A Mixed Methods Approach Exploring Teacher Emotional Labor and Burnout among Middle School Teachers

by

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Dedication

I humbly dedicate this dissertation to my family. First and foremost, to my husband, Bobby, you are always in my corner, continue to see the best in me, and support my dreams. Your faithful partnership, eager ears to listen, willingness to serve without reservation or hesitation, and steadfast love are nothing short of inspiring. Thank you for who you are and who you are to me. To my oldest daughter, Aurora, thank you for championing me in this process and for your thoughtful care to make sure that I am seen. To my oldest son, Aiden, thank you for coaching me to keep going and for always checking in on my progress. To my daughter, Callie, thank you for taking the time to make me feel special with all of your daily creative expressions of love just for me. To my son, Elijah, thank you for being my motivator to finish strong and for lovingly giving me so much grace to complete the tasks at hand. To my son, Kai, thank you for being with me along this journey as a physical reminder of God's faithfulness in all seasons. To my Momma, Sherri, even though you are in heaven, I know that you are proud of me and have felt your encouragement all along the way. You were my first teacher in life, and I hope that this work serves to propel further good works in the field of education. To my Daddy, Terry, even though you are in heaven, I have taken to heart and mind what you have taught me about hard work and integrity. Though through this journey I have often felt like the woman in the arena, I know that it is all worth it in the end. Thank you all for loving me so well. To God be all the glory for the great things He has done.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

According to a National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) study, teacher shortages are often confined to schools with specific characteristics. These include urban, rural, high-poverty, high minority and low-achieving schools and within mathematics, science, and special education departments (Aragon, 2016, p. 6; Ingersoll et al., 2018, p. 21). Given the specific settings in which shortages are most pronounced, McDole and Francies (2022) suggest, "...recruiting and retaining teachers is less about teachers generally and more about finding and keeping the right teachers, in the right subjects, for the right schools" (p. 1). Fischer, Erwin, Pechota, & Syverson (2022) suggest in their "50 State Comparison of Recruitment and Retention" review that there remains declining participation in teacher preparation programs. Fewer high school graduates are interested in pursuing education majors and fewer college students are pursuing teaching careers (Aragon, 2016).

Once in the teaching profession, many go on to report overall job dissatisfaction, a loss of autonomy, and limitations in feedback, recognition, advancement and reward. These factors contribute to a negative stigma concerning the profession. In a longitudinal study of a nationally representative cohort, teacher turnover, as measured annually by the combined percentage of "movers" and "leavers," after five years was 46 percent (29 percent of teachers moved schools or districts and 17 percent stopped teaching) (Aragon, 2016, p. 3). There is also great pressure for teachers to perform through proof of significant student achievement data even though all schools are not served equally with sufficient staff, learning resources, and budgets. This inequity is especially evident within high-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural public schools which have among the highest rates of turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2018).

The study of teacher resiliency is emerging in literature. A systematic review of empirical studies by Mansfield & Price (2011) suggests "Multiple individual and contextual factors work together in complex, dynamic ways to shape the resilience of individual teachers in a developmental or cyclical way" (p. 9). Part of resiliency's complexity, they suggest, is that it is not solely a personal attribute. Instead, it also results from a dynamic relationship between risk and protective factors (as cited in Benard, 2004). Due to the multi-dimensional nature of resiliency, there remains "ambiguity about its nature and how to best examine the phenomenon" (p. 3).

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are often underprepared for their first teaching position and tend to leave the profession within the first 5 years if they fail to implement measures required to manage the class (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020), appropriately regulate emotions, or "play the role" of a warm and caring teacher if feelings conflict with the image of the ideal teacher (Brown et al., 2014). The process of emotional labor has also been associated with the "development of professional identities" (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006, p. 206) which could affect teacher efficacy through burnout. In 2019, the syndrome of burnout was included in the World Health Organization's 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) identifying it as "an occupational phenomenon" (WHO, 2019). Burnout is conceptualized as "resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed" (WHO, 2019). Burnout is therefore characterized by three dimensions: 1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; 2) increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and 3) reduced professional efficacy.

As schools rarely communicate emotional display rules explicitly, this can prove problematic for retaining teachers (Brown et al., 2014). There is a high focus on perfecting content without the balance of preparation of necessary daily, emotional, real-world

experiences with students encountered in the classroom. Students are the ones suffering the consequences of the teacher shortage (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Implications for study on teacher resiliency and emotional labor could assist in early identification, intervention, and prevention to slow the rate of teacher burnout and decrease attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; May & Collins, 2017). By having the proper tools and training to address the emotional needs of teaching and implementing at both the preservice and within profession levels, the teaching profession stands a better chance at building a robust labor force and reputation that is known for equipping educators to meet the needs of today's students.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore and understand the perspectives of teachers who have considered leaving teaching and to identify what factors are most highly related with teacher burnout using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Factors measured quantitatively will include surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally felt emotions (NFE) represented through survey rating scales of three teacher sub-groups that capture a wide range of experience levels within the teaching profession. As "experts" who have a lived experience of the phenomenon, these key participants will help to illustrate the phenomenon of emotional labor with their detailed descriptions about its essence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 50). In turn, this exchange will help to articulate the process of emotional labor, bring awareness of the phenomenon, make recommendations for teacher preparation programs, and provide implications for future interventions to teaching professionals.

As illustrated in the literature review, previous research has been implemented on associated topics, predominantly contributing factors that impact teachers who leave the profession. The lack of formal emotional training for teachers in equipping them to navigate the emotional labor associated with teaching remained largely unexplored prior to this study.

Examining factors that sustain teachers as they move from the pre-service to the early career stage will assist in addressing retention and attrition issues. The lack of formal emotional training for teachers in equipping them to navigate the emotional labor associated with teaching is largely understudied.

Research Questions

Burnout is a potential cause of teachers leaving the profession with emotional labor contributing to these outcomes. Teaching demands a significant amount of emotional labor as these professionals multitask "both cognitive and emotional components" (Kariou et al., 2021, p. 3). Teachers engage in daily interactions with students, colleagues, and parents causing teachers to frequently make varied in-the-moment decisions, manage student behavior, and regulate their own emotions in the process often to satisfy the feeling rules of their respective schools. The following research questions are guiding this study:

1. What are the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching?
2. Is emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), a predictor of middle school teacher burnout?

   Quantitative Hypothesis:

   - Null: Emotional Labor is not a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.
   - Alternate: Emotional Labor is a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.

**Note:* Research questions are expected to evolve and change during the study in a manner consistent with the assumptions of this emerging design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Significance of Study

Teacher retention is not a new issue and has been a source of contention across the nation since the 1970s. However, the number of teachers has increased 51.9 percent, while the number of students has increased 9.5 percent. In 1970, the student/teacher ratio was 22.3

and it is significantly lower at 16.1 today (Malatras, Gais, & Wagne, 2017). While evidence is insufficient to support claims of an increasing teacher shortage on a national level, the shortage of teachers due to turnover remains a great cost to the nation. The filling of a vacancy costs $21,000 on average (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2017; Learning Policy Institute 2017) with the annual cost of turnover being $7.3 billion per year. According to Carroll (2007), this cost would exceed $8 billion.

According to a National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) study, teacher shortages are often confined to schools with specific characteristics. These include urban, rural, high-poverty, high minority and low-achieving schools and within mathematics, science, and special education departments (Aragon, 2016, p. 6; Ingersoll et al., 2018, p. 21). Given the specific settings in which shortages are most pronounced, McDole and Francies (2022) suggest, "...recruiting and retaining teachers is less about teachers generally and more about finding and keeping the right teachers, in the right subjects, for the right schools" (p. 1). Long term trends found by the CALDER study indicate two major points about teacher production: 1) Teacher production is cyclical and responsive to the state of the economy and 2) Overall, teacher production has grown steadily since 1985 and is projected to continue to grow (Aragon, 2016, p. 3).

Fischer, Erwin, Pechota, & Syverson (2022) suggest in their "50 State Comparison of Recruitment and Retention" review that there remains declining participation in teacher preparation programs. Fewer high school graduates are interested in pursuing education majors and fewer college students are pursuing teaching careers (Aragon, 2016). Enrollment in Teacher Preparation Programs in 2009-2010 through 2013-2014 included 725,518 and 465, 536, respectively. A 2022 report by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) states that the number of students completing traditional teacher

education programs in the U.S. dropped by more than a third between 2008 and 2019 (Knox, 2022). Additional findings include:

- The number of undergraduate education degrees awarded annually was stable until the early 2010s. In 2018–19, fewer than 90,000 bachelor's degrees were conferred in education.
- Over the last decade, there has been a significant decline in the number of degrees and certificates conferred in high-need specialties, including a 4% decrease in special education, 27% decrease in science and mathematics education, and 44% decrease in foreign language education.
- Despite concerted efforts to recruit diverse students to pursue teaching as a career path, comparatively few candidates of color are completing traditional teacher preparation programs, with 71% of completers identified as white.
- Colleges of education also lack diversity in their faculty and leadership. Deans, associate/assistant deans, and tenure-track faculty are overwhelmingly white. (King & James, 2022)

One strategy employed across the nation is to provide prospective teachers with an alternative teaching licensure through a structured pathway to certification. The purpose behind the program is to provide individuals who already have a bachelor's degree with a pathway to certification that does not require them to obtain another degree. As such, candidates can become a "teacher of record"—taking responsibility for leading a class and often teaching without direct supervision—before completing all their certification requirements (Woods, 2016). These programs can be run by institutions of higher education (IHEs) or by other organizations. In the 2018-19 academic year, non-IHE alternative certification programs existed in 33 states and Washington, D.C. In most states, the sector

was relatively small; only six states hosted more than 10 programs, and seven states hosted only one program (King & Yin, 2022).

Once in the teaching profession, many go on to report overall job dissatisfaction, a loss of autonomy, and limitations in feedback, recognition, advancement and reward. These factors contribute to a negative stigma concerning the profession. In a longitudinal study of a nationally representative cohort, teacher turnover after five years, as measured annually by the combined percentage of "movers" and "leavers," was 46 percent (29 percent of teachers moved schools or districts and 17 percent stopped teaching) (Aragon, 2016, p. 3).

The cost of teacher shortages extends the monetary and into the ethical. Students who are not afforded a licensed teacher with a postsecondary degree in education are at risk of receiving instruction from unqualified, inexperienced, or out-of-field personnel with no training in teacher education. This creates risk in guaranteeing efficient delivery of instructional content, lack of understanding how students learn, and insufficient understanding of how to engage with students in building positive relationships. According to NCES (2022), of the 3.8 million public school teachers working in school year 2015–16, approximately 676,000 (18 percent) had entered teaching through an alternative route to certification program. In 2015–16, high-poverty schools had a higher-than-average percentage of alternative route teachers (21 percent), and low-poverty schools had a lower than average percentage of alternative route teachers (14 percent). Schools that did not participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program also had a higher-than-average percentage of alternative route teachers (24 percent). These data raise even more questions concerning the ethics around every student's right to a quality education, regardless of his or her zip code.

Research shows teachers are the most influential in-school factor in student achievement (Opper, 2019). Creating opportunities for strong teacher preparation, meaningful

licensure, quality and supportive working environments, career growth and other items that lead to job satisfaction among teachers is paramount to the success of teachers and in turn, students (Fischer, et al., 2022). A National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study in 2016 revealed that among five categories of types of reasons given by teachers for leaving the profession, dissatisfaction ranked the highest with 55 percent. The remaining categories included family reasons, lack of administrative support, low salaries, and poor working conditions (Shields, Esch, Humphrey, & Young, 1999 as cited in Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016). Many of the teachers who left the profession voluntarily reported job dissatisfaction as very important or extremely important in their decision to leave. In a study by Ingersoll et al. (2018), minority teachers reported having feelings of dissatisfaction due to school working conditions, degree of autonomy and discretion over issues in their classrooms, and the level of collective faculty influence over schoolwide decisions that affect teachers' jobs. Ingersoll et al. (2018) further posit, "Increases in turnover among minority teachers, especially in disadvantaged schools, undermine efforts to recruit new teachers in hard-to-staff schools and to diversify the teaching force" (p. 21).

According to a new 2022 survey of National Education Association members, burnout and shortages are the biggest issues that educators face from 67% reporting it as a very serious issue to 90% a very serious or somewhat serious issue. Student absences and unfilled job openings lead to more work for remaining staff serving as compounding stressors. The startling level of stress and burnout among educators and largely increased percentage (55%) who say the COVID-19 pandemic has made them "more likely to retire or leave the profession earlier than planned" (GBAO & Walker, 2022) sheds light on a multi-layered challenge to retain educators in an ever-changing society still impacted by the pandemic years later. This 55% is almost double the number of educators who reported the same desire to leave the profession earlier than planned in July 2020. Of this percentage, Black and

Hispanic educators are more likely to retire or leave early leaving the teaching profession less diverse.

For educators who chose to remain in the profession, efforts to achieve teaching goals and positive learning outcomes can cause teachers to experience burnout as a result of the "congruence and discordance between their personal emotional states and occupational expectations" (p. 3). Given the significant change in student and parent expectations of the teaching profession over the last 30 years that focus on versatility and accountability (Kariou, 2021; Anderson, 2018), the relevance of understanding the phenomenon of teacher emotional labor is critical and the discussion is only at the onset.

Students are the ones suffering the consequences of the teacher shortage. Implications for study on teacher resiliency and emotional labor could assist in early identification, intervention, and prevention to slow the rate of teacher burnout. By having the proper tools and training to address the emotional needs of teaching and implementing at the preservice teaching and early profession levels, the teaching profession stands a better chance at building a robust labor force and reputation that is known for equipping educators to meet the needs of today's students.

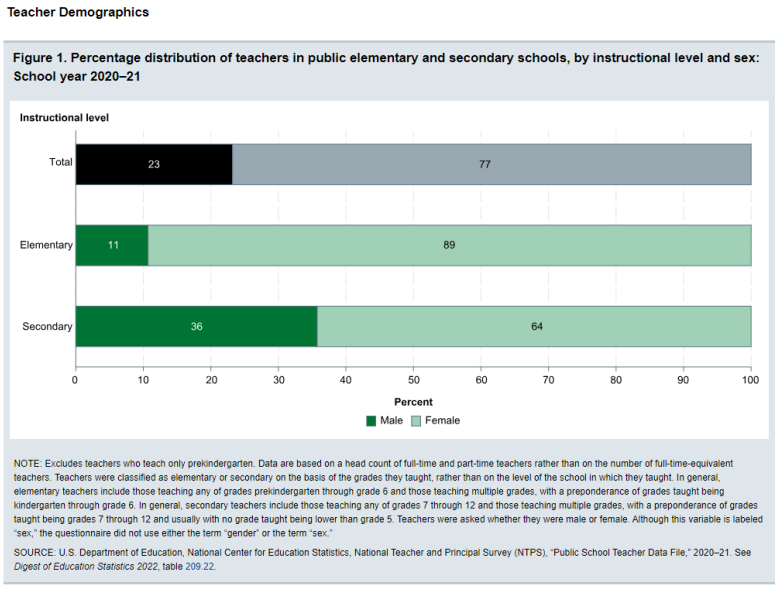
Context

Exploring and examining teachers' emotional modulating behavior along with factors that sustain teachers as they move through their career stages will assist in addressing retention and attrition issues. Though strength and conviction of vocation is associated with teacher resilience, there is evidence that these can become eroded over time, particularly when teachers "no longer experience a profound connection with their students, colleagues, and leaders." These connections require an emotional capacity to uphold and understand teachers' emotional experiences and expressions in the context of their regular processes in their daily work life (Johnson, 2004; Palmer, 2007 as cited in Gu & Day, 2013).

A recent 2021 systematic review of emotional labor and burnout among teachers between January 2006 and August 2021 revealed that only 21 studies fit the inclusion criteria key words of "burnout," "emotional labor," "teacher," "schools," "emotional exhaustion," "elementary school," "middle school," "high school," "primary school," and "educator." Of the 21 studies, there were none found to specifically target middle schools but rather only elementary and high schools both independently and together. This study aims to fill in a gap in literature concerning teacher emotional labor in the context of middle schools. Figure one displays the percentage distribution of teachers across the United States.

Figure 1

United States Teacher Demographics



Source: NCES, 2023

Of the 51 total number of schools within the district, there are 17 middle schools served by 1,108 secondary educators (NCES, 2023). The sample population under study includes 91 middle school teachers with varying levels of experience within a large suburban public school district in the Southeastern United States serving nearly 50,000 students (Sammons, Day, & Gu 2006; Gu & Day, 2013; Horner et al., 2022). The district has experienced tremendous expansion in population at (121.48% since 2010) as well as shifting

demographics (24.83% races other than White) within the last decade. The district's minority enrollment is 40% in which 16.2% of students are English language learners. Moreover, 0.7% of students are economically disadvantaged and are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price meal program (NCES, 2023; U.S. News, 2023). These combined factors contribute to projections making it one of the fastest-growing districts in the region (World Population Review, 2023). Despite its expansive growth, the school district has maintained high rankings determined from 2018, 2019, and 2021 test scores obtained by the Department of Education. Additionally, schools from this district were named the topmost improved for the Midstate area in test scores between 2019 and 2021 (Smith, 2023). Table one and Figure two express both a breakdown of the demographics of the district as well as school enrollment by diversity.

Table 1

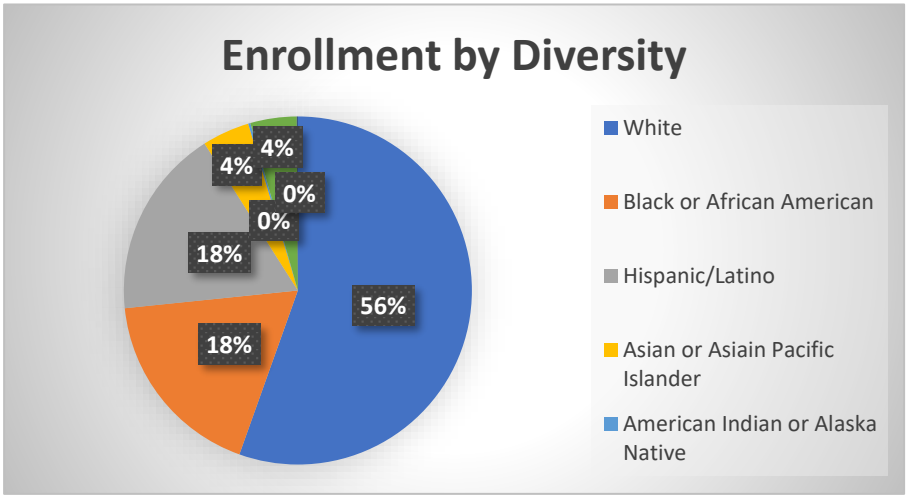
Sample Population Demographics

Race and Hispanic Origin	Percentage
White alone	75.1
Black or African American alone	17.1
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.6
Asian alone	3.9
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1
Two or More Races	3.1
Hispanic or Latino	10.0
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	66.6

Source: United States Census, 2022

Figure 2

Sample Population Enrollment by Diversity



Source: U.S. News, 2023

In order for change to occur on the front of teacher turnover, the importance of teacher retention must first be recognized in school districts who then "develop a comprehensive and coherent human resource strategy to reduce teacher turnover" (Carroll, 2007). What must also be understood is that the teacher retention problem is costly in terms of annual recruitment and hiring cycles that pour into new teachers—most of which end up as fruitless endeavors as often those same teachers leave the profession at increasing rates.

Reflexivity Statement

The researcher will also heavily engage in reflexivity throughout the research study. This will include recording notes during the process of research, reflecting on my own personal experiences, and considering how my personal experiences may shape my interpretation of the results. I will limit my discussions about personal experiences so that they do not overrise the importance of the content in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As an advocate for education with a passion for teaching since I was a young girl, my interest in the emotional labor of teachers has only grown over the past decade as the national teacher shortage continues to loom. Always an inquirer, I have long desired to know how

teacher resilience is constructed and what educational reform might look like to create an environment where teachers can thrive, remain, and attract others to the profession. I have personally known highly-effective and well-liked teachers who leave the profession embittered and left wanting some semblance of recognition for the tireless years they spent pouring their hearts and lives out for students' success. This melancholy saga has propelled me headlong into understanding the perspectives of teachers' emotional labor, contemplations of leaving the profession, complains of burnout, and attempting to amplify their valuable voices by presenting a more robust, evidence-based portrayal of the phenomenon under study.

As a young girl at the age of five, I would be seen most days playing school with my Ty Beanie Babies and younger sister—despite her hesitancy. This innate calling to teach only increased and I began to absorb all of the techniques and relationship-building strategies that my teachers employed on a quest to become the best teacher I could be one day. With the amount of outstanding educators in my school that I was blessed to learn from, I possessed a high regard for educators.

Growing up in a suburban community with similar demographics as the school district under study, I found myself gravitating towards a similar district in which to teach after graduating college. The setting is accredited as a top performing district and, given its recognition, my curiosity for how middle school educators in this district largely remain in the profession despite the numerous, unprecedented challenges they continue to face continues to advance. What individual and contextual factors are at play in these teachers' daily decision-making processes, as they navigate the unique needs of middle schoolers? How are middle school teachers coping with the unpredictable, hormone-raging pre-teens and teenagers day in and day out? What is their why? If they are contemplating leaving the profession, what was the breaking point? Could it have been prevented? How so? Were there

other people in their sphere of influence that sought to intervene when mental distance became evident? If not, where are the guardians of the teacher's hearts? Who is taking care of those who so endlessly care for our future generations?

I have since spent a majority of my teaching career in middle school serving grades 6^{th}-8^{th} in English, Language Arts, and Writing. As I have a direct and personal connection to the teaching field, I am aware that when interviewing my colleagues I must be diligent in remaining neutral to their responses and setting aside my personal views and reactions to instead listen from the perspective of a researcher. This will be achieved by memoing, bracketing, providing pseudonyms, and reiterating how such information will not be compromised or place the participants (or the researcher) at risk throughout the entire process. In addition, multiple strategies for validation will be necessary to demonstrate the accuracy of the information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 260-261).

Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Lens

Stevan Hobfall's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (1989, 2001) suggests that individuals "strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect those things they centrally value" (Hobfall et al., 2017). Individuals also build resources when threatened by the potential or actual loss of these valued resources. These resources may be material (e.g., money, housing), social (e.g., social support, status) or psychological (e.g., personal mastery, sense of autonomy) (p. 104).

