any questions about participating in this research study, do not hesitate to ask. I can be reached at scrudup@une.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Sidney Crudup II

Doctoral Candidate, University of New England

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Examining the Relationship Between Teacher Stress And Disruptive Student Behavior

Principal Investigator(s): Sidney Crudup II

Introduction:
- Please read this form. You may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to give you information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document that choice.

- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during, or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this research study being done?
You are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Sidney Crudup II, a doctoral student at the University of New England. The purpose of this study is to better understand teachers' perceptions of how disruptive student behavior affects teacher stress, burnout, and potential attrition.

Who will be in this study?
Participants in this study will be elementary-level teachers who presently hold a valid Florida teaching certification and are employed at the identified Central Florida inner-city elementary school. Retired or migrated teachers will also be included in the study. Participants who have retired or migrated away from the research site must also have held a valid certification during their employment at the identified research site.

What will I be asked to do?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual interview. The interview will take place in a classroom at the research site or via Zoom/Skype or telephone if preferred. The interview will last approximately 30–45 minutes. The interview will be designed to gather information about your perception of how disruptive behavior affects stress and burnout in your role as an elementary-level teacher.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?
There are limited risks or discomforts that are expected as a result of your participation in this research study. There is a minimal risk that you could potentially disclose private information that could negatively affect the workplace. There is also the risk that some interview questions could cause mild to moderate emotional distress, if they evoke thoughts or feelings from a stressful event or situation that you may have experienced.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?
The study does not provide direct or immediate benefits. However, this study has the potential to contribute to the body of research that looks at the relationship between disruptive student behavior and teacher stress and burnout. The results of this study may indirectly inform approaches to improving teacher efficacy in the areas of classroom management and behavioral interventions.

What will it cost me?
There is no cost to be involved in the study.

How will my privacy be protected?
Your privacy will be protected by the use of a pseudonym, in order to maintain your confidentiality. The researcher will not connect your interview to your name. The interview will be recorded and coded. All names and identifiable information will be stricken during the coding process to further protect privacy. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts for clarification and for accuracy.

How will my data be kept confidential?
Your responses and identity will remain confidential as indicated above. During the study, I will maintain all documentation (i.e., interview notes) and lock them in a secure filing cabinet with a combination lock. The secure terabyte jump drive will also be stored in the same secure cabinet. All your information (i.e., documentation) will also be locked in the cabinet. To further secure documentation, the file cabinet will be locked in a closet secured by a second lock. Documents will be stored on the hard drive of my laptop computer which is password protected using a combination of numbers, letters, and special characters.

What are my rights as a research participant?
- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the university.
- Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with your employer.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason.
  - If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research.
- If you sustain an injury while participating in this study, your participation may be ended.

What other options do I have?
- You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?
- The researcher conducting this study, Sidney Crudup II
  - For more information regarding this study, please contact scrudup@une.edu.

- If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Dr. Heather Wilmot at hwilmot@une.edu.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Mary Bachman DeSilva, Sc.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4567 or irb@une.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?
- You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement
I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

_____   _____
Participant's signature or   Date
Legally authorized representative

Printed name

<u>Researcher's Statement</u>

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

_____   _____
Researcher's signature   Date

_____
Printed name

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

[Sid Crudup II, Introduction, Part I]

Hello! My name is Sidney Crudup II. I am a doctoral candidate from the University of New England. I am here to learn about your experiences as an elementary teacher in the inner-city. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. The purpose of this interview is to learn about the factors of disruptive student behavior and how they impact teacher stress and burnout. There are no right or wrong answers, or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you think and how you really feel. I will be recording our conversation since it is hard for me to write down everything while simultaneously carrying an attentive conversation with you. Your identity will remain confidential and your responses will remain anonymous. Only myself and my faculty advisors will be aware of your answers—the purpose of that is only so that we know whom to contact should we have further follow-up questions after this interview.

[Sid Crudup II, Introduction, Part II]

During this interview, you will be asked to tell me about your experiences as an elementary teacher in the inner-city. You will reflect upon your experiences of working with elementary-age children. I am interested in your experiences, perceptions, and opinions about disruptive student behaviors, and how they may contribute to teacher stress and burnout and training needed for teachers in handling those behaviors. The questions will ask you to think about your professional experiences as a classroom teacher. You can think about your current situation, or of a previous year in which you had worked with elementary-aged students. Again, there are no right or wrong

answers so please be as honest as you can be in helping me to understand what your experiences have been like. Remember that the information you provide will remain anonymous, and used only for research concerning disruptive student behavior and its effect on teacher stress and burnout. Thank you so much for your time.

Rapport-Building and Basic Demographic Questions:

How many years have you been teaching?

How many years have you worked in the district or in your current position?

How many years have you taught at the elementary level?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you define destructive student behavior and constructive student behavior? Please provide examples.

2. Can you describe the level of esteem you feel when you are unsuccessful in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior?

3. Can you describe the level of esteem you feel when you are successful in redirecting students' disruptive behavior to constructive behavior?

4. Have you ever had your feelings of stress and burn out confirmed by other teachers? If so, describe how you felt when your sense of stress and burnout is confirmed by other teachers feeling the same effects?

5. Have you experienced your feelings or perspectives related to disruptive student behavior minimized by others? If so, please describe this experience.

6. Explain what you feel contributes to disruptive behavior by elementary students.

7. How would you describe the impact of disruptive student behaviors in an elementary classroom?

8. How would you describe the effects of student disruptive behavior as it relates to stress? How do you believe it (i.e. disruptive behavior) contributes to potential burnout?

9. Describe the ways that you might attempt to cope with the stress related to student disruptive behavior? Please provide examples.

10. In what ways do you think or feel that teacher stress and burnout can be reduced?

11. Describe your capacity to experience satisfaction in performing your duties as an elementary teacher in an environment that can be disruptive.

12. In what ways can there be a better established means of support for teachers to reduce their stress?

13. Why is it important for you to continue to teach even in an environment where it may be difficult to teach?

14. In what ways do you believe that student disruptive behavior affects your motivation as an elementary teacher?

15. How would you describe the importance of pride and self-esteem in your work as an elementary teacher?

16. What factors do you believe contribute to your sense of belonging as an elementary teacher? Please provide examples.

17. In what ways do you believe that your value as an elementary teacher can be improved? Please provide examples.