In the context of the teaching environment, the relationship between the teacher and the resources within the school community (including tangible and personnel) can become strained producing stress if there is an imbalance. Under COR, cognitions have an "evolutionary-based built-in and powerful bias to overweight resource loss and underweight resource gain" (p. 104). Regarding stress, COR theory proposes that it occurs:

(a) when central or key resources are threatened with loss,

(b) when central or key resources are lost, or

(c) when there is a failure to gain central or key resources following significant effort (Hobfall et al., 2017)

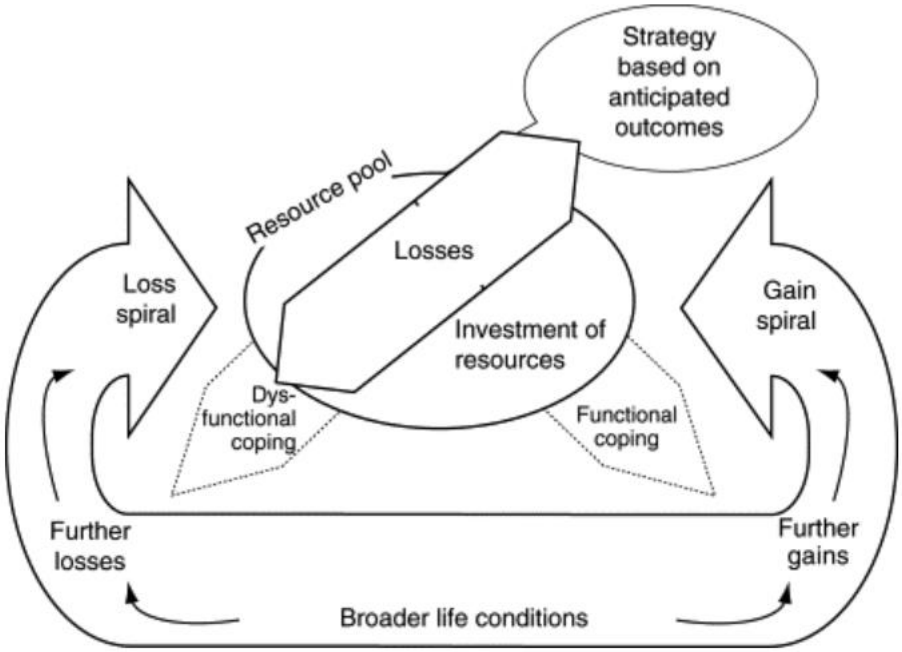
This stress can be from major stressful conditions, significant life events, or a series of events that are "shared within a culture and have a common level of impact. COR contains four principles:

1. Primacy of loss principle: Resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain.
2. Resource investment principle: People must invest resources in order to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources.
3. Gain paradox principle: Resource gain increases in salience in the context of resource
4. Desperation principle: When people's resources are outstretched or exhausted, they enter a defensive mode to preserve the self which is often defensive, aggressive, and may become irrational. (p. 106)

Figure three represents the processes of resource conservation situated in Hobfall's (1989; 2001) framework.

Figure 3

Processes of Resource Conservation



Source: Buchwald & Schwarzer, 2010

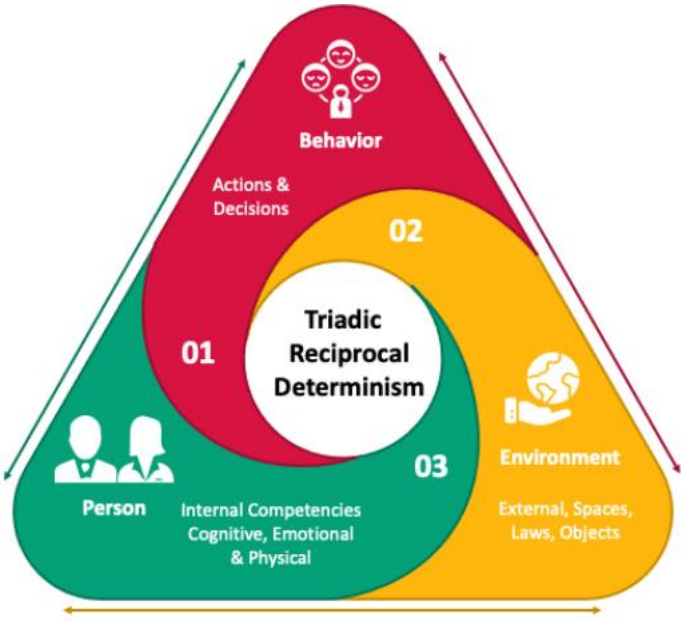
Hobfall's (1989, 2011) Conservation of Resources theory suggests stress results from threatened or actual loss of resources. In effect, as teachers' resources steadily decrease, decisions are made on how to best conserve resources. Conversely, the availability of job resources leads to high work engagement, high organizational commitment, low cynicism, and excellent performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Ventura, 2015).

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive theory (SCT) (1986) (formerly Social Learning Theory in the 1960s) postulates that individuals act based upon the "dynamic and reciprocal interaction of person (individual with a set of learned experiences), environment (external social context), and behavior (responses to stimuli to achieve goals)" (Bandura, 1986). Additionally, all three factors are influenced by each other, or triadic reciprocal causation. The central concept of Social Cognitive Theory is reciprocal determinism. Due to the highly

complex nature of teaching, these three factors are continually at play within the school community. Figure four illustrates key concepts within Bandura's (1986) framework.

Figure 4

Triadic Reciprocal Determinism



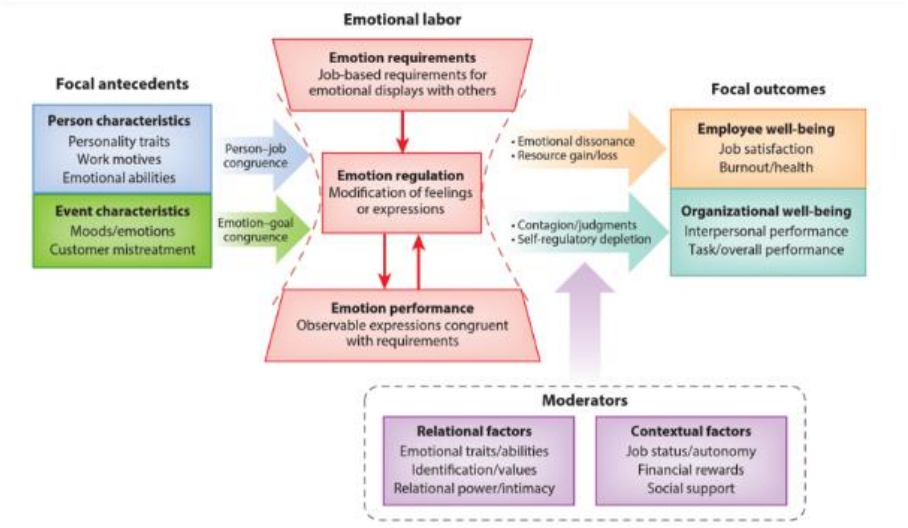
Source: Main, 2023

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory suggests that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. This creates an emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement. Historically, teachers have been incited by society to show appropriate emotions predicated upon school display and feeling rules.

Building upon Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labor and Hobfall's (1989) conservation of resources theory, Grandey's (2000) integrative model of emotional labor includes individual differences (such as emotional intelligence) and organizational factors (such as supervisor support) (Grandey, 2000). Figure five displays details of Grandey's (2000) framework. Figure six provides a summation of the frameworks utilized within this study. Table two delivers definitions of key terms significant to the study.

Figure 5

Integrative Model of Emotional Labor

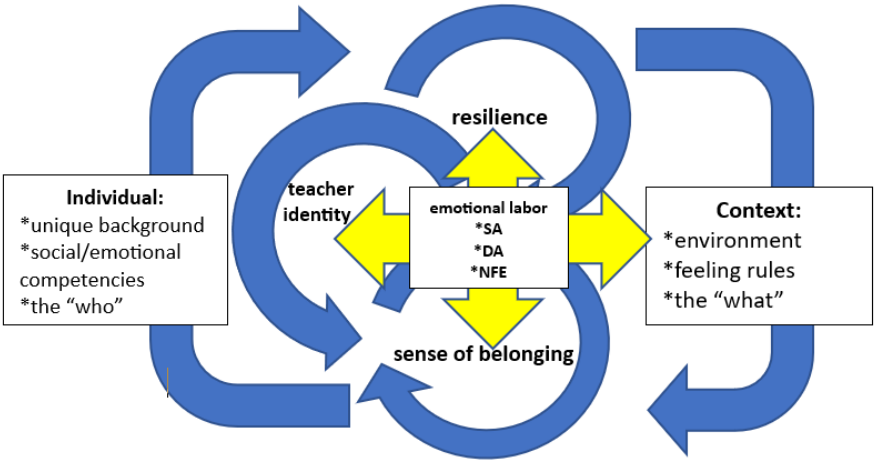


Source: Grandey & Gabriel, 2015

As Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labor involves regulating or managing emotional expressions with others as part of one's professional work role (i.e. display rules) and Hobfall's (1989) Conservation of Resources implies supply of internal and external resources, Grandey (2000) extends to include operationalizing emotional labor in light of teachers engaging in the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals (e.g. feeling rules).

Figure 6

Framework Summation



Illustrating the dynamic and complex relationship among individual teachers and the contexts in which they work, several factors uniquely impact the effects of teacher's resilience, identity, and sense of belonging with emotional labor being central to that process.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Table 2

Definition of Key Terms

Key Term	Definition	Scholar
Emotional labor (EL)	the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for organizational goals	Grandey (2000)
Burnout	state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress	Freudenberger (1975)
Surface Acting (SA)	a practice in which an individual offers a performance that displays the expected feelings they sense are in keeping with the feeling rules of a particular social interaction whether the feeling is genuine or not	Hochschild (1983)
Deep Acting (DA)	strategy for bringing	Brotheridge & Lee (2003)

	feelings in line with observable expressions as required by display rules	
Naturally-Felt Emotions (NFE)	the effort involved for a person to express the feelings that they are actually experiencing in a genuine way	Park et al. (2014)
Emotion Regulation (ER)	The processes by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them	Gross (1998b)
Display Rules	the social norms that dictate what is an appropriate feeling or gravity of a feeling in a given situation as well as when and for how long an individual can feel that way	Hochschild (1979)
Resilience	located in the discourse of teaching as emotional practice and is found to be a multidimensional, socially constructed concept that is relative, dynamic and developmental in nature	Gu & Day (2007)
Mattering	multidimensional construct consisting of feeling valued by, and adding value to, self and others	Scarpa, et al., 2021
Self-efficacy	an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments	Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997)
Individual teacher efficacy	the extent to which teachers believe they have the capacity to improve student learning; a belief about one's ability to perform a task or achieve a goal	Leithwood (2007)
Exhaustion (EX)	physical and psychological resource depletion	Schaufeli, Desart, & Witte (2020)
Mental Distance (MD)	indifference toward one's work and disenchantment with its meaning	Schaufeli, Desart, & Witte (2020)
Cognitive Impairment (CI)	signs of impaired cognitive processes such as focus, attention, and memory	Schaufeli, Desart, & Witte (2020)

Emotional Impairment (EI)	overwhelming negative emotions associated with daily tasks	Schaufeli, Desart, & Witte (2020)

Summary

Teacher retention remains a national concern. Implications for study on teacher resiliency and emotional labor could assist in early identification, intervention, and prevention to slow the rate of teacher burnout and decrease attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; May & Collins, 2017). Recognition of quality teacher retention and further study can bring additional awareness to the field of education and provide discussion surrounding identifying predictors, organizational culture, health risks, and prevention. The following chapter contains a review of the relevant literature. Topics examined include (a) educational shifts within society, (b) emotional labor and burnout, (c) influence of teachers on student character development, (d) teacher impact on student learning, (e) emotion in teaching, (f) social-emotional learning, (g) teacher resiliency, and (h) mattering. Chapter three discusses the methodological approach of the study including the development of Çukur's (2009) Teacher Emotional Labor Scale and Schaufeli and colleagues' (2020) Burnout Assessment Tool along with how the survey and interview data were to be collected.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

"The climate of respect that is born of just, serious, humble, and generous relationships, in which both the authority of the teacher and the freedom of the students are ethically grounded, is what converts pedagogical space into authentic educational experience." – Freire (1998)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) had the explicit purpose of all children achieving high standards and thereby closing the achievement gap by 2014, yet it did not come close (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016, p. 8). Replacing NCLB in 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) came into effect in which school performance is now measured using a system that incorporates one or more non-academic indicators such as combining social, educational, and health services, yet these indicators are chosen separately by each state (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016, p. 9). According to a three-decades study from 1987-2016 by Ingersoll et al. (2018), the data suggested one of the seven trends that is transforming education is the unstable and unequal flow of teacher distribution across states, regions, and school districts. The movers (teachers who move between districts and schools) and leavers (those who leave the teaching profession altogether) account for the largest variations in teacher departures by location—even within the same district with almost half of all public school teacher turnover taking place in just one quarter of the population of public schools. There is great pressure for teachers to perform through proof of significant student achievement data even though all schools are not served equally with sufficient staff, learning resources, and budgets. This inequity is especially evident within high-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural public schools which have among the highest rates of turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2018).

Another trend found to transform the teaching force is an increase of inexperienced, beginning teachers joining the profession. Ingersoll et al. (2018) notes this greener group entering the field as having the highest rates of turnover of any group of teachers regardless of their race. Also pointed out through the Ingersoll et al. (2018) research was a negative consequence of high levels of beginning teacher attrition being "the loss of newcomers before

they are able to fully develop their skills" (p. 21). This becomes especially problematic as a common measurement of teacher effectiveness—indicated through gains in their students' test scores—"increases significantly with additional experience for the first several years in teaching" (Henry, Fortner, & Bastian, 2012; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006, as cited in Ingersoll et al., 2018). The immense, outside influence of high stakes testing performance along with the increased social-emotional needs of students creates the perfect storm of stress, anxiety, and fatigue experienced by today's educators and is driving away prospective teachers. With proper tools, training, and resources that are specifically focused on social-emotional learning and equipping, educators could enter the classroom with strategy and confidence to meet students' needs.

Educational Shifts with Society

Education evolves to meet the needs of people and the demands of society. As a result, the schools reflect society and society reflects the schools (Dewey, 1899; Fowler, 1996). Society and schools are intricately linked, creating a relationship that moves together over time. The pre-seventeenth century schools of the ancient world that once depicted selective elite literate members of the priesthood who taught the exclusively wealthy and their families has since evolved to include male and female, working-class citizens seeking teacher apprenticeship and licensure (Coleman, 2021; Paterson, 2021). By the late 1830s, reformer Horace Mann of Massachusetts would spearhead the concept of common schools to be "a system of free, universal, and non-sectarian schooling" (Barger, 2004). The precursor to today's public school, each district would "provide a school for all children, regardless of religion or social class" (Barger, 2004; Kober et al., 2020). This shift in paradigm for children to gain needed knowledge while learning how to be productive democratic citizens would result in an increased number of new schools across the country which then demanded greater numbers of educated teachers. The need for an increased quantity of educated teachers

became the driving force for yet another new concept of "formalization of teacher training, often through Normal Schools" (Paterson, 2021). Though paid only a third of what men received, women began to enter the teaching profession following the nudge from reformers that women were by nature nurturing and maternal, as well as of high moral character. Schools were no longer bound only by "the more educated and ambitious schoolmasters [who were] young men [making] the schoolroom a stepping-stone on their way to careers in the church or the law" (Films, 2000). By the mid-1800s, most states in America had adopted three principles guiding public education: "schools should be free and supported by taxes, teachers should be trained, and children should be required to attend school" (Kober et al., 2020; Paterson, 2021). Around the turn of the 20th century, immigrants flooded into the United States surging population records. In 1907 alone, it was reported that more than 1,200,000 newcomers had arrived in the United States. Faced with a novel focus on community given the rise in diverse populations, many immigrant families were thankful for the school operating as a "bridge to a new and better life [in which] students looked to teachers as role models, exemplars of gentility and success in the new land" (Paterson, 2021). The Progressive Era of the 1920s championed by educational philosopher John Dewey "challenged the rigidity that characterized many American classrooms…arguing that democracy must prevail in the classroom. Both teachers and children needed to be free to devise the best forms of learning for each child" (PBS, 2000). From the 1960s to 1980s, public concern of the perceived failing state of American schools generated more accountability measures for teachers. Teachers' unions such as the NEA and AFT began to become more vocal regarding collective bargaining rights as the public's increased scrutiny of teacher's effectiveness became a focus of policy reform. The 1990s to present day landscape of the American school is riddled with continual standardized testing, "the call for uniform, high standards in teaching and learning," charter and choice schools, classroom

inclusion initiatives (e.g. IDEA and ESSA), and intensified parental voice (Films, 2000; PBS, 2000). Nonetheless, as society continues to evolve, teachers remain steadfast in adapting to its changing needs.

Emotional Labor & Burnout

Teaching is highly complex work (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, and Collins, 2018, p. 22) and goes beyond assisting students in learning by the transference of knowledge in a safe learning environment. The teacher of today takes on many different roles aside from being an expert in a specific field of knowledge. Teachers' roles instead extend the academic realm of curriculum, standards, assessments, achievement data, and technology (Ayar, 2023) to include: mentorship, mediation for student behavior, counseling, parent communication, school team collaboration, and engagement with the school community (Lumpkin, 2008). Teachers are often viewed as role models (Cruess, S. Cruess, R., & Steinert, 2008) and the responsibilities of the teacher are becoming increasingly demanding in the domain of catering to individual student's academic and emotional needs. This provides opportunities for producing prolonged emotional labor without prior training and preparation for such tasks though present in other human service fields such as nursing, hospitality, and sales (Denzin, 2009, as cited in Brown et al, 2014, p. 207).

According to Hochschild (1983), emotional labor requires one to "induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (p. 7) and thus suggests a clear link between how we feel and how we act. Teachers interact daily with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents as part of their role in the school community. Within each school, there exist societal feeling rules that are the underpinning of the school's social climate, yet these feeling rules are neither communicated by the school's administration nor understood by the school faculty (Brown, Horner, Kerr, & Scanlon, 2014, p. 217). A study of language teachers by Gkonou & Miller (2021) reported

the development of emotional capital as teachers struggled to orient to the school's feeling rules and desired to perform the emotions that they believed were expected of them (p. 134). Hochschild (1983) describes the cost of engaging in sustained emotional labor as "alienating from an aspect of self that is used to do the work" and begs the question of who is in control: the self or the outside influence of the desired emotion.

Benesch (2018) continues to expand upon Hochschild's emotional labor theory in the context of teachers and their educational environment noting "conflict between implicit institutional feeling rules and discourses of teachers' training and/or classroom experience" (p. 63). This conflict can impact the decisions that teachers make along with how—or if—they will express their true emotions. In a report by Edwards (2021), "the interpersonal relationships formed between teachers and students were the strongest predictors of joy and anxiety for teachers, and lack of discipline was a strong predictor of anger. Teacher-student relationships played a strong role in teachers' emotional experiences in class" (p. 18). As teacher-student relationships are constructed, teachers are held responsible for the impact for their chosen method of discourse as role models for students. As such, inherent societal pressure to display the correct feeling rule can create undue tension and stress upon the teacher.

Effective decision making involves both emotion and cognitive processing (Ochsner & Barrett 2001; Damasio, 1994, as cited in Sutton, 2005). A benefit to preservice teachers would be to understand that their own and their students' emotions will permeate the classroom and influence their goals, motivation, problem solving, and teaching strategies (Hargreaves 2000; Sutton & Wheatley 2003). In addition, learning how to modify or regulate emotions while teaching should strengthen beginning teachers' effectiveness (Sutton, 2005). Research suggests three educational contexts in which emotional work training for teachers would be helpful: 1. learning how to express emotions, 2. reacting to the emotions of

students, and 3. negotiating emotion-related interactions with parents, colleagues, and other school personnel (Hebson, Earnshaw, & Marchington, 2007; Oplatka, 2007).

Teacher Influence on Student Character Development

The impact of the teacher on students is complex in nature and is multi-dimensional—extending beyond achievement and into nurturing student character development. Research has consistently found that defining characteristics of teachers as role models who ultimately display positive moral behaviors, virtue, good character, effective decision-making in emotional situations, and professional conduct (Gunes, 2020, p. 4; Lumpkin, 2008; Palmer, 1997). Campbell et al. (2008) propose, "…[t]eachers have a moral obligation to influence not only students' minds, but also their hearts in ways that encourage them to grow into morally grounded servant-leaders as they interact in the world. The influence of teachers as role models is linked to student social-emotional welfare and a respectful classroom culture (Gunes, 2020, p. 13; Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016).

The school setting consists of an intertwined environment shaped by pre-existing factors such as climate, school values, demographics, and socio-economic factors. This environment is then expanded upon with daily interactions and conversations that form the school community. Kincheloe (2004) posits that "the classroom, curricular, and school structures teachers enter are not neutral sites waiting to be shaped by educational professionals" (p.2). Bearing this in mind, an effective approach to pedagogy would be one that takes the whole child into account to include their environment, background, schema, and well-being. According to psychologist Abraham Malow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, "individuals are constantly working to achieve the topmost category of self-actualization" (Huitt, 2007, as cited in Tichy, 2017). Maslow defines a self-actualizing person as "one who has the desire to become more than what he/she is currently" (Maslow, 1954). Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs theory depicts basic needs on the bottom of a pyramid which are

considered “Physiological Needs” (oxygen, food, and water) followed by “Safety Needs” (shelter, security, order, and stability). The next tiers are “Love and Belonging Needs” (intimate relationships, friends, family, and sense of connection) and “Esteem Needs” (prestige and feeling of accomplishment) with the final top tier of “Self-Actualization” (achieving one’s full potential, acceptance, meaning, and experience purpose) (Simons et al., 1987; Tichy, 2017, p. 94). Maslow suggests that these needs must be met in order, and that one cannot skip a need before moving on to the next need (Maslow, 1954, as cited in Tichy, 2017). Maslow (1954) further warns: “One of the main hindrances [that] could impact an individual’s ability to progress through the hierarchy of human needs is society itself, particularly in the area of education. (p. 95). Building upon Maslow’s principle, Poston (2009) suggests that “many factors could work against an individual trying to reach the highest level of self-actualization [such as] losing his/her job, having a family emergency, or experiencing a difficult relationship breakup” (p. 95).

Brendtro (2019) submits, “…meeting these needs is a powerful source of positive emotions, such as the joy of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.” Contrastingly, “deprivation of these needs is profoundly painful [such as] feeling rejected triggers shame while belonging triggers pride” (p. 7). In a study by Taormina and Gao (2013) of 386 adult respondents, results indicated that “the more each lower-level need was satisfied, the more the next higher-level need was satisfied” (p. 155). Factors such as family support, traditional values, and life satisfaction showed “significant positive correlations with the satisfaction of all 5 needs [whereas] anxiety/worry facet of neuroticism had significant negative correlations with the satisfaction of all the needs” (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Overall, the satisfaction of each higher-level need was statistically predicted by the satisfaction of the need immediately below it in the hierarchy consistent with Maslow’s theory. Students thus need to feel safe first and teachers cultivate that culture/classroom environment (Gunes,

2020). Teachers within the school can therefore serve as a "protective factor to help students progress through the hierarchy despite other environmental stressors" (Tichy, 2017, p. 94).

Teacher Impact on Student Learning

Over 50 theories of learning exist in the wide body of literature on student learning suggesting that learning has multiple definitions and is highly dependent upon context (Tricot and Sweller, 2014). For example, a main objective of humanistic learning is to educate the "whole person"—attending to physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. This definition's characteristics include the value of human worth and dignity and improving their character (Nagel, 2013a). In contrast, a definition of learning according to behaviorist theory encompasses "enduring change of behavior resulting from external events, be they conscious or unconscious" and includes classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning places focus on the learning of "involuntary emotional or physiological responses such as fear, sweating or increased muscle tension vis-à-vis some form of stimuli" (p. 14). Operant conditioning is a form of learning in which the consequences of a behavior produce changes that will increase or decrease the probability that the behavior will reoccur. It employs positive and negative reinforcement methods to accomplish this goal (Nagel, 2013, p. 15). Kohn (1999) submits, "both rewards and punishment operate on an 'if you do this, you get that' strategy and are dictated by someone other than the learner" (as cited in Nagel, 2013). This theory is often evidenced in methods of classroom management in which the teacher implements an incentive that is intrinsic (e.g. sense of accomplishment for earning a high grade on an assignment) or extrinsic (i.e. reward with candy for answering a question correctly). Still another definition of learning is found within social learning theory that suggests learning occurs based upon modeling and observation of others' behavior in a given environment (e.g. how to conduct appropriate table etiquette at a formal dinner). Furthermore, the focus of experiential learning theory is "educators' purposeful engagement

with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values" (Association for Experiential Education, 2023; Gass et al., 2012). This could be evident on a school fieldtrip in which students are immersed in the environment of a topic of study (e.g. service learning). Learning defined through the cognitive lens of constructivist theory suggest that it involves "the mental processes involved in comprehension and acquiring knowledge often described as higher order functions of the brain encompassing language, imagination, perception, planning, thinking, remembering, judging and problem solving" (Nagel, 2013, p. 16). This approach connects learning closely to developmental changes (i.e. a preservice teacher's meaning-making process). Table three describes five of the most common learning orientations in psychology and educational psychology.

Table 3

Definitions of Learning

Term	Definition	Examples	Historical Origins	Theorists
Experiential Learning	learn through experiences that can help students retain information and recall facts; engage with the learning environment	internship	Progressivist	John Dewey (1938) David Kolb (1984)
Social Learning	learning occurs by observation and modeling of others' behavior; attitudes, attribution and group dynamics	new employee	Social Cognitive	Albert Bandura (1977; 1986)
Behaviorist	learning can be conditioned through changes to the individual's stimuli and	positive or negative reinforcement	Classical & Operant Conditioning	John Watson (1913) B.F. Skinner (1953)

	analysis of behavior			
Cognitive	learning is internal; intimately linked with developmental changes and a gradual increase in sophistication of mental processes; schema	young student identifying animals from a picture	Constructivist	Jean Piaget (1930)
Humanistic	learning is the practice of shaping the whole person with a view to improving his or her character; personal change and growth	Montessori schools	Humanistic Psychology	Maslow (1943) Rogers (1969)

Learning is a process that embodies five specific characteristics. It is active, builds on prior knowledge, occurs in a complex social environment, is situated in an authentic context, and requires learners' motivation and cognitive engagement (Sirney, C., 2019). This integrated, layered, and intentional process is reflective of the diverse student population of the modern classroom. Learners possess complex brain processes and multiple intelligences of which educators must be knowledgeable (Gardner's Multiple Intelligences as cited in Wilson, 2018).

Emotion and cognitive processing are integrated in some areas of the brain (Ochsner and Barrett 2001 as cited in Sutton, 2005, p. 229). According to Caine and Caine (1994), brain-based learning is "… acknowledging the brain's rules for meaningful learning and organizing teaching with those rules in mind" (p. 4). This helps us to also understand how the brain stores and retrieves information (Frey & Fisher, 2010). In essence, developing lessons in agreement with how the brain learns cultivates student learning.

By playing an active role in their learning experience, students are more likely to embrace and therefore remember the content. These positive associations lead to long-term

academic retention. Another study concludes, “Moreover, attentional and motivational components of emotion have been linked to heightened learning and memory. Hence, emotional experiences/stimuli appear to be remembered vividly and accurately, with great resilience over time” (Tyng, C. M. et al., 2017).

Teacher Identity

The individual teacher leaves just as distinctive an impact on the students they serve. The process by which preservice teachers develop their teaching identity is just as unique as research suggests a connection between teacher identity and teaching approach (Walkington, 2005, p. 764). People embody varying life experiences and these experiences vicariously transfer into the learning environment. The environment and context by which teacher identity develops is integral to the process and outcome (Hargreaves, 1998). The result is that each classroom ‘looks’ different to reflect the varying identities of the teachers (Walkington, 2005, p. 764). Schutz and Lee (2014) posit, “The complexity of teachers as individuals, the context in which they live and work, and their perceptions of the world and the profession dictate their actions (as cited in Simonton et al., 2023, p. 6).

The journey to establishing teacher identity is multi-faceted and is shaped largely by three realms of the school social system: 1) personal experiences, 2) preservice teacher training, and 3) school culture (Chong et al., 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans, 2005; Kitching et al., 2009 as cited in Brown et al., 2014, p. 207). Teacher identity shapes teaching practices as what the teacher does is shaped by both personal (the “who”) and contextual circumstances (the “what”) (Brown et al., 2014). The development of teacher identity forms when both frameworks come together and gives a full scope of the teaching experience in tandem with the teacher identity process.

Robert Kegan (1994)’s constructivist-developmental theory, or Evolution of Consciousness, proposes five orders of progressively more complex ways of knowing that

contribute to “the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of the mind” (p. 9). This interaction occurs between the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal factors via times of instability and reconstruction to times of stability and serves to describe how individuals construct and make meaning of their own world. As teachers are establishing their professional identities, they are increasing in their way of knowing that filters their experience of themselves, others, and their relationships (Drago-Severson, 2007; UT, 2022).

Building upon Kegan’s (1994) work, Baxter Magolda’s (2001) Theory of Self Authorship is defined as “the internal capacity to define one’s beliefs, identity, and social relations” (p. 269). This four-phased process requires people to collect, interpret, analyze, and reflect to form their own perspectives and subsequent interactions and decisions (Magolda, 2001). Gradually moving from external to internal identification and then ultimately self-authorship (self-in-context) (UT, 2022). The key elements of self-authorship include: trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments which may prove challenging amidst the evolving teaching profession with its expectations of maintaining established organizational display rules. This is an important piece to consider as internal processes of identity construction take precedence over organizational goals in which “Teacher sense-making, both a cognitive and affective process, precedes teacher practice” (p. 615). Concern with the affective part of the teacher sense-making process is largely overlooked by the school improvement literature.

Teaching is a personal experience

Teaching is both art and science (Paterson, 2021). For instance, teaching and classroom management skills are two sides of the same coin. Classroom management is described as deliberate actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction, thus providing an environment in which teaching and learning can

flourish (Collier-Meek et al., 2019; Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020). Classroom management hosts three dimensions: the teacher, planning, and the environment (Collier-Meek et al., 2019, p. 349).

Preservice teacher training

Preservice teachers are at a stark disadvantage in their classroom management skills compared to their experienced counterparts as the three dimensions are enhanced synergistically. Self-esteem in teaching is linked to confidence about ability to teach with a positive correlation between teachers' expectations of their teaching efficacy and their teaching practice (Berger et al., 2018, as cited in Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020). Accordingly, teachers' confidence about their ability to teach increases as their exposure and interaction with their teaching environment increases—a behavior associated with Albert Bandura's (1977; 1986) Social Cognitive Theory (formerly known as Social Learning Theory) (p. 159). Bandura's theory posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. It also takes into consideration a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur (LaMorte, 2022). Self-efficacy is task- and context- specific (Bandura, 1997) in nature, thus teachers' perceived efficacy "may be varied based on the subjects which they are teaching, the group of students they are working with, and the settings where teaching and learning transpire" (Fu & Wang, 2021, p. 155).

When considering the building of resilience in teachers, the "positive adaptation in the face of adversity" (Gu, P.Y., 2018) brings to light teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs refer to their "ability to cope with tasks related to their professional role" (Caprara, et al., 2006) and "affect valued students' outcomes" (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Wheatley, 2005, as cited in Daniilidou et al., 2020, p. 552). Bandura's (1986) perceived self-efficacy, however, is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and

execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, p. 391). In essence, self-efficacy beliefs affect how people feel, think and act (Bandura, 1997, as cited in Daniilidou et al., 2020). Suggestions for mentor teacher responsibilities to provide much-needed support for preservice teachers include: 1. dealing with discipline problems, 2. promoting positive self-concept, 3. improving cooperative learning, and 4. building relationships with learners (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020).

School culture

The environment in which teachers work and students learn is an important factor to consider when addressing emotional labor and burnout. A significant handful of teachers' emotions have a major influence on teaching and learning with consequences for school improvement including these seven:

1. individual sense of professional efficacy
2. collective sense of professional efficacy
3. organizational commitment
4. job satisfaction
5. stress and/or burnout
6. morale
7. engagement in the profession (Leithwood, 2007, p. 615).

Teachers' working conditions, in turn, have a major influence on these emotions.

School leadership, especially the leadership practices of principals, is one of the most powerful direct and indirect sets of working conditions influencing teachers' emotions. Leadership practices demonstrably nurturing positive teacher emotions are part of several more comprehensive leadership models including the top-down approach (leadership—teacher—student). According to Leithwood (2007), "…improvements in student learning are a consequence of teachers' school and classroom practices." Specifically, there are three sets

of organizational conditions that influence teachers' thoughts and feelings: 1. Classroom (instructional resources); 2. School conditions (leadership); and 3. Product of policies (initiatives by district, state, etc.).

Classroom conditions can include "student behavior management, tremendous workload, interrelationship with colleagues and students, high volume of work, and lack of time" (Tsivgiouras et al., 2019, as cited in Fu et al., 2023). The strain that results often occurs when teachers' abilities cannot meet the requirements of daily teaching. Over an extended period of time, the daily tension of these classroom conditions can create exhaustion. Teachers who are in a constant state of exhaustion therefore run the risk of becoming ineffective in their attempts towards nurturing student achievement. In a study by Wahlstrom et al. (2010), results indicated that "teacher motivation had the strongest relationship with student achievement" (p. 8) which further suggests the need for optimal classroom conditions for teachers and students to thrive. School organizational situations have also been identified as an important influencing factor of stress.

On the other hand, Kaihoi et al., (2022) submit that "support from colleagues, especially from school leaders, can alleviate the stress [as] the support from colleagues and their network are natural psychological resources for educators (as cited in Fu et al., 2023). Kangas-Dick and O'Shaughnessy (2020) suggest that "school-level contextual factors appear to be the most essential to contribute to psychological resilience outweighing personal factors for the thrive of teachers' well-being" (as cited in Fu et al., 2023). Regarding the product of policies, Wahlstrom et al. (2010) note, "The growth of state and federal policies in the last 15-20 years has led to increased district level approaches to the improvement of teaching" (p. 8). As policy reform has long been a common term in education, ensuring social justice during the process is no small feat. The task of policy makers is to therefore "increasingly ask whether qualified and talented teachers are available to all students, largely because there is

evidence that poor and minority students are less likely than others to experience high-quality instruction" (Wahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 25). Firestone (2009) purports, "For state policy to affect student learning, it must first pass through the filter of school and district leadership and its embodiment of local values, beliefs, policies, and behaviors (as cited in Wahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 28). Taken together, these three organizational conditions that influence teachers' thoughts and feelings are pivotal points of discussion to move the marker closer towards equitable school culture for all stakeholders.

Emotion in Teaching

Teaching is a human act (Stump & Newberry, 2021) in which emotions have been said to be at the core of teachers' work (Steinberg, 2008; Zembylas, 2003 as cited in Edwards, 2021) and are a complex process (Sutton, 2005). Researchers have found that becoming a teacher is an "emotionally-charged journey" (Anttila, et. al, 2016, p. 466). In their year-long qualitative study following a new teacher, self-identified as a 'positive person,' Stump & Newberry (2021) found that the very strategies used to maintain the image of a 'positive person' were a "type of avoidance from situations that produced uncomfortable emotion states." This contributed to a "false sense of positivity, a dissonant between the teacher's reported experiences and her perceived sense of self, gradually leading to burnout" (p. 558). Due to the participant's focus on maintaining a positive emotion, it was determined that the false sense of positivity distracted from the necessary work of processing emotional experiences to improve teaching practice. Schutz and Zembylas (2009) and Simonton et al. (2021) propose that "Teacher emotions have been suggested as a proximal link or meditator between perceptions of the environment and teachers' behaviors and actions" (as cited in Simonton et al., 2021, p. 8).

A wide array of emotions can occur within the classroom walls at any given time. Sutton et al. (2009) noted that emotions ranging from happiness, frustration, anger,

disappointment, and anxiety are all possible during delivery of instruction and that oftentimes these emotions arise from "management and disciplinary classroom interactions" (p. 130). Given the spectrum of varied emotional range, teachers attempt to regulate these emotions frequently due to the belief that it "helps them achieve their goals."

A study by Isenbarger & Zembylas (2006) reported that emotional labor has been associated with the development of professional identities (as cited in Brown et al., 2014, p. 206). Varied teaching environments warrant varied emotional labor. This compounds difficulties of emotional commitment to students (Hargreaves, 1998 as cited in Brown et al. 2014). Further still, Sylwester (1994) posits, "Far more neural fibers project from our brain's emotional center into the logical/rational centers than the reverse, so emotion is often a more powerful determinant of our behavior than our brain's logical/rational processes."

Social-Emotional Learning

One goal of effective teaching is to create responsible learners that exhibit strong executive functioning skills (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020). Contrastingly, the increased emphasis on student preparation for a global, technological, and information-based marketplace through high-stakes testing seems to eclipse teaching the general well-being of students (Lumpkin, 2008). Mathis & Trujillo (2016) warn that standardized test scores "must be used cautiously and only in combination with other data to avoid creating incentives for narrowed and distorted teaching and learning" (p. 4). Presently, the realization of what educational theorist John Dewey capsulated in his 1899 *The School and Society: Being Three Lectures* concerning the relationship between schools and civilization is becoming increasingly pertinent. According to the CDC, "Concerns about poor adolescent mental health and suicidal behaviors preceded the COVID-19 pandemic but escalated during the pandemic" (Jones et al., 2021). Due to the social and educational disruptions caused by the

pandemic, there have been exacerbated concerns about adolescents' mental health and suicidal behavior.

To address this, a preventative method recommended by the CDC incorporates the use of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) to identify potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence in the home or community, having a family member attempt or die by suicide, or any other aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding. In a study using nationally representative data from U.S. public and private high school students in grades 9–12, Anderson et al. (2022) found that ACEs were common among U.S. adolescents during the pandemic and often resulted in acute consequences for mental health and suicidal behaviors, even among some adolescents who reported one to two ACEs." Additionally, the prevalence of poor current mental health and of past-year suicide attempts among adolescents who reported four or more ACEs during the COVID-19 pandemic were four and 25 times as high as those with no reported ACEs during the pandemic, respectively (para. 6). Additionally, the report concluded that of the forms of abuse contributing to adolescent suicidal behaviors, emotional abuse might be relatively more harmful.

The nature of education and its delivery warrant a shift to social and emotional well-being to adequately meet students' needs of today's society. Accordingly, there is emerging a very pressing need for intentionality in curriculum reform that adequately incorporates social-emotional learning (SEL) inextricably with that of the academic standards. Since only 29 of the 50 states (58%) in the United States have determined and provided their SEL standards, there is a great need for improvement in this area (Positive, 2020).

The origins of SEL are rooted in ancient Greece with the philosopher, Plato. In his work, *The Republic*, he emphasizes the necessity for curriculum to be "holistic requiring a

balance of training in physical education, the arts, math, science, character, and moral judgement" with a "practical aim of training for citizenship and leadership" and chiefly, "education for character." Citizens of good character are thus produced by "maintaining a sound system of education and upbringing" (Das, 2023; George, 2011; Lodge, 2000; Murphy, 2015). In the late 19th century, as John Dewey becomes acclaimed as the Father of Pragmatism, his influences on education further the urgency of fortified SEL curriculum. As Maddux and Donnett (2015) suggest, "Dewey recognizes that biological and psychological frameworks are intimately connected to cultural and historical ones, and that all of these are employed in logical and scientific ways to make sense of our experience" (p. 67). In building upon both Plato's and Dewey's educational philosophies and theories, Dr. James P. Comer continued to carry the torch for agency in social-emotional learning in the late 1960s. As founder and chairman of the School Development Program at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center, Comer began the pilot program called the Comer School Development Program. A leader in child advocacy, Comer notes that "children need as much as computers or books is relationships with caring adults…educators can work with families [in modeling how] to create caring communities in schools" (O'Neil, J. & Comer, J., 1997). Moreover, he delineates:

> Intelligence is really the capacity to gain and use knowledge to solve problems and promote well-being [and has] several components: the cognitive, the affective or emotional, and the expressive. People use different terms, but there is now clear recognition that the cognitive is only one dimension of intelligence. To be successful, one needs a threshold level of cognitive ability. But many other things are just as important: creativity, personal discipline, the ability to relate to other people [called] "effective intelligence"—all the things that come into play in problem-solving. (para. 6)

These profound connections between cognitive and emotional intelligence are the framework for pivotal SEL curriculum.

Accredited as the Godfather of SEL and Director of the Social-Emotional & Character Development Lab at Rutgers University, Dr. Maurice Elias reaffirms SEL as "the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors" (George, 2011). Dr. Elias' developments are founded in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) initiative which seeks to "support states, districts, and schools nationwide and convene leading thinkers to ensure SEL is a priority in every school nationwide" (CASEL, 2023).

Teacher Resiliency

The study of teacher resiliency is emerging in literature. While challenges such as burnout, stress, and attrition in the teaching profession have been widely examined (e.g. Ingersoll, 2001, 2018; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Nguyen & Springer, 2019; Gu & Day, 2013), the "protective factors that support teachers in coping with these difficulties have not been studied to the same extent" (Gu & Day, 2007; Hong, 2012 as cited in Daniilidou, et al., 2020, p. 552). A systematic review of empirical studies by Beltman et al. (2011) suggests "Multiple individual and contextual factors work together in complex, dynamic ways to shape the resilience of individual teachers in a developmental or cyclical way" (p. 9). Part of resiliency's complexity, they suggest, is that it is not solely a personal attribute. Instead, it also results from a dynamic relationship between risk and protective factors (as cited in Benard, 2004). Due to the multi-dimensional nature of resiliency, there remains "ambiguity about its nature and how to best examine the phenomenon" (p. 3). The question of how to accurately measure resilience has been a source of contention for many

researchers as Stoffel and Cain (2018) submit, “Measurement of resilience…like other psychological constructs, is complex and not an exact science” (p. 125).

A review by Stoffel and Cain (2018) revealed nineteen different general resilience scales that have been reported in the literature. “While the number of scales indicates the popularity of the construct, it also leads to inconsistencies in how to define and study these constructs” (p.124). The Resiliency Framework by Kumpfer (1999; 2002) demonstrates variables found to be related to increased resilience into a “dynamic framework that allows for interactions between the resilient person and his or her high-risk environment.” This transactional model includes (1) environmental precursors such as risk and protective factors; (2) characteristics of the resilient person; (3) his or her resilient reintegration or positive outcome after a negative life experience, as well as dynamic processes that mediate between the person and his or her environment and his or her environment and the person and the outcome (p. 180). A paradigm shift in focus from the risk-focused approach due to the “pervasive emphasis on the identification of risk factors” (Turner, 1995, as cited in Kumpfer, 2002) to include “protective and resilience mechanisms” (Rutter, 1993, as cited in Kumpfer, 2002), calls for a more comprehensive approach to better understand the complexities of resilience. Kumpfer’s (2002) Resiliency Framework thus “increases emphasis on optimism and hope as opposed to the frustration and despair that can occur from an emphasis on risk processes” (p. 179).

More recently, a systematic mini review focused on the conceptual framework of teacher resiliency by Zhang and Luo (2023) spanned the last decade of research. It was discovered that from 2014 to 2022, of the 172 articles with the key word ‘teacher resiliency,’ there were 22 that measured the resilience level of teachers, used a quantitative measurement tool, and did not have a review or meta-analysis study. Of the 22 studies, the majority, eleven, were conducted in East Asia. Additionally, most research was conducted in

elementary (8) and secondary (7) schools followed by high school (5) and preschool (4). The increasing number of publications indicates that the importance of teacher resilience research is increasingly recognized (Zhang & Luo, 2023, p. 3).

Recent studies focused on whether teacher resilience would be altered according to variables such as age, experience levels, department, and seniority have since been investigated. Regarding the variable of age, results from Liu et al. (2021) indicate that experienced teachers ranging from ages 36-45 have a greater resilience level than others while Brouskeli et al. (2018) and Van Wingerden and Poell (2019) suggest there was no difference found between the ages of those who participated in the studies. In terms of career departments, teachers of the humanities and social sciences were found more resilient than those of the exact and natural sciences (Brouskeli et al., 2018). The pedagogy in language, communication, and Spanish instructors contains more resilience than pedagogy in mathematics and computer science (López-Angulo et al., 2022 as cited in Zhang & Luo, 2023, p. 4). Teacher seniority bears no difference on resilience levels (Brouskeli et al., 2018) whereas Liu et al. (2021) discovered resilience levels of new instructors—with 1-3 years of experience—are lower than those of other teachers. A study by Mansfield et al. (2012) investigated how graduating and early career teachers perceive resilient teachers. Survey results from 200 graduating and early career teachers indicate that graduating and early career teachers perceive that "resilience for teachers comprises characteristics that are multi-dimensional and overlapping, and that views of resilience may develop according to teachers' career stage" (p. 2). Moreover, variables such as school type, school size, and students' socio-economic status were determined to not change the resilience level of teachers (Brouskeli et al., 2018).

Upon examination of multiple individual and contextual factors that shape the resilience of individual teachers, several studies have surveyed correlation between teacher

resilience and variables including psychological, workplace, and teacher's own competence and qualities. Cho et al. (2021) suggest there is a negative correlation between teacher's resilience and depression, stress, and anxiety. Gan et al. (2022) found emotion and resilience to be negatively correlated. Contrastingly, Baguri et al. (2022) proposed that dispositional hope and mattering are positively correlated with resilience. A study by Abdullah et al. (2019) suggests that there is a "favorable association between resilience and quality of life" (as cited in Zhang & Luo, 2023, p. 4). For contextual factors such as job burnout and turnover intention, Liu et al. (2021) purported as negatively correlated with resilience while Van Winderden and Poell (2019) assert job crafting, meaningful work, work engagement, and working conditions (Brouskeli et al., 2018) were positively correlated with resilience. Moreover, Hu et al. (2019) demonstrated that "school conditions and relational trust were significant predictors of teacher resilience" (as cited in Fu et al., 2023).

In the sphere of emotion regulation, use of emotion, total emotional intelligence, and self-emotional appraisal, resilience was exhibited as positively correlated "suggesting instructors' capacity to regulate emotional states" (Xie, 2021; Khammat, 2022; Li & Lv, 2022, López-Angulo et al., 2022 as cited in Zhang & Luo, 2023). Pečjak and Pirc (2022) identified a positive correlation between resilience and empathy. In connection with others' emotion evaluation, the "ability to comprehend the emotional states of their colleagues and pupils" (López Angulo et al., 2022) is generated. Regarding individual factors such as teacher competencies and resilience, a positive correlation was evident (Brouskeli et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021, Pečjak & Pirc, 2022). In terms of the teachers' personal qualities, these included: teacher self-efficacy (Cho et al., 2021; Gratacós et al., 2021), crisis self-efficacy (Baguri et al., 2022), reflection (Ayoobiyan and Rashidi, 2021), and self-esteem (Baguri et al., 2022).

Anger, anxiety (Gan et al., 2022), and fear (Yirci et al., 2022) were discovered to all have a detrimental impact to one's resilience (as cited in Zhang & Luo, 2023). Positive

emotional states such as Eastern mindfulness, Western mindfulness (Kowitarttawatee and Limphaibool, 2022), and enjoyment (Gan et al., 2022) were found to produce beneficial effects on resilience. Mental abilities such as cognitive reflection and metacognitive reflection were also found to have a "favorable influence on one's resilience" (Ayoobiyan and Rashidi, 2021). Bouillet et al. (2014), Fernandes et al. (2019) suggest that the resilience of teachers can be increased by training on resilience and through social support (Park et al., 2020; Suryaratri et al., 2020).

Dimensions of teachers' resilience

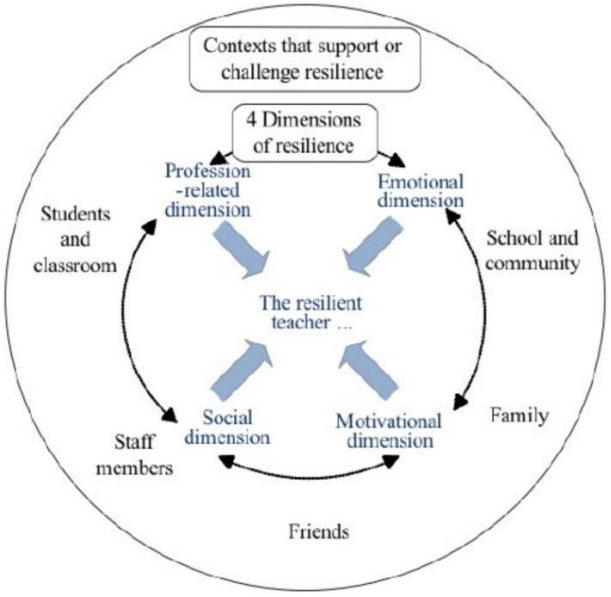
A study by Mansfield et al. (2012) incorporating Kumpfer's (1999) Resilience Framework classified the protective resilience factors along four dimensions which illustrate the characteristics of a resilient teacher: professional-related dimension, emotional dimension, motivation dimension, and social dimension. Professional resilience involves "aspects concerning the practice of teaching, some of which may be traditionally addressed in teacher education programs including organization, preparation, use of effective teaching skills and being reflective" (p. 21). The emotional dimension concerns emotional responses to teaching experiences, emotional management and coping with stress. The motivation dimension aspects include influences such as "self-efficacy, focusing on continual improvement and learning, persistence and perseverance" (p. 21). The social dimension concerns characteristics related to social interactions in the work environment such as "developing a support network, asking for assistance, and taking advice" (p. 21). Daniilidou et al. (2020) report job-related factors that can be strong protectors of teachers' resilience including the "use of different teaching practices" (Klusmann et al., 2008; Mansfield et al., 2012), the "acquaintance with the students and the response to their needs" (Kaldi, 2009), the "commitment to continuing professional development" (Patterson et al., 2004; Sumsion, 2004), and the "use of coping strategies to address challenging situations in the classroom"

(Sharplin et al., 2011) (p. 553). According to Gu & Day (2007), understanding resilience is "unequivocally a necessary condition of effectiveness in that a teacher who lacks resilience in the challenges of contemporary teaching will struggle to maintain effectiveness over time or may not be effective to begin with" (as cited in Simonton et al., 2023, p. 1). Ball and Lacey (2012) iterate that "resilience is a psychosocial skill that all teachers likely need to survive and thrive in schools" (as cited in Simonton et al., 2023, p. 5).

The findings of a study by Daniilidou et al. (2020) propose that the self-efficacy and resilience of instructors are favorably affected. Four resilience subscales were used including Social-Professional, Adaptability, Motivational, and Emotional. While the Social-Professional, Adaptability, and Motivational subscales of resilience partially mediated the relationship of self-efficacy with burnout and stress, Emotional Resilience was found to "fully mediate [the relationship of self-efficacy with burnout and stress] and had the strongest predictive power over burnout and stress" (p. 550). Figure seven outlines contexts that support or challenge resilience.

Figure 7

Contexts that Support or Challenge Resilience



Source: Kumpfer, 1999/2002; Mansfield et al., 2012

In summation, robust theoretical evidence has demonstrated resilience as a key role in influencing teacher well-being due to the environment and emotional state (i.e., Day and Qing, 2009; Day et al., 2007; Fredrickson, 2001; Gu and Day, 2007). As resilience is theoretically formed from both environmental attributions and personal daily experiences (Day et al., 2007; Mansfield et al., 2012), "emotions may be proximately associated with resilience" (as cited in Simonton et al., 2023, p. 6). It is thus "critical to understand how resilience is developed, how it is related to action, and how it can be used to sustain motivation and well-being" (p. 6).

Mattering

For many educators, beyond typical goals of students reaching high academic achievement and growth, a more salient goal of nurturing students' sense of belonging becomes their priority. Linked to benefits such as successful transition into higher education, persistence and graduation rates, academic performance, mental health, and well-being (e.g., Strayhorn, 2012; Thomas, 2012; Meehan & Howells, 2019 as cited in Weston & Felten, 2022), a sense of belonging has long been valued on behalf of students, yet it remains a sparse focus explored in terms of teachers' sense of mattering.

Mattering is a "multidimensional construct consisting of feeling valued by, and adding value to, self and others" (Scarpa, et al., 2021, p. 1). Sociologists Morris Rosenberg and McCullough (1965; 1981) were credited with first introducing the concept of mattering and suggest that "mattering is a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension exercises a powerful influence on our actions" (Schlossberg, 1989; Flett, 2022). Rosenberg and McCullough (1981) identified three components: (1) the sense that other people depend on us; (2) the perception that other people regard us as important; and (3) the realization that other people

are actively paying attention to us (Flett, 2022). Schlossberg (1989) extended Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) to include an additional element of mattering—feeling appreciated by someone—upon conducted interviews focused on what it means to matter to other people. Schlossberg (1989) prepends, "Mattering refers to our belief, whether right or wrong, that we matter to someone else" (p. 3). Accordingly, the sense of mattering is connected to involvement:

> Involvement creates connections between students, faculty, and staff that allow individuals to believe in their own personal worth. This involvement also creates an awareness of our mutual relatedness and the fact that the condition of community is not only desirable but essential to human survival. (Schlossberg, 1989, p. 1)

Comparatively, mattering can be considered as "double-edged in that [it] is highly protective but feelings of not mattering are deleterious, especially among people who have been marginalized and mistreated [who] feel insignificant and devoid of worth in the eyes of other people" (Flett, 2022; Schlossberg, 1989). A study by Scarpa et al. (2021) revealed a strong direct predictive effect of mattering onto well-being and a strong indirect effect of fairness onto well-being through mattering. Thus, mattering is "likely to fully mediate the relationship between fairness and multiple domains of well-being, except in one case, namely, economic well-being" (p. 1).

According to Elliott et al. (2004), mattering is "the perception that, to some degree and in a variety of ways, we are a significant part of the world around us" (p. 339, as cited in Wilfong & Donlan, 2021). Flett et al. (2019) describe mattering as "the feeling of being significant and important to other people" (p. 667). The role that being valued and bringing value to those around us creates a dynamic that is dependent upon the interactions encountered on a day-to-day basis. Pearlin and LeBlanc (2001) noted that mattering is "a

process that involves being both a donor and a recipient of feelings of mattering" thus emphasizing the reciprocal nature of mattering (as cited in Flett, 2022).

Moving beyond a transactional lens and into a person-centered perspective, these interactions can be considered powerful when a person feels as though they matter because it transforms the lives of individual people (Pearlin and LeBlanc, 2001; Flett, 2022). Additionally, mattering is considered a vital source of resiliency and adaptability:

> [providing] a powerful 'psychological shield' for the person exposed to stress and distress…[thus] effective in fueling a form of interpersonal resilience greatly needed to reduce the 'slings and arrows' that can come in various forms of maltreatment and mistreatment by other people. (Flett, 2022; 2018)

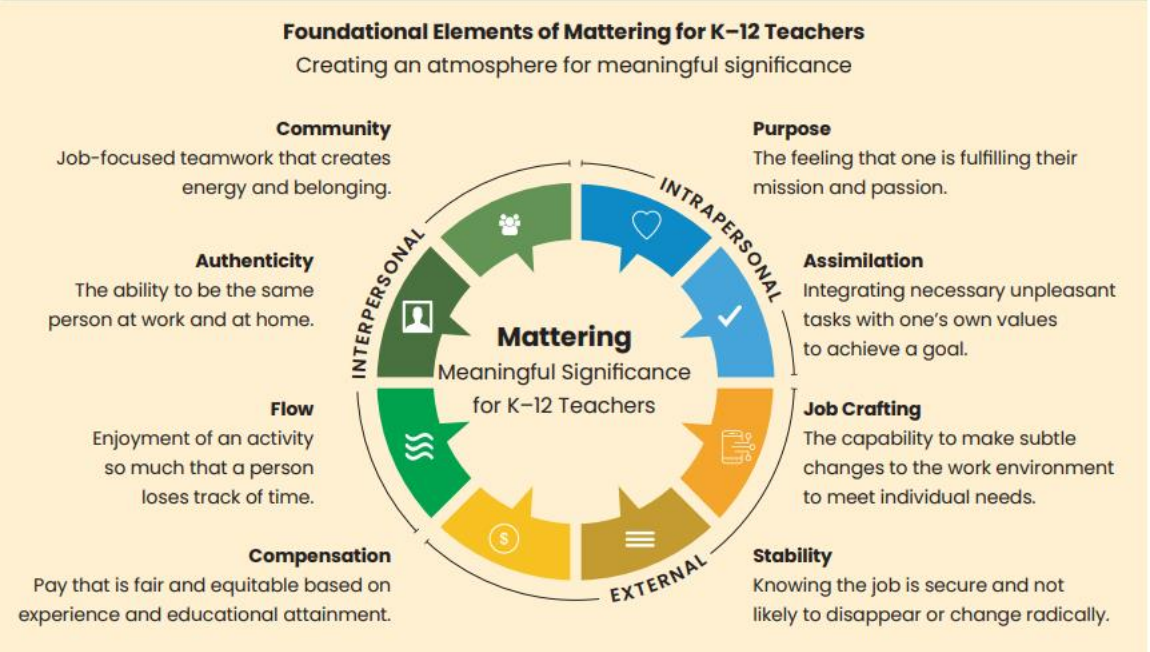
Another aspect of mattering is that it is modifiable. Flett (2022) suggests, "People can learn to engage with others and take part in activities in ways that can foster their own sense of mattering" (p. 5). This is consistent with the view of "mattering to others by having value to others but also giving values to others (Prilleltensky, 2020; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2021, as cited in Flett, 2022). Mattering is also considered "broadly resonant because it is central to how people define themselves" suggesting that "knowing whether someone feels as sense of mattering is essential in order to truly understand this person" (Flett, 2022, p. 5). From young to old, mattering pertinent across the lifespan. It is common to all ages and stages of life. Additionally, mattering is universal, relevant to our current times, and thus has great knowledge mobilization potential (Flett, 2022).

To advance mobilization of the concept of collective efficacy in schools, Wilfong and Donlan (2021) suggest that "mattering holds the key" (p. 51). In Wilfong and Donlan's (2021) study, results revealed a significant relationship between mattering and self-efficacy, change, culture, and organizational health (p. 52). "Understanding these elements of mattering," they suggest, "is critical to understanding how leaders can provide an

environment where teachers matter, feel more satisfied, and are less likely to leave the profession" (Wilfong & Donlan, 2021, p. 52). Serving as a contextual framework of mattering, Figure eight summarizes foundational elements of mattering for K-12 teachers.

Figure 8

Conceptual Framework of Mattering



Source: Wilfong & Donlan, 2021

The teacher who serves his or her school community "devoid of a sense of mattering to others" can run the risk of "lacking the basic sense of personal significance, human connectedness, and social acceptance required to thrive and flourish" (Flett, 2022). In contrast, teachers who feel a persistent sense of mattering to the school community have a "key inner resource that fuels positive responses to life challenges [suggesting that] a clear sense of mattering can buffer various life stressors" (Flett, 2022).

Summary

As expressed in the literature review, quality teacher retention is a complex issue that is multi-dimensional encompassing the individual, context, and interactions within their environment. Examining teachers' emotional modulating behavior along with factors that

sustain teachers as they move through their career stages will assist in addressing retention and attrition issues. Additionally, exploring teachers' sense of mattering is critical to better understand how factors positively and negatively influence how teachers perceive their belongingness within their contexts and relationships. As Johnson (2004) and Palmer (2007) exhort, "These connections require an emotional capacity to uphold and understanding teachers' emotional experiences and expressions in the context of their regular processes in their daily work life" (as cited in Gu & Day, 2013). This study will help to articulate the process of emotional labor, bring awareness of the phenomenon, provide entry points for resiliency discussion, make recommendations for teacher preparation programs, and provide implications for future interventions to teaching professionals.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

"The world cannot be understood without numbers. But the world cannot be understood with numbers alone." ~Hans Rosling
Factfulness (2018)

As illustrated in the literature review, previous research has been implemented on associated topics, predominantly contributing factors that impact teachers who leave the profession along with resilience defined singly through the lens of personal traits. Though strength and conviction of vocation is associated with teacher resilience, there is evidence that these can become eroded over time, particularly when "teachers no longer experience a profound connection with their students, colleagues, and leaders" (Johnson, 2004; Palmer, 2007 as cited in Gu & Day, 2013). As these connections require an emotional capacity to uphold, understanding teachers' emotional experiences and expressions in the context of their regular processes in their daily work life is paramount. The lack of formal emotional training for middle school teachers in equipping them to navigate the emotional labor associated with teaching remains largely understudied. Examining teachers' emotional modulating behavior along with factors that sustain teachers as they move through their career stages will assist in addressing retention and attrition issues. As explained subsequently, the BAT12 and TELS will assess teachers' experiences with burnout factors and emotion modulating practices, respectively. The rationale behind each of the design decisions is discussed in the following sections.

Restatement of the Problem and Research Questions

Problem Statement

Teachers are often underprepared for their first teaching position and tend to leave the profession within the first five years if they fail to implement measures required to manage the class (Mkhasibe & Mncube, 2020), appropriately regulate emotions, or "play the role" of a warm and caring teacher if feelings conflict with the image of the ideal teacher (Brown et

al., 2014). The process of emotional labor has also been associated with the "development of professional identities" (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006, p. 206) affecting teacher efficacy through burnout. As schools rarely communicate emotional display rules explicitly, this can prove problematic for retaining teachers (Brown et al., 2014). There is a high focus on perfecting content without the balance of preparation of necessary daily, emotional, real-world experiences with students encountered in the classroom. Students are the ones suffering the consequences of the teacher shortage (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Implications for study on teacher resiliency and emotional labor could assist in early identification, intervention, and prevention to slow the rate of teacher burnout and decrease attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; May & Collins, 2017). By having the proper tools and training to address the emotional needs of teaching and implementing at both the preservice and within profession levels, the teaching profession stands a better chance at building a robust labor force and reputation that is known for equipping educators to meet the needs of today's students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore and understand the perspectives of teachers who have considered leaving teaching and to identify what factors are most highly related with teacher burnout using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Factors measured quantitatively will include surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally felt emotions (NFE) represented through survey rating scales of three teacher sub-groups that capture a wide range of experience levels within the teaching profession. As "experts" who have a lived experience of the phenomenon, these key participants will help to illustrate the phenomenon of emotional labor with their detailed descriptions about its essence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 50). In turn, this exchange will help to articulate the process of emotional labor, bring awareness of the phenomenon, provide

entry points for resiliency discussion, make recommendations for teacher preparation programs, and provide implications for future interventions to teaching professionals.

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching?
2. Is emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), a predictor of middle school teacher burnout?

   Quantitative Hypothesis:

   - Null: Emotional Labor is not a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.
   - Alternate: Emotional Labor is a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.

**Note:* Research questions are expected to evolve and change during the study in a manner consistent with the assumptions of this emerging design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Philosophical assumptions of the mixed methods approach

While there is no consensus on how to mix or combine qualitative and quantitative elements in research, there are at least seven 'levels of research' that can be mixed or combined. These include the elements: data, methods, design, epistemology, ontology, purposes of research, and practical roles of research with various ways of mixing or combining these 'levels' (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; van Grootel et al., 2020; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) define the central premise of the mixed methods approach as "the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (as cited in Cameron, 2011, p. 96). From a philosophical point of view, there is still much debate concerning justification of the use of mixed methods.

The researcher carries a Pragmatist position assuming knowledge is constructed—inductive approach—and based on uniquely independent experience. Social scientific research is value-oriented (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and

the aim of social scientific research is to solve problems. Thusly, social scientists "do not have to decide only one and are free to choose the methods, data, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes" and "[instead] employ both quantitative and qualitative methods/data when designing and conducting research" (e.g., Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Greene, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). As such, pragmatism will serve as an umbrella paradigm to the research study (as cited in Silverman, 2017, p. 78). Regarding philosophical assumptions about sought knowledge, phenomenology is an attempt to "explore the relationship between the knower and the known" (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022) and thus viewed from an epistemological paradigm.

Role of the researcher

The researcher will culminate the essence of the lived and shared experiences for several individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 50). The researcher serves to observe, record, determine themes and patterns, and convey the participants' stories with fidelity. This will be accomplished by embedding ethical considerations into the fabric of the study. The researcher will also secure permissions from the voluntary participants to be studied (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) via informed consent forms, remind them during each encounter of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The researcher will discuss the purpose of the study and how data will be used. The researcher will also discuss with participants the risks of the research study to include minimal risk as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during routine physical or psychological examinations or tests" (National Research Council, 2014). Participants will be told the aspirational benefit of this study is to bring further awareness of the emotional labor of middle school teachers to policymakers and society.

The interviews will be audio recorded and digital files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. Audio files will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by researchers. To protect participants' identities, names, organizations, places will be masked to de-identify and replaced with pseudonyms. This anonymization will occur as early as possible during the data analysis phase. Participants will have the opportunity to self-select their pseudonym to gain rapport with the researcher. Participants will determine acceptable times for interviews. To secure the research data, the researcher will store all electronic data on a secure server to which only the researcher has access. Data will be hosted in a password protected, secure file in Microsoft Word and Atlas.ti. All composition data will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet in my office and kept away from open access and exposed areas. Hard copies of the data will then be shredded at the appropriate time interval after the research is complete within 3 years. The researcher will destroy non-anonymized data such as audio from the interviews and recordings of the emotional journal log. The steps taken to gain entry to the setting and evidence of approval for entry from the Chief Academic Officer gatekeeper will also be provided (Appendix E) (Andrasik et al., 2014; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Design

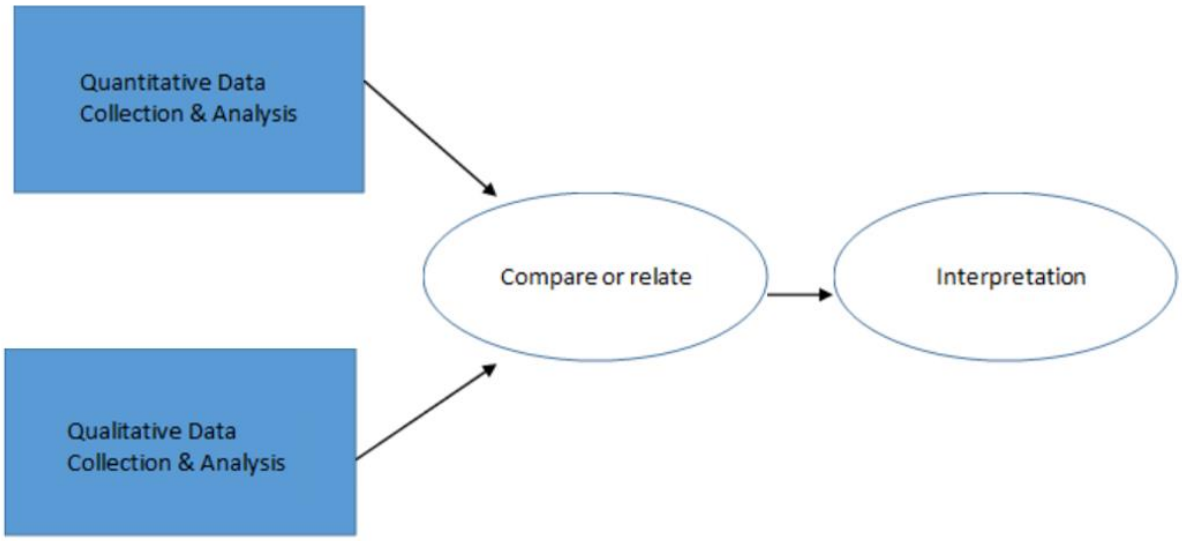
Design purpose

This mixed methods study will address middle school teachers' emotional labor regulation. A convergent mixed methods design will be used, and it is a type of design in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged. In this study, a cross-sectional survey will be used to test the theory of emotional labor regulation (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017) that predicts surface acting will positively influence the burnout complaint for middle school teachers

within the large suburban public school district in the Southeast. The interviews and journals will explore the emotional labor and regulation for 19 middle school teachers at their natural setting in their respective schools. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data is to "directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data" (Silverman, 2017, p. 62). By weighing the two methods equally, each has an equivalent priority as both play an important role in addressing the research problem. Figure nine displays the research design in further detail.

Figure 9

Convergent Parallel Design



Source: Silverman, 2017

A mixed methods research design will be employed to both qualitatively and quantitatively analyze and synthesize data that "provide different types of information—often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively—and together they yield results that should be the same" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 300). By varying the research designs, it will build a more robust picture of middle school teachers' journeys. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2006), this design has a number of

strengths due to its efficient design in which both types of data are collected during one phase of the research at roughly the same time and are analyzed separately and independently using their given techniques (p. 66). The goal of the research design is to "bring together the differing strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods (large sample size, trends, generalization) with those of qualitative methods (small sample, details, in depth)" (Patton, 1990, as cited in Silverman, 2017, p. 77) to generate a more complete understanding of the emotional labor of middle school teachers and its potential influence on burnout.

To produce a persuasive, rigorous, and high-quality mixed methods design, decisions of level of integration, priority, timing, and mixing for this study are addressed in Table four.

Table 4

Mixed Methods Framework

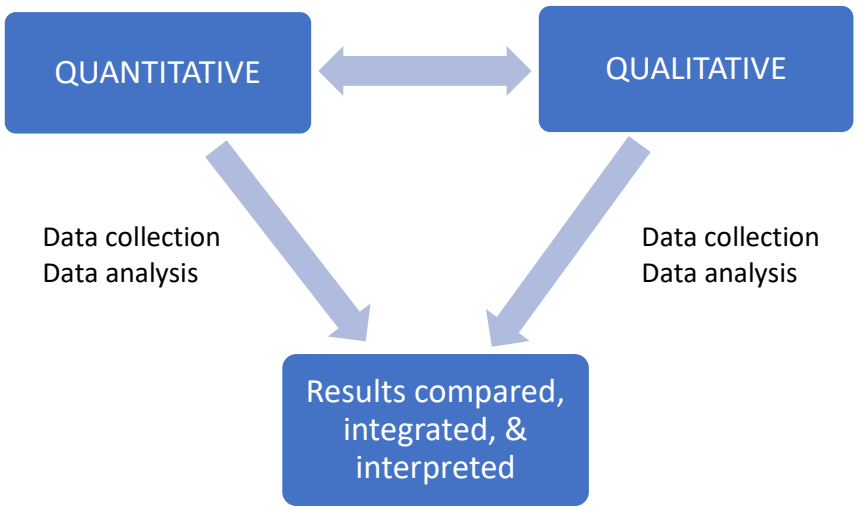
Decision	**Characteristic**	**Details within design**
Integration	interactive	direct between both strands of the study; two methods mixed before final interpretation
Priority	weighing	two methods have equal priority; both play an equally important role in addressing research questions
Timing	implementation	concurrent; both the quantitative and qualitative strands employed during a single phase of research study
Mixing	merging	explicitly brings the two sets of results together through a combined analysis for comparison or interpretation

Sources: Silverman, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018

A convergence parallel model will be utilized as the mixed methods approach to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this model, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results of the two data sets. The intention behind merging the two data set is to "compare the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 300). During the interpretation of the merged qualitative and quantitative data, employing a Concurrent Triangulation Design will best accomplish set aims. The purpose would be to "obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" to best understand the research problem (Morse, 1991, p. 122 as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and to "compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for corroboration and validation purposes" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Silverman, 2017). Figures 10 and 11 represent illustrations for how these will be conducted in this study.

Figure 10

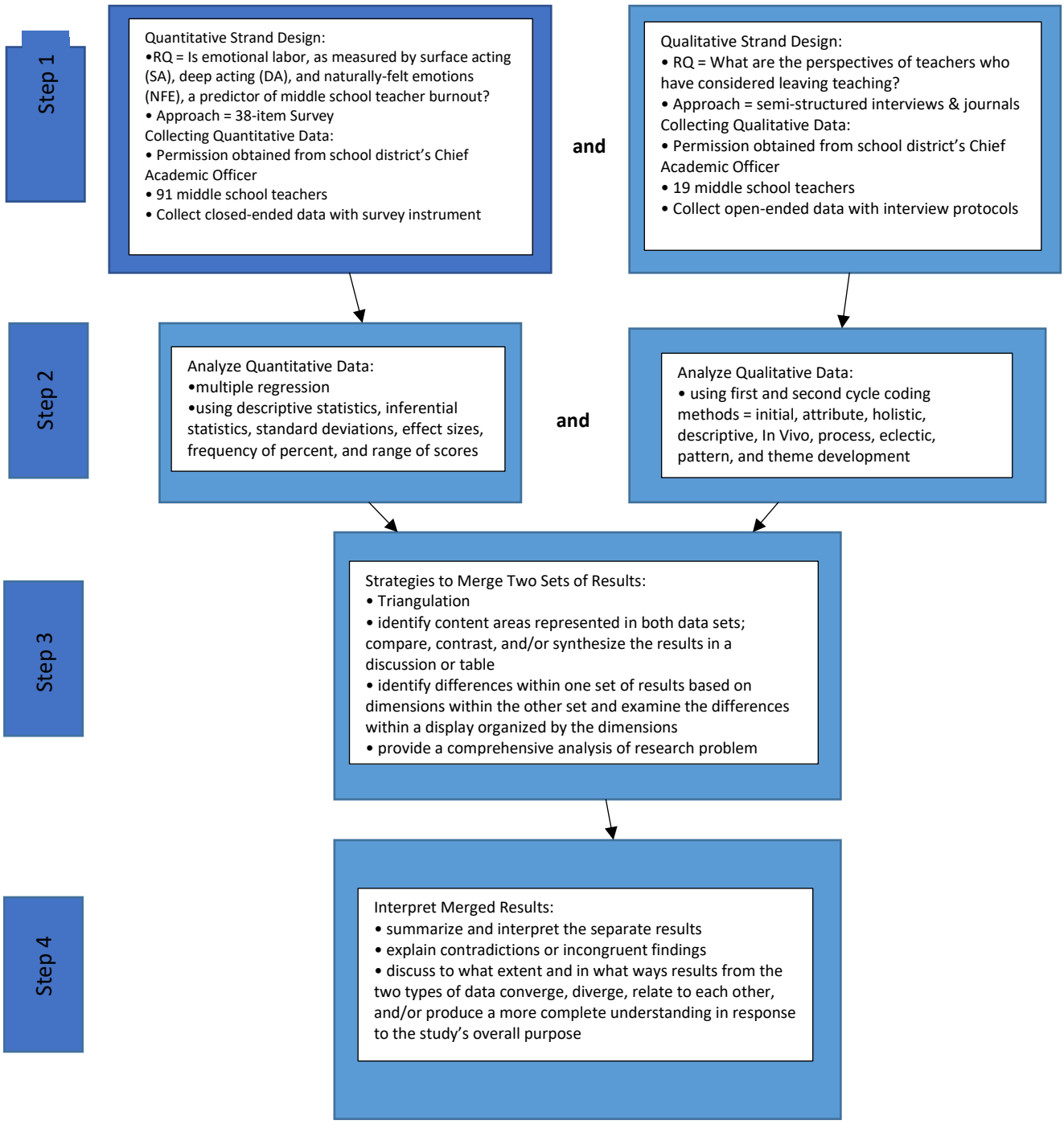
Concurrent Triangulation Strategy



Source: Atif et al., 2013

Figure 11

Flowchart of Convergent Design Procedures



Sources: Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Silverman, 2017

The researcher will conduct the following four steps to implement a convergent design:

- Step 1: Collects both quantitative data and qualitative data about middle school teachers' emotional labor.
    - As these two types of data collection are concurrent, one does not depend on the results of the other. Each type of data collection is also of equal importance.
- Step 2: Analyzes the two data sets separately and independently from each other using typical quantitative and qualitative analytic procedures.
- Step 3: Merges data results to directly compare the separate results or relate the two data types during additional analysis.
- Step 4: Interprets to what extent and in what ways the two sets of results converge, diverge from each other, relate to each other, and/or combine to create a better understanding in response to the study's overall purpose. (Silverman, 2017, p. 78)

Population and Sample

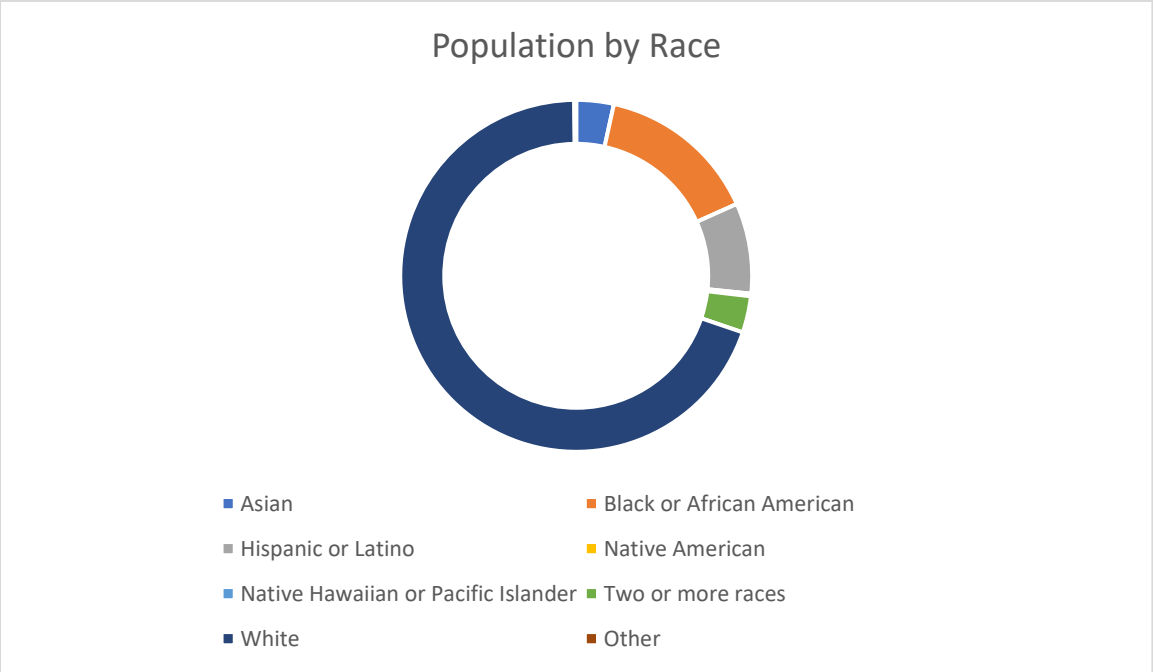
Population

Quantitative data were collected from 91 middle school teachers with varying levels of experience within a large suburban public school district in the Southeastern United States serving over 50,000 students (Day et al., 2016; Gu & Day, 2013; Horner et al., 2020). The district has experienced tremendous expansion in population at (121.48% since 2010) as well as shifting demographics (24.83% races other than White) within the last decade. These factors contribute to projections making it one of the fastest-growing districts in the region (World Population Review, 2023). Participants were initially recruited via a district-wide online cross-sectional survey during the Spring semester of the 2023-2024 school year. Qualitative data was derived from those who volunteered participation, engaged in informed consent to follow-up interviews on the survey, and willingly decided to continue in the study

throughout the second semester of the school year. The timeframe of interviews to expand across both semesters of the school year was determined to capture various, nuanced experiences of teacher emotional labor as the school year progresses. An email will be sent to confirm participation format (in-person, telephone, or Zoom) along with an IRB consent form (Appendix B) and interview protocol (Appendix A). Once informed consent is given, additional emails and telephone calls to verify interview locations, dates, and times will be facilitated. The interview length will consist of 25-30 minutes each and will be recorded and transcribed verbatim to capture full details. Figure 12 details the demographics of the population under study.

Figure 12

Population Demographics



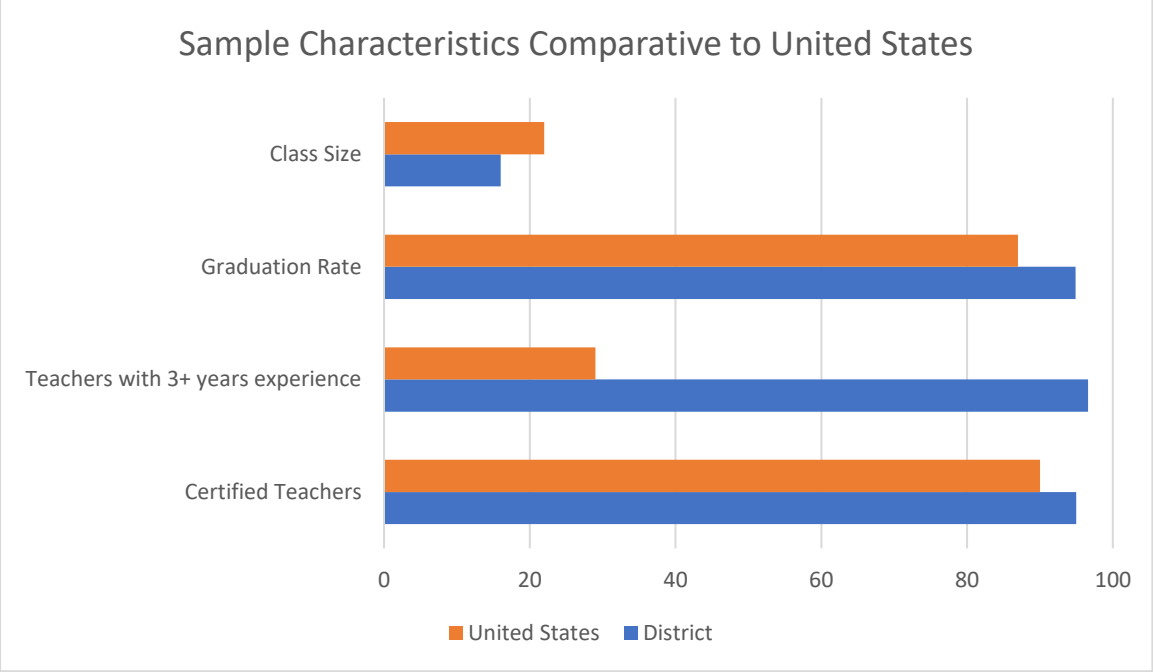
Source: World Population Review, 2023

Sample

The interview participants will be divided into four specific sub-groups to inform analysis: 1) early career teachers (year 0-5); 2) middle career teachers (6-15 years); 3) late career teachers (16-23); and 4) concluding career (24+) based upon survey data (Gu & Day, 2013). These groups were selected to represent the most common and distinct levels of experience within in the professional life phases of teaching (p. 28). The variance in teacher grouping will provide unique perspectives and maximum variation to highlight differences (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158). Three to five distinct teachers will be interviewed within each of these sub-groups in order to obtain this comparative data. Figure 13 displays the characteristics of the sample population under study.

Figure 13

Sample Characteristics



Source: NCES, 2022; Taie & Lawis, 2022

Instrumentation

For qualitative data, characteristics of the Interview Protocol will involve semi-structured questions to include directness, indirectness, probing, specifying, and interpreting. These characteristics will fluctuate and suit the needs of the participant at the time. Questions will also largely be open-ended (e.g. 'How would you view your emotional life as a teacher?') with the majority framed with how and why to a promote a natural, relaxed conversation, and elicit depth and extension on ideas proposed by the participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Follow-up questions may also be used to clarify and/or extend participant responses. With permission, the in-person and telephone interviews will be recorded to ensure quality results with full detail. Handwritten notes to capture the interview may also be utilized where appropriate. Multiple interviews with the same individuals will also occur to increase reliability and validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interview participants will also be asked to maintain a journal as an emotional log for two weeks in which they will write down (or voice message) the daily events as they happened and describe their feelings and emotions in such situations (Ghyasi & Gurbuz, 2023). A sample journal entry prompt (Appendix C) will be provided as a guide. The emotion journal will give a creative opportunity for the teachers to have "reflective practice over daily events and allow the researcher to analyze emotions to decide whether the experience of the teacher falls under the defined phenomena" (Ghyasi & Gurbuz, 2023). This method of additional data collection was determined to include distinctive data collection types that "go beyond typical observations and interview, create reader interest, and capture useful information that observations and interviews may miss" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 262-263). Accordingly, the researcher can thus draw on multiple sources of qualitative data to make interpretations about a research problem. As the journals are personal documents thereby "social products," they must be examined critically since they reflect the interests and

perspectives of their authors (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 130 as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018) and carry "values and ideologies, either intended or not" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 231 as cited in Saldana, 2013).

For quantitative data, a Qualtrics survey design will first inquire participants' demographics (i.e. gender, age, number of years teaching, content areas taught, and certifications). Additionally, the survey aims to provide descriptions of participants' attitudes, opinions, and test for associations among variables of the given sample population. The 38-item survey will also be e-mailed to participants to be completed and sent back to the researcher. The survey questions are constructed from two reliable sources: Teacher Emotional Labor Scale (TELS) (Çuker, 2009), and the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) (Schaufeli, W.B., De Witte, H. & Desart, S., 2019). Items on the TELS evaluate the degree of agreement given teaching scenarios (e.g. "I try to put an effort to actually feel the emotion I need to display when getting very bad news from my family before class.) for each category: Surface Acting (SA), Deep Acting (DA), and Naturally-Felt Emotions (NFE). The TELS implements a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree-Strongly Disagree) that rates participants' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. The use of the 4-point Likert scale allows the researcher to include four extreme options without a neutral choice. The BAT provides negative statements related to work situations and measures the frequency of experience to the given situation (i.e. "At work, I feel mentally exhausted") using a 5-point Likert scale (Never-Always). The BAT considers burnout complaints involving four components: exhaustion (EX), mental distance (MD), cognitive impairment (CI), and emotional impairment (EI). As engagement represents the desired goal for any burnout case, through this framework participants will start to consider the factors in the workplace which are most likely to enhance their energy as an employee. While the BAT should not be used for diagnosing burnout or its causes, it is a measure to assess burnout complaints and can be a valuable tool

to use in the individual assessment process for estimating the individual's level of burnout symptoms (Schaufeli, De Witte, & Desart, 2019). Both the TELS and the BAT were selected as a primary complementary step in exploring and further analyzing exhaustion and disengagement among the burnout-engagement framework continuum.

Selection of Instruments

Burnout Assessment

The measurement for burnout has been largely dominated by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and it is used in about 90% of all empirical papers on the subject (Maslach, 1993; 2011; Lheureux et al., 2017). Yet, the MBI has been criticized on conceptual, practical, and psychometrical grounds since its outset in the early 1980s. These grounds include the lack of clinically validated cut-off values, the lack of statistical norms that are based on national representative samples, and that it yields three different subscale-scores instead of a single burnout score. As representative samples used in previous MBI studies cannot be accurately compared across nations, further replication becomes a challenge. During the writing of this paper, there has not yet been a single systematic comparison of burnout levels between countries using nationally representative samples. In contrast, the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) was found to be invariant across the pilot study samples to justify meaningful cross-country comparisons of burnout scores (de Beer et al., 2020) to include excellent internal consistency values above 0.70 and exceeding 0.80, fit of all the models being high (CFI ranges from 0.979 to 0.975 and RMSEA between 0.055 and 0.064), both first- and second-order factors demonstrating scalar invariance, and the entire BAT with its four subscales were found to be internally consistent in all seven national samples (Austria,

Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Japan) as well as recently Italy, Brazil, and Portugal (Mazzetti et al., 2022; Sinval et al., 2022; Schaufeli & De Witte, 2023). These factors support the consistency and accuracy necessary to utilize the BAT in the context of this study (de Beer et al., 2020; Schaufeli, De Witte, & Desart, 2019; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schutte et al., 2000).

Emotional Labor Assessment

Previous emotional labor scales were designed to singly assess emotional labor among teachers; however, the Teacher Emotional Labor Scale (TELS) was developed to measure emotional labor that teachers perform for their students, coworkers, and supervisors. This dynamic and multi-dimensional format was therefore determined to best capture the research aims of this study. In similar fashion to the BAT mentioned above, the initial evidence for the TELS construct validity, criterion validity, and internal consistency of the subscales were acceptable ranging from .70 to .81 (Çukur, 2009, p. 568). Confirmatory factor analysis results pf the TELS supported four dimensional structures of emotional labor separating surface acting, deep acting, automatic emotion regulation, and emotional deviance. For the purpose of the current study, emotional deviance was an omitted category.

Interpretation

Validity and Reliability

The researcher will use multiple approaches for validity and reliability to "enhance the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of findings" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To confirm validity of the Burnout Assessment Tool construct, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (i.e., Principal Axis Factoring) and cross-validation using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were reported. Regarding reliability, internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha was determined (Schaufeli et al., 2020, p. 8). Additionally, "convergent validity and discriminant validity with other burnout measures—including the MBI and OLBI—[were] reported, as

well as discriminant validity with other well-being constructs, such as work engagement and workaholism" (Schaufeli et al., 2020, p. 8). The ability to provide insight regarding middle school teachers' burnout according to the four core dimensions—exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment—will enhance the ability to pursue mitigating factors.

The validity of the Teacher Emotional Labor Scale construct occurred via Confirmatory Factor Analyses to investigate the factor structure and item performance of the offered four factor model of the TELS (Jöreskog, & Sörbom, 2005; Çukur, 2009, p. 565). Furthermore, the following indicators of fit were applied: a) the Chi-Square Goodness of Fit ($\chi 2$), (b) $\Delta\chi 2$ /Δdf tests, (c) the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), (d) the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), (e) the Root Mean Square Residuals (RMSR), (f) the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), (g) the Comparative Fit Index, (CFI), and (h) the Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) (Loehlin, 1998; Sümer, 2000; Toit, & Toit, 2001, as cited in Çukur, 2009, p. 565). The emphasis on the emotional regulation strategies and emotional labor scale (including three subscales: surface acting, deep acting, and expression of naturally felt emotions) (Diefendorff et al., 2005) of this instrument for implementation within public schools for full-time, non-administrative teachers (Çukur, 2009, p. 563) will serve the context under study. The following mixed methods approaches are listed as follows:

- Triangulation of different data sources (interviews, journals, and surveys) by examining and converging evidence to build "a coherent justification for themes" (Creswell, 2014)
- Member checking with follow-up interviews to insist accuracy of qualitative findings by taking the final themes and polished descriptions back to participants to determine whether participants feel they are accurate

- Multiple interviews with the same individuals to verify and corroborate findings
- Rich, thick description that is particular versus general (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to convey the findings including many perspectives about a theme developed in a specific context
- Reflexivity embedded to clarify researcher bias that includes how researcher interpretation of the findings is shaped by my background, gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin
- Bracketing to suspend researcher judgement
- Present negative or discrepant information by discussing evidence about a theme that contradicts the general perspective of the theme so that "the account becomes more realistic and valid (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)
- Select an appropriate sample size and type that accurately reflects the population under study via power analysis utilizing three pieces of information:
    1. An estimate of the size of correlation (r) (Gu & Day, 2013; Horner et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2014)
    2. A two-tailed alpha value (α) Type I error rate with a commonly accepted alpha value of .05
    3. A beta value (β) Type II error rate with a commonly accepted beta value being .20
        - Once all values are determined, the researcher will input numbers into a power analysis calculator (e.g. G*Power) to determine the appropriate sample size needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 213).

- Report efforts by authors who have used the instrument(s) and any meaningful inferences drawn
- Consistency and repeatability of the instruments (e.g. internal consistency verified by running Cronbach's Alpha to confirm reliability in this administration of the instrument in this setting)
- Inter-Rater/Observer consistency of answers from different raters/observers
- Descriptive and inferential analysis provided for all independent and independent variables indicating the means, standard deviations, and range of scores (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)

Trustworthiness

Credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are the bedrocks for enhancing trustworthiness thus adding rigor to the study. As such, the researcher will:

- Establish confidence in the 'truth' of the findings guiding using questions such as: 1) Are the findings I present based on the data analysis reasonable? and 2) Do the findings reflect participants' views/experience?
- Show that the findings have applicability in other contexts and consider how the findings apply to other people, time periods, etc.
- Maintain neutrality regarding researcher's and participants' realities grounded in data with the goal of objectivity to guarantee study findings are not based on researcher's preferences and viewpoints.
- Provide findings that are consistently documented and distinguished along with the interview and analysis process. To maintain consistency in the interview and analysis processes, akin to reliability, the researcher will consider the questions: 1) Am I consistent in the way I am analyzing my data? and 2) Am I consistent in the way I am doing interviews/observations? (Schwartz, 2021).

Specific strategies to honor the aforementioned foundations within the study include the development of a coding system to appropriately capture participants' thoughts and accurately connect to eventual themes. An audit trail will address confirmability by a providing a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of the study, development, and reporting of findings and including raw data of interview transcripts and emotional journal log, data collection, and analysis process notes. Member checking will be facilitated to addresses credibility by sharing study findings with the participants ensuring that they agree with the conclusions. Additionally, if participants do not agree, the researcher will obtain additional information and incorporate their comments into the final product. Researcher's reflexivity will be maintained by explaining researcher bias and how my interpretation of the findings is shaped by my background, gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin. Triangulation will be implemented to address credibility and confirmability by speaking to the analysis from multiple perspectives as well as data triangulation using more than one data source of interviews and emotional journal logs (Padgett, 2017). The disadvantages of the mixed methods research approach are noted in Table five.

Limitations

Table 5

Disadvantages of Approach

Qualitative	Quantitative
In-person interviews provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees	Surveys may not capture important information or context
Interviews with researcher's presence may bias responses	Potential to misunderstand meaning of questions
Telephone and Zoom interviews lack natural field setting	Missing data
Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive	Need for larger sample size
Emotion journal entries may not be authentic or accurate; may be incomplete	Statistical significance may have little real-world meaning

Documents, Audio recordings, and Interviews require transcribing and/or optically scanning which is time-consuming and expensive	Generalizability of research results in relation to sample size and population

Source: Creswell & Creswell, 2018

Delimitations

To combat missing data and nonresponse rates from participants, Sharma (2022) notes that shortening a relatively lengthy questionnaire significantly increases the likelihood of response. As such, the original BAT23 was reduced to the BAT12 by utilizing items that sufficiently captured the focus of each of the four categories assessed (Exhaustion, Mental Distance, Cognitive Impairment, and Emotional Impairment). In similar fashion, the original TELS included 20 items with a focus on four factors (Surface Acting, Deep Acting, and Naturally-Felt Emotions), but it was instead modified to encompass 12 items in only three factors (SA, DA, and NFE) as Emotional Deviance is not an aim of this study.

As there are 38 items in total (including demographic information) making the questionnaire longer than 30 items, there is potential for missing data or nonresponse rates. Sharma (2022) posits that as the number of questions on a survey increases, the tendency of participants "speeding up or satisficing through the questions" could severely affect the quality, reliability, and response rates. To mitigate the risk of nonresponse rate, the survey is divided into smaller, more manageable sections not exceeding 15 items each.

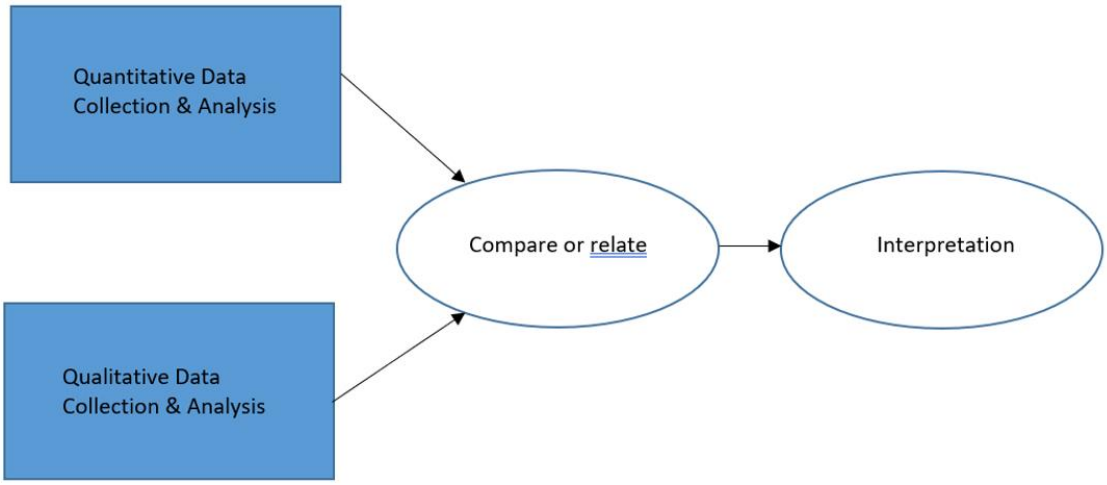
Data Collection Procedures

The mixed methods approach for this study will warrant concurrent timing as the researcher "implements both quantitative and qualitative methods during a single phase of the research study [in which] the quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted at (approximately) the same time" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006, p. 81). Qualitative data collection includes an Interview Protocol for telephone and in-person interviews will be utilized. For quantitative data collection, the 38-item survey including

demographic information, BAT, and TELS will be implemented. Figure 14 outlines the data collection procedures used in this study.

Figure 14

Convergent Parallel Design



Source: Silverman, 2017

Qualitatively, the phenomenological approach is chosen to explore the perspectives of middle school teachers and understand the essence of experiencing the lived phenomenon of emotional labor to then describe its essence in thick, rich detail. The goal would be to fully capture and understand each teacher's unique experience (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher acts as a key instrument in the co-construction of participants' meanings of the lived experience while maintaining reflexivity in a natural setting. Data analysis involves an inductive process to obtain a holistic account (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitatively, middle school teachers who have considering leaving teaching in each of the four chosen subgroups will be surveyed and identify factors of surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally felt emotions (NFE) for given teaching scenarios. These variables will be examined in light of burnout factors.

In order to recruit participants for this study, purposeful sampling will be utilized. As a focus for this study is comparison, a criterion sampling strategy will be employed for the recruitment. The selection criteria for inclusion in the study are teachers with varying years and professional experience (Gu & Day, 2013) levels who could articulate their experiences as it relates to the phenomena under investigation of emotional labor of teaching. Based on this important criterion, all cases meeting it are studied to compare (implicitly or explicitly) with those that do not manifest it. The sample sizes will include 19 interviews and 91 surveys with a range of people as "all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 157). This will give sufficient data to derive meaning statements, depth of description, and varied perspectives (breadth). Phenomenology ranges from 1-325 participants but having too many in this case would deter from giving the extensive and precise detail necessary (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 158-159).

To accomplish this, the researcher will engage in coding to first "Touch the data [so that] handling the data gets additional data out of memory and into the record [turning] abstract information into concrete data" (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 145 as cited in Saldana, 2013). As coding is considered highly complex and incredibly detail-oriented work, the researcher must honor the principles of organization, perseverance, acceptance of ambiguity, flexibility, creativity, ethics, and vocabulary (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Coding is also not an exact set of rules, but it is rather guided by the data that emerge. Saldaña (2009) encourages, "Qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meanings of human experience" (p. 10). When executed properly, however, Charmaz (2006: 45) posits that coding "generates the bones of your analysis. … [I]ntegration will assemble those bones into a working skeleton" (as cited in Saldaña, 2009, p. 8). As coding is a decision-making process (Elliott, 2018), the corresponding code type for each research question is described:

RQ 1: *What are the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching?*

- The Process coding scheme would be implemented as participants would explain what caused their burnout. It would be important to "categorize sequence of events, changes over time, or passages from one type or kind of status to another" (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003).

RQ 2: *Is emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), a predictor of middle school teacher burnout?*

- The Descriptive coding scheme would be utilized to better understand the characteristics of each unique perspective in rich detail. Phenomenological reduction through bracketing would be an essential piece "to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process" (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

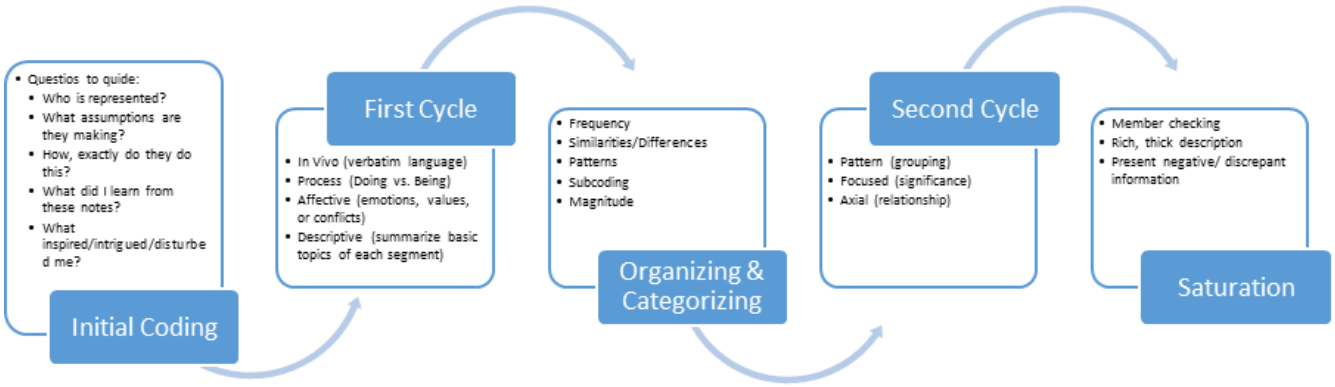
The researcher will engage in an inductive approach to coding encouraging codes to emerge organically during the data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Initial codes will be consulted with Atlas.ti software to compare findings. This will occur through a "collaborative and iterative process to achieve high interrater reliability" (Creswell, 2018; Saldana, 2013; Horner et al., 2020). As an emergent process, the constructed codebook will develop and change based on the information learned during the data analysis (p. 271). Accordingly, the following process is suggested for coding:

- ❑ Step 1: Divide text into a word or phrase/label.
- ❑ Step 2: Sort the codes into categories and subcategories based on how different codes are related.
- ❑ Step 3: Identify a central category and relate it to other categories by generating a theme (Saldana, 2013; Schwartz, 2021).

First cycle coding will utilize descriptive, in vivo, and process coding. Second cycle coding will consist of pattern, focused, and axial coding. While there is no standardized coding number to achieve (Lichtman, 2006; Wolcott, 1994), the researcher will eventually synthesize the coded data into a minimum of five to seven major concepts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) to ensure that the analysis will be kept coherent. Figure 15 represents the coding process for this study.

Figure 15

Coding Breakdown



Source: Creswell & Creswell, 2018

Data Analysis Procedures

The mixed methods approach for this study will warrant concurrent timing as the researcher "implements both quantitative and qualitative methods during a single phase of the research study [in which] the quantitative and qualitative data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted at (approximately) the same time" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 81).

Qualitatively, since phenomenological research uses the "analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of what Moustakas (1994) called an essence description," the researcher will engage in segmenting and taking apart the data as well as putting it back together (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This will occur through simultaneous procedures of memoing notes in margins of transcripts, recording general thoughts about the data, analyzing previous interviews, bracketing, and winnowing the data to aggregate data into a small number of between five and seven themes (Creswell, 2013). Once major themes are identified, they are analyzed and shaped into a general description. For sophistication, the researcher will then "form complex theme connections" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 268-269). The researcher will then advance how the description and themes will be represented by constructing a narrative passage to convey the discussion of several themes, sub-themes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and quotations that capture the essence the findings of the analysis (p. 269). Sequential steps will be followed ranging from specific to general and will involve multiple levels of analysis (Creswell & Creswell. 2018, p. 268):

- Step 1: Organize and prepare the data for analysis by transcribing interviews, optically scanning emotional journals, typing up memoing and bracketing notes, cataloging, sorting, and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information.
- Step 2: Take inventory of a general sense of the information collected and reflect on its overall meaning. Reflection will be captured via notetaking in the margins of the documents. Suggested starting questions to guide this process include:
    - What general ideas are participants saying?
    - What is the tone of the ideas?

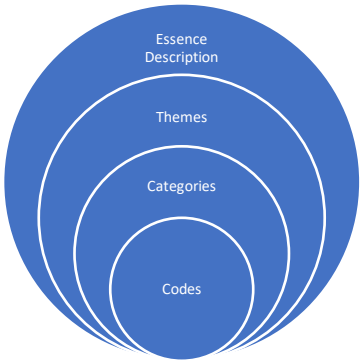
- What is the impression of the overall depth, credibility, and use of the information?

- Step 3: Begin coding by organizing the data by bracketing chunks of text and segments of sentences. From there, the researcher will write a word that represents a category in the margins and then label those categories with a term grounded in the in vivo, verbatim language of the participant.
- Step 4: Generate a detailed description of the people, places, and events in the setting along with themes utilizing the coding process. A range of five to seven themes or categories will be generated from the coding process that will display multiple perspectives from individuals, diverse quotations, and specific evidence shaped into a general description. As an extension of the discovered themes, the researcher will build additional layers of complex analysis by theme connecting.
- Step 5: Determine representation of the description and themes in a qualitative narrative that conveys the findings of the analysis such as:
  - detailed discussion of several themes (complete with subthemes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from individuals, and quotations)
  - discussion with interconnecting themes
  - generating visuals, figures, or tables as additions to the discussions

Figure 16 illustrates the methodology for the qualitative portion of this study.

Figure 16

Qualitative Methodology Overview



Source: Saldana, 2013

Quantitatively, with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics, the researcher will:

- ❑ Step 1: Identify the population and sample.
    - Conduct power analysis to select an appropriate sample size and type that accurately reflects the population under study utilizing three pieces of information:
        - An estimate of the size of correlation (r) (Gu & Day, 2013; Horner et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2014)
        - A two-tailed alpha value (α) Type I error rate with a commonly accepted alpha value of .05
        - A beta value (β) Type II error rate with a commonly accepted beta value being .20
    - Though there is not a minimum sample size for multiple regression, the researcher aims to for the sample to include a minimum of 30 participants to follow the 10 observations per variable rule while also adding at least an additional 10 observations for each additional independent variable to the equation.
        - Effect size

- Alpha (α) = .05 (small); .01 (moderate)
- 40 sample size = 0.14 -0.60 (0.05 small; 0.35 moderate)

- ❑ Step 2: State the hypothesis in terms of the population parameters:
    - Ho: Emotional Labor is not a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.
        - There is not a statistically significant relationship between emotional labor and middle school teacher burnout.
    - Hα: Emotional Labor is a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.
        - Researcher will reject the null hypothesis in the event the p-value is less than or equal to the determined significance level (i.e. 0.05)
    - Burnout = dependent variable (interval)
    - Surface Acting, Deep Acting, and Naturally-Felt Emotions = independent variables (categorical)
- ❑ Step 3: State assumptions and check conditions to ensure that the results of the test (i.e. goodness of fit; diagnostic plots) are valid for multiple regression analysis.
    - Formula: $Yi = b0 + b1X1i + b2X2i + b3X3i + \ldots + bkXki + \varepsilon i$, i = 1, 2, 3, …, n, where Y is the dependent variable, Xs are the independent variables from 1 to k, and the model is estimated using n observations
    - Purpose- determine how strong the relationship is between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable
    - Assumption- one or more categorical independent variables and interval dependent variables satisfying each of the five:
        - (1) linearity
        - (2) homoskedasticity

        - (3) independence of errors
        - (4) normality and
        - (5) independence of independent variables
    - Application- assess the strength of the relationship between an outcome (burnout) and several predictor variables (Surface Acting, Deep Acting, and Naturally-Felt Emotions) as well as the importance of each of the predictors to the relationship, often with the effect of other predictors statistically eliminated
- ❑ Step 4: Clean and code the dataset.
- ❑ Step 5: Perform descriptive analysis for all independent and dependent variables indicating the means, standard deviations, frequency of percent, and range of scores.
- ❑ Step 6: Execute inferential analysis so that inferences can be drawn from the sample to a population.
- ❑ Step 7: Interpret results that draw conclusions for the research questions, hypotheses, and the larger meaning of the results.
    - First, report how the results addressed the research question or hypotheses.
    - Next, report two forms of practical evidence of the results: (a) the effect size and (b) the confidence interval.
    - Lastly, draft a conclusion section and discuss implications of the results and determine if they are consistent with, refute, or extend previous studies' results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Figure 17 depicts a representation of the quantitative portion of this study.

Figure 17

Multiple Regression Analysis

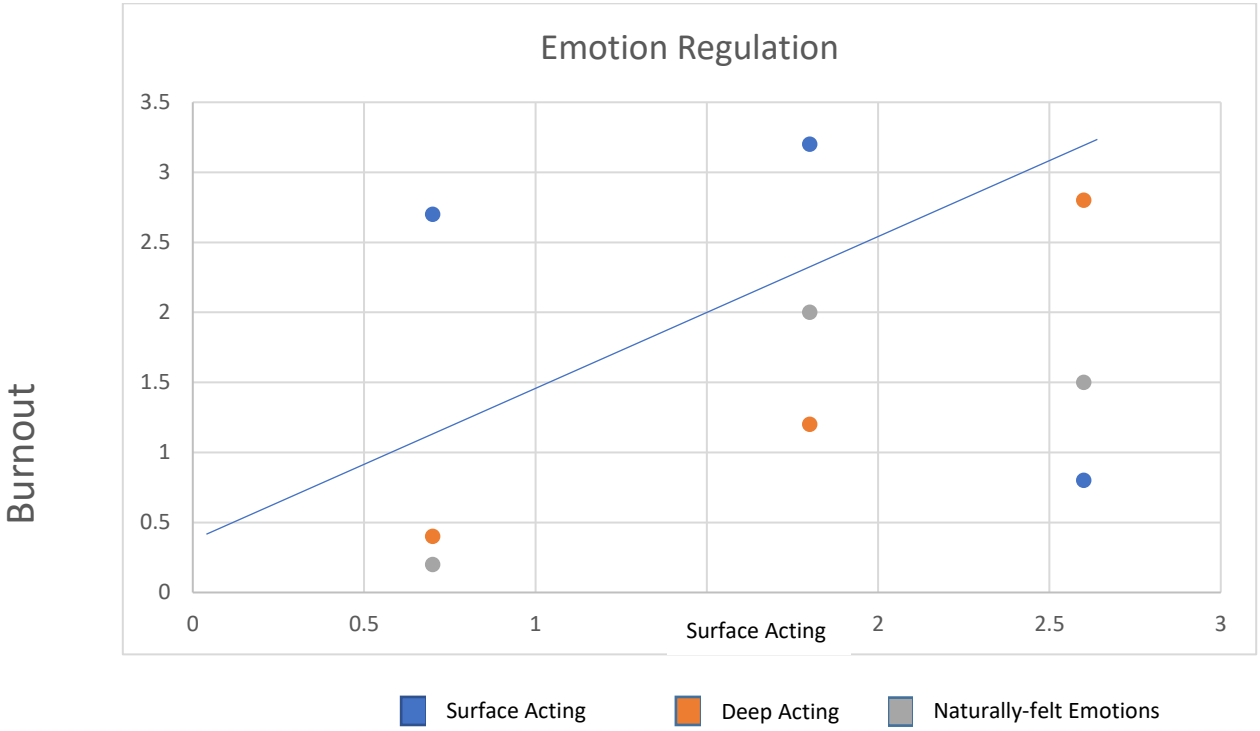


Table six details the logic utilized for this mixed methods research design.

Table 6

Logic of Mixed Methods Research Design

Research Question	**Corresponding Source of Information**	**Corresponding Data Analysis/Reporting Procedures**
RQ 1: What are the perspectives of teachers who have considered leaving teaching?	Interview Questions Journal Entries	Open Coding Axial Coding Selective Coding
RQ 1a: What are early career teachers' perspectives?	Survey Questions 15-38 filtered by early career responses	Descriptive Statistics

RQ 1b: What are middle career teachers' perspectives?	Survey Questions 15-38 filtered by middle career responses	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 1c: What are late career teachers' perspectives?	Survey Questions 15-38 filtered by late career responses	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 2: Is emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), a predictor of middle school teacher burnout?	Survey Questions 15-26 Survey Questions 27-38 Interview responses and journal entries (mixing)	Descriptive Statistics Inferential Statistics Effect Sizes

Summary

This chapter described how a mixed methods study was needed to address the two research aims: 1) explore the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching and 2) assess burnout complaints of middle school teachers through measurement of emotional regulation among surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions. Taken together, the mixed methods design addressed the proposed hypothesis regarding a statistically significant relationship between emotional labor and middle school teacher burnout. The chapter addressed how a convergent parallel design would be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter included a description of the population, participants in the sample, and the instruments used to collect the data. The chapter also provided an overview of the collection and analysis procedures for both sets of quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter IV: Findings & Results

This chapter contains the results of the mixed methods phenomenology methodology study conducted using a convergent parallel design. The following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching?

RQ2: Is emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), a predictor of middle school teacher burnout?

Quantitative Hypothesis:

i. Null: Emotional Labor is not a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.

ii. Alternate: Emotional Labor is a predictor of middle school teacher burnout.

This chapter includes discussion of the analysis conducted, its consistency with phenomenology methodology, and how the analysis corresponds to the research questions. Additionally, this chapter includes sample demographics, using tables and figures to complement the summary.

Qualitative Analysis

After compliance with the rules and regulations of the university's Institutional Review Board, the researcher engaged in the process of transcript analysis from the 19 individual interviews to uncover codes, significant statements, and themes as is described in subsequent detail in Chapter 3. To accomplish this, there were three levels of analysis: (a) open coding, (b) axial coding, and (c) selective coding. In addition, eight emotion log journals were submitted during the data collection. At each stage of analysis, constant comparison between each new interview and individual emotion log journals was used to further refine the data until patterns, categories, and themes emerged. To foster identity

protection of participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the study (Heaton, 2022, p. 124) as well as de-identification of IP addresses.

Description of Study Participants

The following present concise descriptions of relevant educational characteristics for the participants in the study. Nineteen total participants were interviewed during this study.

Sara Lauren (Participant #1). Sara is an 8th grade Science teacher who has been teaching for 11 years. Prior to her current school of three years, she taught in another state. She is also simultaneously working towards her Ed.S. degree.

Tom Givens (Participant #2). Tom is a Special Education teacher for grades 6th-8th and has been teaching for 11 years. He has taught in his current school for six years and serves as Department Chair. He works alongside and oversees both inclusion and intervention teachers.

Susan Sanderson (Participant #3). Susan is an 8th grade ELA teacher and has been teaching for 31 years. She has taught in her current school for over 10 years. This year, she shifted roles from an instructional coach back to a classroom teacher per administrative request.

Jordyn Patterson (Participant #4). Jordyn is an 6th-8th grade ELA Reading Interventionist. She has been teaching for 11 years and works within the realm of the SpEd department. She has taught in her current school for at least five years.

Cheyenne Blackman (Participant #5). Cheyenne is a 6th grade ELA Inclusion co-teacher and is in her 10th year of teaching. She works within the realm of the SpEd department and has taught in her current school for three years.

Isabella Martinez (Participant #6). Isabella teaches 7th grade math. She is in her 15th year of teaching and also serves as Math Department Chair. She is a second-career educator and has taught in her current school for at least five years.

Jack Robinson (Participant #7). Jack teaches 8th grade ELA and is in his 11th year of teaching as a second-career educator. He has taught in his current school for two years.

Robert Sprague (Participant #8). Robert is a teacher of 23 years, is a 6th-8th Band teacher. He works within the realm of the Exploratory department and serves as the 8th grade Dean. He has taught in his current school for at least 10 years.

Michelle Johnson (Participant #9). Michelle has been teaching for 11 years. She teaches 7th grade science. She also serves as the National Junior Honor Society Chapter Sponsor and Beta Club Co-sponsor for her school. She has taught in her current school for at least five years.

Veronica Evans (Participant #10). Veronica has been teaching for two years. She has remined in her current school for both years. She teaches 7th grade ELA.

Catherine James (Participant #11). Catherine has been teaching for 14 years. She teaches 7th grade Inclusion and Intervention for both ELA and Math. She has taught in her current school for one year.

Tiffany Pierce (Participant #12). Tiffany teaches 6th–8th grade ELA. She has been teaching for 10 years and serves in an alternative school setting. She has taught in her current school for at least two years.

Jane Smith (Participant #13). Jane has been teaching for two years. She has remined in her current school for both years. She teaches 7th grade Math and Accelerated Math along with serving on Student Council in her school for a Magnet School.

Patricia Langford (Participant #14). Patricia, teacher of 12 years, teaches 7th grade ELA in a Magnet School. She also serves as Jr. Beta Sponsor and facilitates after school tutoring. She has taught in her current school for at least 10 years.

Christine Jones (Participant #15). Christine teaches 6th grade math. She has been teaching for 21 years. She has taught in her current school for one year.

Joyce Hicks (Participant #16). Joyce is a second-career teacher and has been teaching for 16 years. She teaches 6th grade Social Studies and has taught in her current school for at least five years.

Amy Daniels (Participant #17). Amy has been teaching for 21 years and currently serves in a Magnet School. She teaches 8th grade Accelerated Math and serves as her school's cheerleading coach. She has taught in her current school for one year.

Rachel Thompson (Participant #18). Rachel teaches 8th grade Math. She has been teaching for 23 years. She currently serves as both PLC Lead and Math Department Chair for her school. She has taught in her current school for at least two years.

Barbara Henderson (Participant #19). Barbara is a second-career teacher who has taught 6th–8th grade Art in her current school for three years. She has been teaching a total of three and a half years and hosts the Art Club for her school.

A summary of participants' demographic information is listed below in Table 7.

Table 7

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Teaching Licensure Pathway	Years Teaching
Sara Lauren	Female	39	Education specialist or professional diploma based on at least one year of course work past a Master's degree level	Regular	11
Tom Givens	Male	44	At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree	Regular	11
Susan Sanderson	Female	55	Master's	Regular	31
Jordyn Patterson	Female	38	Master's	Regular	11
Cheyenne Blackman	Female	53	At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree	Regular	10

Isabella Martinez	Female	44	Master's	Transitional	15
Jack Robinson	Male	55	Master's +45	Transitional	11
Robert Sprague	Male	47	Education specialist or professional diploma based on at least one year of course work past a Master's degree level	Regular	23
Michelle Johnson	Female	35	Master's	Regular	11
Veronica Evans	Female	33	Master's +45	Regular	2
Catherine James	Female	49	Master's	Regular	14
Tiffany Pierce	Female	42	Master's	Regular	10
Jane Smith	Female	24	Bachelor's	Provisional	2
Patricia Langford	Female	35	Bachelor's	Regular	12
Christine Jones	Female	52	Education specialist or professional diploma based on at least one year of course work past a Master's degree level	Regular	21
Joyce Hicks	Female	62	Master's	Regular	16
Amy Daniels	Female	43	At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree	Regular	21
Rachel Thompson	Female	53	Bachelor's	Regular	23
Barbara Henderson	Female	54	Master's	Temporary	3.5

[1]

Findings

From the 19 interviews, eight emotion log journals, and ongoing memos, 224 initial codes were compiled. The codes were further condensed into 77 categories that ultimately

[1] To foster identity protection of participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the study (Heaton, 2022, p. 124)

yielded seven themes. Table 8 portrays discovered themes, representative categories, and sample codes.

Table 8

Themes, Categories, and Sample Codes

Themes	**Categories**	**Sample Codes**
Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance	Teacher Experience at School Home Life Work Expectations Support from Outside School Boundaries	schedule management constraints balance duties
Value System of Student-Centered Care	Teacher-Student Relationships Student Experience Student Success Prioritization	compassion fulfillment sense of purpose duty
Not Enough to Go Around	Teacher Needs Consistent Insufficiency Workload Realistic Expectations	experience resources time student needs self decompress
A Tired Teacher	Emotional Turmoil School Environment Teacher Efficacy Classroom Management Physical Wellbeing	exhaustion mental processing overwhelm unpredictable anxiety stress
Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance	Support Within School Climate Productivity Contribution	friendship support group safety vulnerability
Administration Sets the Tone	Culture Assistance Professional Challenges Valued Asset	environment backing fortunate protection
Bottling Up or Spewing Out	Emotion Regulation Outside Influences Emotional Wellbeing	emotional suppression commitment to change personal growth

	Perspective	reflection

The researcher explored the perspectives of nineteen middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching from within four distinct career stage categories. The intention of the study was to better understand the teachers' lived experiences along with factors that contributed to their consideration to leave the teaching profession. These key teachers illustrated the phenomenon of emotional labor and provided insight into other facets of their teaching journey. Seven themes emerged from their collective interviews and are highlighted in detail below.

Theme 1: Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance

Few teachers were able to concisely provide strategies for maintaining a healthy emotional balance between work and home, while many expressed difficulty in providing a clear method. In multiple occasions during the interviews, participants responded with a hint of laughter and uncertainty regarding their current balanced status. It was not uncommon to hear them question whether or not they did maintain balance. Often some would explicitly say that their work-life balance did not grant any balance but rather overrid their lives. For example, Isabella Martinez expressed: "I don't have a personal life!" The pace of the school day was often described as rushed, hurried, and packed full with attention to accommodating students' academic and social needs. Christine Jones commented: "I don't feel like I have a moment to breathe throughout the day." Others conveyed strategies to protect their work-life balance that included just shutting it off and keeping the boundaries. Prioritizing preserving her wellbeing, mid-career teacher Tiffany Pierce communicated her ability to balance: "I learned a long time ago that there's always going to be more work tomorrow. So, I leave, and I leave work at work so that I can have a restful evening." Teachers also shared liking their

balance, imbedding physical activity into their daily routine, and living in the community in which their school was located.

The desire for wanting an emotionally balanced work and home life was echoed across the career stages. Teachers often began their response with a hesitant pause then became quite reflective. There was facial evidence of their wheels turning as they formulated their truth. As they began mulling over a concept that they were still yet processing, it was as if the 'what' were there—being keenly aware of their busyness—but the 'how' of how to best remedy it seemed a distant goal. Late-and second career teacher Joyce Hicks admitted, "I think I need to do better at a balanced of physically taking care of myself and planning more little road trips and things." Another mid-career teacher, Cheyenne Blackman, stated: "I want to have a much busier social life, but a lot of times by the time I leave here I'm done. I don't wanna look at people. I don't wanna talk to people. I've used it up. There are no more words for the day. I'm done." Even with the best of efforts, efficiently meeting the demands of the teaching workload without occupying personal time eluded even the most seasoned teachers late in their career. Coming to terms with the workload of teaching and the necessary invasion into personal time, late-career teacher, Amy Daniels, remarked:

> I feel like I really do use my time well, like at school during my prep period and everything. But, I do spend time on the weekends and at home at night grading papers, looking at ideas for lesson plans. And it's just one of the few professions that, good, bad, or indifferent, it takes time outside of the day—unless you're just really one of those people, and I don't know very many of those people that have been able to walk away at 3:00 and come back at 8:00, and they don't touch it in between.

The cost of seizing every minute of the school day to complete the required duties of teaching so that personal time was protected came at the price of physical fatigue. Christine Jones

shared how she tries to utilize every minute of the school day so that she does not have to stay after school by utilizing her PLC and their collective planning time:

> My team meets every single day during planning. We're not required to. We chose to do that as a team…It's a rare thing for us to take anything home or do anything outside of school hours…But that means that I don't have a moment to rest.

Another late-career teacher, Rachel Thompson, noted her frustration between feeling like she must often make a choice between demands at home and at work:

> I tried my best to leave it all here and let me do it. Sometimes at night, when I get ready to sit down and work, I get frustrated that I have to do that because there's so many other things like [household chores and spending time with family] and I do it. But, in the back of my mind, all I'm thinking about is, 'Oh, I have so much I need to do. I've gotta get ready for tomorrow.

Regarding guarding personal mental health, Patricia Langford divulged a shift in her frame of mind given her personal experience of the mental taxation that can come with teaching:

> I have been much more adamant about speaking about mental health to others. I don't take anything home. I know it sounds terrible, but I am very much a 'You pay me from 7:45 to 3:15, so this is the chunk of me that you get. And so, hopefully, I use that wisely.

Finding service through his niche in the school community as a way to recharge, late-career teacher and Dean, Robert Sprague, noted in his emotion log journal:

> *The day ended after 9:00 p.m. tonight as we finished school and then hosted a jazz in-service for local educators. Although it makes for a long day, free food and performing good music with friends is an excellent way to refresh the spirit and end a taxing week.* (personal communication, February 23, 2024)

Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance described experiences that teachers faced regarding internal navigation of how to best prioritize their home lives and students' needs parallel to external pressures faced in maintaining the expectations of their teaching profession. The tension between how to win as an educator and personally at home without feeling guilty about giving in either area too much weighed heavily on teacher's minds. It became evident that the tension between maintaining a healthy work-life balance was a culprit of stress. Many teachers were torn between how to become successful at both work and home without sacrificing too much on either side. This often led to feelings of frustration and highlighted a need for teachers to have an example of how to accomplish their much-desired goal to excel in both their personal and professional realms. Table 9 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 9

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance	schedule management constraints balance duties	"Good and fulfilled but overwhelmed. There's just so much to do outside of the actual teaching: field trips, math competitions, student council, extra support for students, enrichment activities, meetings, PDs…The list goes on!" (Jane Smith, personal communication, February 21, 2024)	Teaching can be both fulfilling and overwhelming as teachers manage their schedules in service to the school community in various contexts.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 2: Value System of Student-Centered Care

Notoriously 'others-first, self-last' minded, teachers expressed a deep value for putting students' needs first—even at the risk of neglecting their own needs—along with a desire to be a highly effective teacher for students. Teachers expressed a selfless attitude

often referring to their students as ‘kids’ rather than ‘students’ indicating a parental association. Such common phrases reverberated throughout the interviews: “It’s for the kids,” “They need to see a positive role model,” “You get attached to them and then they change placements,” “I worry about those kids that you know are hungry,” “Tomorrow's another day, and we're gonna try this again.” The sense of deep responsibility to serve and fulfilling the appropriate roles of both educator and student advocate created a canopy that illustrated the ‘why’ behind their choice to become an educator.

Full of compassion, Catherine James cried, “There's so many of these kids that you just think, ‘If I could take home and let them have a normal stable household.’” An early career teacher, Jane Smith, emphasized: “I think that’s one of the reasons I stay is I really just don’t know that I could find this level of enjoyment, albeit stress, but enjoyment in another field.” Sara Lauren conveyed a strong sense of duty and God-given purpose in her convictions towards her role as a teacher that she strives to honor disclosing: “I just refuse to make somebody else suffer because what's going on in my life, that's not their fault…[noting the responsibility of] not wanting to fail students and not wanting to fail at your job.” The constant two-sided coin of prioritizing students’ needs at the price of self-sacrifice permeated teachers’ responses. Despite the personal strain, Veronica Evans, early-career teacher, reflected joy and her aspiration to be the best teacher for students in her emotion log journal:

> *Everyone was WAY more engaged today. I think they finally got the hang of our mystery game. A lot of them figured out "who dunnit," so they were proud of themselves. Two things to note: 1) My PLC went over our classes' strengths and weaknesses. Felt better knowing that all of our kids seem to be struggling with the same things. It means I'm doing a halfway decent job. Phew. 2) Had my post-conference today (it was moved from last week). It went well! My AP said she liked the lesson, thought my questions were great, thought the*

> *feedback was solid…and she was impressed by how well the kids were analyzing/understanding the text. That last part is especially good because it was a HARD text…She even used my differentiated assignment as an example for another teacher who needed help! Yay! I haven't looked at my scores yet, but who cares. What matters to me is the qualitative feedback…I still want to be an effective teacher. I want to know that my kids are walking out of my classroom better thinkers and better writers who are more equipped to handle their academic and personal worlds.* (personal communication, February 13, 2024)

Not only were students frequently seen as children with basic needs for compassion, a safe environment, and deserving of an effective teacher, but there also emerged the need for students to experience a teacher with an outward appearance of stable emotions. Ms. Smith remarked, “I’m positive with my kids like all day long. Even if something’s going on with me, honestly, I just don't let my kids know it at all. I'll just smile through it.” In similar fashion, but with over 10 years difference in teaching experience, Joyce Hicks voiced, “A big part of what my kids are learning from me is how I react to things [so I] keep that in mind—even when tired or frustrated—I’ll keep going [trying] to be positive as much as possible.” Reflecting on her personal journey and how it influences her teaching, Jordyn Patterson spoke of ongoing identity management with a savior complex:

> I recognize whenever that is impacting my emotional regulation. So, I can kind of see, okay, right now, I'm just trying to play the role of savior, and that is not beneficial for me, and I cannot actually save. So, I need to remind myself of what I can do and what is possible within my realm to remove that responsibility for me.

Amidst the overflow of care for students, the notion of desiring a manifested return on investment was evident. Some teachers reported the uncertainty of seeing the fruits of their labor—or if ever—and that this investment in students' growth requires patience, hope, and endurance. Tom Givens reflected:

> It would be nice to just see into the future to see if you're actually doing any good with some of these kids that you only have for a short amount of time. [You're] planting a lot of seeds, but not getting to see if they ever do anything later. That's the hard part.

Jordyn affirmed:

> There's a really good feeling out of my kids whenever I see that they have made some kind of growth whether it's social, emotional, or academic. And when they see that pride in themselves, for me, that's all I need. To tell with a paycheck. I want them to love themselves and define the beauty in themselves and in this world and in this life. So, when I can see that they have those moments, it's as you can tell, I'm already tearing up talking about it. (personal communication, January 30, 2024)

Teachers often shared the necessity of building strong relationships with students. This was seen as a pivotal first step in nurturing a positive classroom culture prior to establishing academic foundations. For many teachers, this concept was an oven versus microwave process that required a continual recalibration of perspective. Regarding building rapport with all students, Michelle Johnson surmised:

> I had noticed that I was focusing on those challenging students too much. It's like, if I had a class of 30, I had like 3 or 4 that were like being a problem. But I had 26 other kids that were fantastic. So, I think whenever I started to think that way, my own perspective change and my relationship with the kids

> change. And that ended up being one of my favorite years of teaching…I was able to just have relationships with them. I didn't think of them as a problem anymore.

Student success was often a motivator for teachers' persistence in their day-to-day classroom interactions. The evidence of student learning often propelled teachers over the classroom management hurdles—helping to sustain teachers' efforts. Second and mid-career teacher, Jack Robinson, expressed, "It gives me a good sense of satisfaction up here helping the kids particularly when they get something, when they finally break through something." The ebb and flow of the classroom environment was not lost on Mrs. Hicks who voiced, "You know I do have a lot of good times with feeling like, I'm in sync with the kids, and they're listening, and they're learning." The classroom dynamics proved a valuable influence for early-career teacher, Barbara Henderson, who noted, "Sometimes I feel joyful because I feel like I'm making a difference, or the kids are excited and engaged." Enthusiasm for students' visible learning was expressed by Amy Daniels who beamed, "I love seeing the light bulbs that go off."

Teachers' Value System of Student-Centered Care depicted teachers' consistent encounters with daily choices on how to excellently serve students both academically and socially. In considering these decisions, teachers often maintained focus of their perceptions of students' best interests despite any personal emotional consequences that may transpire as a result. The sense of purpose in teaching, rapport built with students, return on investment with student achievement, and strong desire to provide a duel model of positive role model and effective teacher were all key motivators that provided a source of determination in their teaching profession. The teachers' persistent drive for student success and relentless pursuit of students' well-being seemed a distinctive trademark of the teaching profession. Table 10

portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 10

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Value System of Student-Centered Care	satisfaction fulfillment sense of purpose duty	"Part of me wants to do it just because nobody else wants to do it. I guess that kind of gives me a satisfaction knowing that I'm doing something nobody else wants to do for the kids that really do need somebody." (Tom Givens)	Service to students as a positive role model is not for the faint at heart and satisfaction comes from being the students' advocate and sometimes only support system.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 3: Not Enough to Go Around

When considering the workday schedule and demands of teachers, there appeared a lack of adequate work resources that often filtered into depletion of personal resources when left unaddressed. Teachers expressed the school and community's expectation of them to do more to enhance student learning and achievement with less resources. Common concerns rapidly shared among teachers across all career stages included "substitutes," "time," "planning," "class sizes," "lack," "busy," "rushed," and "adjustment" creating an undertone of stress. With limited provisions to complete the required tasks involved in teaching, many teachers found themselves doing the best with what they had—even knowing the provisions were deficient. Making the best out of a less than ideal situation, Catherine James had to pivot her original plans to instead accommodate the shortage of staffing—a more pressing need at the time:

> One of the teachers that I do inclusion with has the flu, and there's no sub, so I went from my whole world to subbing for her…I'm not complaining about having

> to do it. But that shift of 'Okay. This is what I needed to get done today. Now, this is what I'm doing.' It is, you know it is.

Mr. Givens asserted his frustration for sufficiently meeting students' needs due to continual lack of resources:

> There is so many different elements to SpEd and you're always feeling like you're robbing Peter to pay Paul and shortchanging one area or the other. I've always tried to make the SpEd Department better every year, but you're pulling away from something to try to give extra there…You just can't. We don't have the resources or the people to balance everything the way it needs to be balanced.

Patricia Langford divulges an experience in which she had to grapple with the physical health of her unborn child amidst the pressure to perform as an educator:

> But as far as school was concerned, my main concern was, 'Am I really showing up for my job the way that someone has hired me to do? And I am I teaching the kids to the best of my ability? Are these scores going to totally tank because I've taken 20 something days off [due to complications during pregnancy] and [students] haven't seen me and these 3 standards are showing up on the benchmark real low? Kind of something crazy like that.

The inconsistency of sufficient resources to operate as a teacher appropriately and effectively was also acknowledged as deriving from bureaucratic policy. Isabella Martinez recounted how she experiences the daily schedule of teaching and State expectations of maintaining the increasing workload despite minimal resources:

> Back when our Union negotiated for our planning time, we had smaller classes…no classrooms that were overflowing, so the amount of time negotiated for us was fine when you only had X amount of kids. Well, now, we have one and a half times that amount of kids [yet] having the same

> planning time. But I'm expecting to do the same amount of time for literally an entire other class. It's like having an extra class…I can't get it all done.

Being left without an educational assistant and mentorship, second career newly job-embedded teacher Barbara Henderson emphasized the need for more physical assistance in preparing and organizing her art room (often recruiting her own daughter for help) along with more opportunities to see how fellow art teachers are able to make it all happen:

> I don't have a helper here…It's hard to physically cut out enough [cardboard] for everyone…'How am I supposed to by myself?' [I can get] nervous and a little anxious...if [the art room] gets unorganized…So, I haven't figured it out. It's that part that's exhausting.

Not Enough to Go Around illuminates the challenge teachers confronted in their work with having to do more with less resources. The resources spanned across the dimensions of personnel, adequate, protected time within the daily schedule, and classroom allowances necessary to efficiently complete their teaching tasks. For many teachers, this consistent lack of sufficient resources became a source of anxiety—creating yet another facet of their profession to worry about amidst a vast array of other previously established concerns. The notion of building the plane while flying it appeared to cause teachers to consequently focus on meeting immediate basic needs instead of being able to move more freely with autonomy in their teaching craft, thus stifling teachers' sense of well-being. Table 11 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 11

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Not Enough to Go Around	experience resources time student needs	"There's never enough of you. There's never enough to make every kid get everything they need.	The continual depletion of personal and environmental resources is

	self stress	There's never enough time. There's never enough money for everything that you need to be able to do it." (Catherine James)	disheartening leaves one feeling defeated.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 4: A Tired Teacher

Exhaustion was exhibited in various facets by teachers and was a consistently used word to express feelings of mental drain and physical tiredness. Mrs. Pierce postulated, "You know you go home, and it's like you've made a thousand decisions from the time you walked in the building." The sentiment is further echoed and seen as a source of physical exhaustion by Mrs. Langford who submitted, "And I feel like we are consistently making decisions. And so that exhaustion at the end of the day may be physical exhaustion that could come out that way: yawning, tired, my body hurts, whatever." Though well into his teaching career and one year shy of dipping into the concluding career phase, Robert Sprague still reported exhaustion as both mentally and physically:

> Mentally, we're just done. You don't want to think about anything else related to today for tomorrow, and you just need a time in front of the television to zone out and not put a lot of effort into things. And then physically, it's a real feeling aches and pains—especially the older you get. It's harder to rebound from putting in a 12-hour day or 14-hour day…Just everything starts hurting. Joints are hurting and especially my feet.

Highlighting the difference in experience that can be made from one year to the next, Jane Smith imparted, "I would say, 85% of the time, it's just super positive. There's definitely the 15% where we have our own full challenges, and it's stressful. But last year, maybe it would have been like 15% of the time happy." Ms. Henderson attributed much of her overwhelmed feelings to not having enough experience:

> I guess right now it's kind of an emotional roller coaster because I have the highs like I'm happy about it. But then I also get really, really overwhelmed sometimes, and it's probably because I'm new. And they say that until you get into year like Number 5, you probably still don't have a good grasp of everything, so I don't know if that's what it is. But right now, it's kind of overwhelming because at the very beginning I almost said, 'You know, hey, maybe I shouldn't do this.'

The exhaustion commonly experienced by teachers began to undermine their sense of teaching efficacy. For many teachers, the effects of exhaustion generated a gradual deterioration of their confidence in their teaching effectiveness despite teachers' collectively expressed desire to grow in their profession and develop further in their discipline. The consequences of exhaustion on building teaching professionalism were felt by Mrs. Patterson who contended:

> If they could stop changing what we do every f****** year, and we could get used to the thing—whatever the thing we're gonna do—we're gonna get used to it. And then it's good. And then we'd be golden. And then we have less mental like—we're not figuring it out—we know it. And so, then, we can actually improve upon what we know. So, I feel like I guess at this point, I'm not mentally available enough to improve upon what I know, because it's so much of just answering 5,000 questions about where the pencil is. It's like putting out the fires: fight or flight.

Ms. Lauren, who experienced outside pressure from the district level that affected her daily instruction, submitted: "We think that's what we have to do—even though the expectations did not seem feasible." Mr. Robinson denoted the stark contrast between school culture and

the corporate word's views on job security and inherent pressures that go along with job transition:

> Sometimes I feel it'd be nice to have a one-year break [knowing that] I won't lose my job. I will lose my benefits. I like the district, but you [either] make a permanent move, or you stay where you are. And coming out of the corporate world, that's very odd to me. Even the writing side, if I get tired of writing something, I go, and I shift, and do something else. It helps recharge those batteries a little bit.

The pressure to perform according to State expectations was felt by teachers on many different levels. Sharing a comparable sentiment in regard to heavily State-tested content areas, Mrs. Daniels revealed, "I know as a math teacher, I've been a tested subject almost every year of my career, and so there's constantly a bullseye on you."

Not only are there external pressures placed upon teachers to perform by the district and State, but also by intrinsic motivation and teacher efficacy that generated influence on teacher's aspirations. Mrs. James reflected, "You know a lot of what I'm exhausted by stuff I put on myself. It's not necessarily that's put on. It's wanting to do the best job possible." Mr. Sprague, recounting his first year of teaching and feeling the weight of not knowing what he did not know, considered, "You're a new teacher, and you're not good at what you do so you don't know how to handle that kind of stuff. It's very stressful environment." Susan Sanderson expressed her unexpected shift from instructional coaching back to teaching and its mental effects:

> When you're kind of in a place in a position of leadership, and then you're taken out of it, it does something to your psyche. So, I've had to kind of get over that and realize that I'm still doing my thing, and I'm still gonna do my

> teaching. I've had to really battle that this year. It was really just mentally deflating this year.

Each day, teachers were faced with a decision to press forward in their careers, or seek another alternative.

Several teachers expressed concern for the upcoming generation of teachers. Their collective astonishment with the current state of teaching contributed to their hesitance for others to join in the dysfunctional system. From the perspective of a teacher concluding her career, Christine Jones offered the following:

> Teaching is hard, and it's so much harder now than it was when I started. I honestly didn't think when I left intervention that I'd be able to make it through the year this year. So, I feel completely blessed to be where I am and to have had the years that I've had so far. But, I hate it for everybody else because I know that I am the minority. Very few people feel this way, and I didn't feel this way until this year. I can't imagine that teachers being able to continue at the rate we're going with everything that's on us. It's just too much, and it's not feasible for teachers to continue going the way that they are. So, I'm glad I'm on the way out.

Mrs. Lauren voiced a similar concern for incoming teachers being set up to fail: "Nobody wants to become a teacher anymore and when someone speaks about their desire to become a teacher, I get really quiet. Because in my head, I'm thinking, 'Are you sure?'"

A common paradox experienced by teachers was the need for built in, protected time during the school day to accomplish multitudinous teaching tasks with excellence or risk tapping into personal time fueling further exhaustion. This contradiction was illuminated by Isabella Martinez:

> So planning…there's times where I spend an extra 5-10 minutes after school, maybe 15-20, just because I want to be done with it. And I recognize it's like a double-edged sword. Yes, I shouldn't have to put my personal time and put in extra hours to get this work done. But, if I don't, I only screw myself ‘cause it's gonna make my job even more stressful because I walk in the next day not ready to go. So, it's fine that they say don't burn yourself out. Don't do this. Well, I can't get all this stuff done if I don't.

A Tired Teacher reflects teachers’ experiences interacting with the dynamics of their work environment and the mental and physical results of the engagement. Among teachers, there emerged a commonality of felt external pressures from immense State and district level intimidation for them to achieve at peak performance. This operated in tandem with teachers’ personal commitment to their profession. Teachers’ internal pressure to provide the utmost care to students as champion of their success thus produced another source of fatigue. The intrinsic drive to become the most effective teacher also contributed to teachers’ exhaustion. Collectively, the external, internal, and intrinsic burdens that teachers carried left them in an exhausted state—seemingly beyond repair—notwithstanding their best efforts to find solutions to combat their fatigue which created the perfect storm for teacher breakdown. Teachers often felt the impact of the emotional labor of which they daily engaged and expressed being on the cusp of tipping the scales towards risk of burnout if changes to their work environment were not implemented to mitigate these implications. Table 12 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 12

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
A Tired Teacher	exhaustion mental processing emotions unpredictable anxiety	"The amount of mental processing that I must do as a part of my job is the exhaustion like there's the emotional aspect to it, and that is exhausting as well, because you never know what a kid's gonna bring in your classroom, what they're gonna come to you with, and what you're going to have to manage. But then, like on top of that is literally the amount of questions that we are asked, the amount of like impromptu decisions that I have to do to change my lesson or you know, address a certain need at that specific time. And then like, I don't have anything left it when I go home." (Jordyn)	Decision fatigue leads to exhaustion both mentally and physically which bleeds over into teachers' home lives.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 5: Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance

When faced with challenges and uncertainties in their work, teachers often found solace within a trusted peer group to not only get them through the day, but also contributed to teachers' decision-making processes as to whether or not they should persist in teaching. Several teachers spoke fondly of their respective teams across the gamut of curricular (Professional Learning Community—PLC), grade-level (6^{th}-8^{th}), and school spirit (Houses). They expressed the need to both contribute to a team and be seen as a human with strengths and vulnerabilities. Finding her PLC as a great source of reinforcement, Mrs. James asserted:

> The biggest support in a building is building that team environment…I love a team. I love support for each other. We are better together. You're better thinking through lesson plans. You're better thinking through everything with somebody. But, truly, that team support it is what makes or breaks it.

Noting the importance of seeking out like-minded and understanding peers, Tom Givens mentioned:

> Since I've taught, I've always found people that were my people, that I felt like I could trust, and that I could openly vent to. And not do it in a negative way of a complaining way. Just knowing that this is a safe space and you can just kind of let it all out and even say things that you don't—they know you don't really mean in the long term—but you mean it right then in that moment.

Fostering camaraderie among coworkers, Mrs. Jones reflects joy and belonging in her emotion log journal:

> *I left today feeling happy. Today was a pretty good day, but I was sidetracked after school by a coworker who had a hilarious story about one of our shared kiddos. I literally laughed out loud. They say laughter is good for the soul…I believe it.* (personal communication, February 15, 2024)

Noted as the heartbeat of the school, the importance of and appreciation for a healthy PLC was expressed by Veronica Evans who felt lucky for her ELA team:

> We all get along, pull our weight, do our work, and check in with each other. We constantly joke around, like each other as people, and respect each other professionally. Which is rare, right? We get complimented a lot on our PLC how it just goes so smoothly [whereas] other PLCs where people don't do what they're supposed to do, or they totally do stuff on their own. They're not being a team player, right?

Regarding the dynamics of co-teaching, Mr. Sprague shares, “Things are going pretty well. Most 99% of the time, we get along. Great co-teaching. Kind of each have our strengths and weaknesses and kind of balance each other out. So that part's really good.” Ms. Smith, recognizing the risk and sacrifice of her teammates on her behalf, reflected the day-in and day-out support that she experienced—ultimately being the catalyst for her persistence in her second year:

> Anytime I was having an issue just being super overwhelmed in my class, or if I had an issue with a kid or a parent, [my team lead] would go talk to our principal about it if I was just super overwhelmed and be like, ‘You can't do this to her next year.’ Or if we had a parent email that needed to go home, honestly, half the time I would just like word vomit, and she would just write it up for me and just send it off super-fast. She definitely tried to take away a lot of that [stress]…She would do anything. a lot of people [were] going to bat for me. I love my team.

Mrs. James recognized that strong teams and relationships are not built overnight, but they are instead built with time, intention, and love: “It’s a non-negotiable. I have to have that support in a building of some group that loves you enough to get you through the hard days.” Mrs. Jones expressed the need for transparency within her teams to vocalize frustrations: “We all have our group chats—the math team and houses. Sometimes you need to take a moment to vent through that. I think typically you either hold it in, or you're doing your vent when you can.”

Barbara Henderson shares:

> A lot of times I feel like I'm by myself [yet] I have certain teachers that have came by, or given me their phone number, and told me with particular

students, ‘If I have a problem, call them.’…That's been a big support. Just knowing there's someone.

Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance unveils facets of teachers’ experiences interacting with their peers and teammates within their schools. Teachers who found trusted peer groups reported feelings of belonging and increased likelihood of being able to endure challenges faced throughout the workday. A found asset of the trusted team dynamic was the emotional safety that teachers experienced which contributed to the school climate. The safe space created by trusted peers also provided an outlet to release the tensions of the school day which contributed to teachers’ emotional wellbeing. Teachers’ professional contributions to their respective groups also made a difference in how they perceived creative workflow and approached their work demands. The collective sense of accomplishment provided an avenue of possibility in discovering another means for teachers to maintain a healthy work-life balance: by sharing the workload. The teachers’ sense of emotional safety in finding a supportive and understanding group prevailed as a driving force for both their personal and professional motivation. Table 13 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 13

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance	friendship support group safety	“And I had an older teacher across the hallway who was very disciplined and stern. And so, we're still friends today. And that was 20 something years ago.” (Rachel Thompson)	Finding a supportive friend in the school building helps with teacher’s sense of belonging and perseverance.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 6: Administration Sets the Tone

Across all career levels, teachers expressed the notion that administration sets both the physical environment of the school—ensuring student and staff safety and protection from situations—along with shaping the overall culture and climate of emotional safety. An administrative investment in building rapport and maintaining a level of respect with teachers was viewed as a top priority within the school though not every teacher encountered a positive experience. Cheyenne Blackman submitted, "I knew there were great admins out there. I just had not met them till I got here." Mrs. Hicks expressed her disappointment over formers administration's mishandling of a traumatic situation in which she was physically shoved into the lockers by a student and suffered a concussion as a result:

> It was emotionally hard because I didn't feel like the school protected me. They put me in that position. It was tough, emotionally, because I felt like the school let me down and then that I didn't feel like the student was getting what he needed either [by administration neglecting his need for an aide]. And so, I was in the crossfires. They were trying to have him apologize to me and I thought, 'It's not him that needs to apologize. It's the administration that needs to apologize. He should have had somebody with him. All those kind of things. I also need some resources in the event something does occur so that I'm safe. I felt like the administration of that particular school really dropped the ball for me and that student. So after that year was over, I left, but I left on good terms. And I just thought, 'Yeah, if I'm ever an administrator that won't happen.'

Susan Sanderson recalled an experience earlier on in her career in which she resolved to maintain her teacher identity amidst administrative deferment to backing students and making sure parents approved of how he handled the situation instead of supporting the teachers:

> I'm not gonna relent over certain things because I know that in this case I don't need to…If I do that, then I'm not gonna be true to the teacher that I am. So, I had to really understand that and just keep gorging ahead.

Still others, like Mrs. Daniels, balancing responsibilities as both teacher and cheerleading coach, asserted the contrast between previous and current administration:

> Administration have been very supportive because coaching is usually some of the most high stress that I've dealt with. [They've] been phenomenal on backing me—whether they agreed with me or not, they've backed me. In previous schools, I may or may not have had backing depending on how they felt at the time. So, just having the support of admin. saying, 'You're the coach. You do what needs to happen. You're the teacher.' They've been the same way in the classroom.

Veronica Evans gleamed with gratitude for her current experience with administration:

> I'm lucky that I have a principal I like. She alleviates a lot of stress. When parents come at us for anything, she has our back. Everyone has our backing, and then if we mess up, they quietly tell us on the sidelines...but they will never embarrass you in front of your colleagues or anything. So, that's nice.

Ms. Smith shared appreciation for her administration hearing her concerns, providing an intentional rearrangement of her schedule, and increasing her confidence in her abilities—crediting them as being what made her come back after a difficult year last year:

> The thing that made me stay: I felt like I could handle two preps and 100 kids [downsizing from three to two preps and 155 students to 100 students, respectively], and maybe in the future I'll go back up, but [administration] being willing and able to change my schedule and give me a study hall—to get that extra planning time was definitely the key factor—especially knowing by

> the end of the year of my schedule change. I was much more confident and much less complaining. Everything gets easier…They did listen to me. I feel super lucky.

Teachers were often captured as trying to evolve and progress in their perceived areas of growth. There was a sense of personal commitment to be the change in which they sought—maintaining duties of excellence and diligence—despite what negative experiences may have transpired around them. In regard to the combined school environment and results of her personal changes, Sara Lauren mentioned:

> This is my first year in teaching that I've not had a crying moment. When I go home, it's the same energy. The more I come in here not being exhausted or not being stressed out, I can give [students] more. Kids are worth it. To me they are.

Mrs. Daniels offered, "If a kid has done this, [administration] might ask: 'Well, have you thought about this?' But they've always backed me [in this new school which] really helped me be confident that this is the way I should do it."

Administration Sets the Tone draws attention to teachers' integral need to operate in a school environment in which administration truly values them as individuals with unique backgrounds, ideas, and interests. Teachers needed to feel as if the work that they do matters to their superiors along with their superiors understanding the daily challenges that teachers face and how, without teachers, there would be no school itself. Teachers needed opportunities for being challenged professionally, assistance in problem-solving, encouragement with facilitating student achievement, occasions to continuously learn and be creative, and safe places to fail forward. Teachers' expressions of needing to add value to others highlighted their commitment to service and to positively impacting their school culture. Leadership was commonly expressed as needing to be a top-down approach in which

administration models and facilitates protective, welcoming, and supportive environments that prioritize teachers in deed and not only in word. The importance of administrative intention on building meaningful relationships that consider teacher's needs—being human beings worthy of respect and protection and as valued assets—resonated throughout the interviews. Table 14 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 14

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Administration Sets the Tone	environment backing fortunate protection	"Just knowing my admin. is fantastic, I just know that, no matter what happens, I'm gonna be supported. And I don't think a lot of people feel that way in their positions. I feel honestly like, I'm a little lucky." (Michelle Johnson)	The presence of administrative support is pivotal to teachers feeling valued.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

Theme 7: Bottling Up or Spewing Out

Many teachers both face and feel a spectrum of emotions throughout their day. They also face the daily decision as to how or whether they will choose to express themselves. Although for a small few, like Mrs. Blackman, who does not find herself going through the spectrum of various emotions, explained:

> I'm stable. Stable. I don't have those up-down days, the days where you just leave, and you just never want to go back. I don't have those days. And I don't know if that's because I'm not as seasoned of a teacher, or if it's because I'm older and had more experience dealing with life. But it doesn't seem to get me the way it does other people.

Another seasoned teacher, Mrs. Hicks, on the other hand, expressed, “So, in a day I can go from one extreme to the other and, in fact, it’s just dependent on what's going on and which class I have.” Mrs. Evans shared her need to express her naturally-felt emotions or otherwise risk losing her focus throughout the day which hinders her job performance and later home life:

> I am very upfront with kids. I will not lie to them [and instead tell them], ‘This is what I need from you.’ Most of them are receptive to that. I don't like and am not really good at hiding, so, and things get worse if I let them fester. So, if I want to cry and I try to shove it down, it'll just force them a little bit. I would like freak out over nothing. Or, if I'm mad and I try to not be mad, I would be mad, or later it'll fester. It'll bother me. I can't focus. So, I just need to say it, and get it, out and move on. Not good at the whole bottle-up thing. Also makes me a horrible wife.

Cheyenne Blackman expressed, “I have high energy. I'm loud. I'm vocal. I'm never completely still.” Having the tendency to bottle-up his emotions, Mr. Sprague disclosed:

> I very much bottle it up unless it’s positive stuff. That's different where I'll obviously tell the kids, ‘Hey, I'm having fun today. Hope you guys are able to join this.’ But negative stuff, like when my co-teacher and I disagree with stuff, I usually don't press that. I’ll just let it happen. He does his thing, and I'll just kind of bottle it up… I'll just kinda keep it inside and not be really expressive.

Jane Smith candidly expressed her experience with pushing through emotions at the risk of further burdening herself:

> I’ll just push through. I'll deal with it later. I’m very much a ‘If you can't feel it, it can't hurt you type of person. So, it was all fun and good until somebody

> would be like, 'No, really! How are you?' And then I would just burst into tears. So, running through everything, and then just like absolute breakdown. And then I just do it all over again.

Christine Jones voiced, "I'm a helper by nature. Try to fix to an extent. Pretty typical of teachers trying to fix things [making] everything better for everybody. I don't deal with my own emotions and just take care of those around me." Mr. Sprague recalled how he had to make a change from improperly coping with his emotions during his first year of teaching:

> It was literally having a physical effect on me—the anxiety and depression stuff… I didn't really handle it well. I was probably drinking and glass of wine a day at the end of the day. When I got home, I went out to eat a lot to kind of not have to work at home. Just like I've had a bad day, and say, 'Let's go out to eat.' But my wife would say, on Sunday night I would just kind of sit on the couch and be real quiet because I knew Monday morning I'd have to go back to work. So, I guess self-medicating. Now, I've learned a lot from that experience. I talk a lot with my wife and am more open with her on how things are going. I been saved since that started, so I'd use a lot of prayer and that kind of stuff and prayer requests when needed.

Bottling Up or Spewing Out delineates teachers' emotion regulation processes and the subsequent decisions predicated upon whether or how they will express their emotions. Many teachers expressed holding in their true emotions with reservations varying from fear of job loss to feeling the need to be a steady emotional presence and strong role model for students. These teachers found the display rules of the school environment to be a determinant of their decision to express a more socially desirable emotion even if that emotion was not the true emotion that they felt at the time. The bottling-up of their emotions at school often lead to spewing it out at home, with friends, or at school the next day if not previously released.

Other teachers felt compelled to express how they genuinely felt in that moment regardless of the emotion being considered positive, negative, or the unspoken display rules of the school environment. These teachers perceived the risk of being preoccupied with their true emotions all day and that preoccupation interfered with their work performance. Still others noted a more even keel approach to expressing emotions. The process of emotion regulation proved to be distinctive of each individual teacher and yielded unique results on teachers' emotional and physical wellbeing. Table 15 portrays example codes, discovered theme, sample of significant statement, and related formulated meaning.

Table 15

Theme, Codes, Example of Significant Statement, and Related Formulated Meaning

Theme	Code	Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
Bottling Up or Spewing Out	emotional suppression commitment to change personal growth reflection	"I think I definitely try to have those conversations to get everything out and not let it be inside because that's kind of a thing I've had to learn over the years. I'm still not very good at it. When I want to keep it bottled up, I try to have people around me that know to start prodding and asking questions to get me to open up." (Robert Sprague)	Choosing whether or not to bottle up emotions is a process along with understanding one's own emotional needs.

Source: Creswell & Poth, 2018

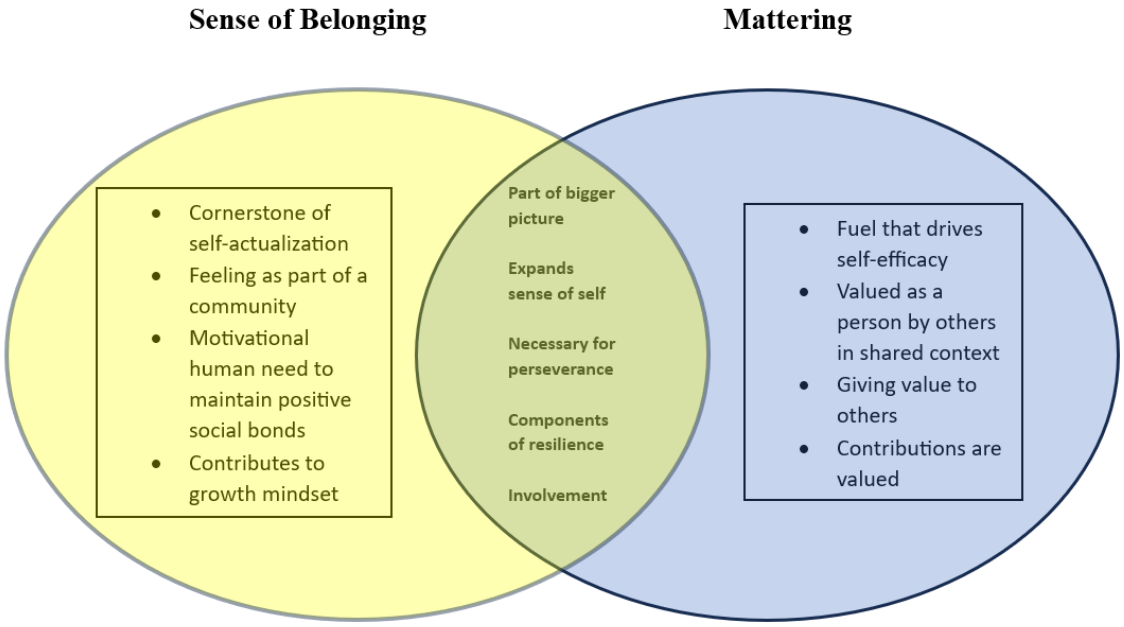
Figure 18 illustrates how each theme interacts with the study findings.

Figure 18

Connected Themes

Figure 19

Sense of Belonging and Mattering



To protect teacher well-being and promote a vibrant teaching workforce, it was an essential aim of this study to discover factors that contribute to teachers' consideration of leaving the teaching profession. The center of the figure represents the heart of the inquiry: teacher well-being. Seven themes emerged that contributed to teachers' consideration of leaving the teaching profession. The first theme, Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance, represents the tension between maintaining a heathy work-life balance that was offset by internal and external pressures faced by teachers. The second theme, Value System of Student-Centered Care, focuses on the innate care that teachers provide for students even at the cost of neglecting their true emotion to uphold a positive role model figure which results in hyperactivity of emotional labor. Theme three, Not Enough to Go Around, describes the paradoxical nature of teachers' working conditions in which student achievement is demanded but adequate resources are not provided to consistently accomplish the goal which ultimately impact teacher efficacy. The fourth theme, A Tired Teacher highlights the

sustained exhaustion that teachers experience, how it diminishes their sense of teaching efficacy, and generates a progressive decline of their confidence if left unaddressed. Theme five, Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance, portrays teachers' need to belong in their school community, contribute to its' success, and promote a healthy emotional climate in which they feel safe being vulnerable. The sixth theme, Administration Sets the Tone, exhibits teachers' necessity to be valued by their administration and seen as distinctive individuals who also stimulate the success of their school by adding merit to it. Lastly, theme seven, Bottling Up or Spewing Out, presents the continued emotional interaction in which teachers engage in their school environments and how socially appropriate display and feeling rules influence teachers' decisions on how to react to emotional situations. Each of the seven themes typify points of interest in understanding teachers' navigation of how to best prioritize emotional health and wellbeing.

Qualitative Field Notes

According to Schwandt (2015), field notes are intended to add to an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied. As such, the researcher relied on descriptive and reflective field notes to corroborate the information shared during the interviews and within the transcripts. The field notes outlined descriptive data, such as date of meetings, demographics, and type of school setting that took place with the 19 teachers who participated in interviews. Among the 19 teachers, eight participated in-person and 11 teachers participated via Zoom spending an average of 30 to 45 minutes in duration of the interview. Table 16 includes reflective information and unique details about the teachers such as additional career experience, interests, future goals, and personality.

Table 16

Field Notes During Interviews

Participant	Date	Descriptive	Reflective
Sara Lauren	1/26/2024	8th grade Science 11th year teaching	Began in Pre-K Grateful for this year being different than last year Positive outlook Perfectionist tendencies Anxiety Fight or flight response in teaching Strong calling to the teaching profession Joy evident Concern for incoming teachers
Tom Givens	1/29/2024	6th–8th Special Education Department Chair 11th year teaching	Strategy for balance involves gym and living in same community as school working in helps Strong sense of support from sought out colleagues Strong sense of duty to the profession that others avoid Frustration with marrying State demands vs. student needs Never stays caught up
Susan Sanderson	1/30/2024	8th grade ELA 31st year teaching Shifted from Instructional Coach back to classroom	Comfortable Overall content in her work Grateful to be sought out for teaching tips Importance of creating a calm environment Setting work/home boundaries is key Felt mentally deflated after shifting roles
Jordyn Patterson	1/30/2024	6th–8th ELA Reading Interventionist 11th year teaching	Values therapy, medication, diet, and exercise as means for maintaining balance Decision fatigue Fulfillment in connecting with students Fight or flight response in teaching Would not persist in teaching if not for trusted peers Forced to reprocess trauma in work environment
Cheyenne Blackman	1/31/2024	6th grade ELA Inclusion co-teacher 10th year teaching	Describes herself as happy Has the best job in the whole stinking world Enjoys a core group of friends Still emotionally connected to her work but has healthy separation

			Had to experience loss of job as non-renewed to build resilience
Isabella Martinez	1/31/2024	7th grade math Math Department Chair 15th year teaching Second-career educator	Frustration Constant go, go, go Team is strong and is big support Everything feels so taxing Something's got to shift to stay in profession Educational policy is disserving students
Jack Robinson	2/1/2024	8th grade ELA 11th year teaching Job-embedded Second-career	Background in publishing helped preparation for teaching Good most days Need for challenge; fear of complacency Got to be about the kids Hard to not have emotion there Self-discipline as means to maintain balance
Robert Sprague	2/1/2024	6th–8th Band 8th grade Dean 23rd year teaching	Did not plan on becoming a teacher until positive role model high school teacher Still pretty excited to come to work Positive co-teaching experience Pivotal 1st year teaching make-or-break Pride in work—your name is attached to what you're doing Physical movement and plenty of rest helps maintain balance
Michelle Johnson	2/1/2024	7th Science 11th year teaching National Junior Honor Society Chapter Sponsor Beta Club Co-Sponsor	Most of the time has fun Masks anxiety and frustration Felt stuck mentally and feels better this year due to doing something new Support system, exercise, sleep, and recognizing need for time to herself helps with exhaustion
Veronica Evans	2/1/2024	7th ELA 2nd year teaching Background in psychology	Describes teaching as not for everyone Day-to-day is unpredictable though plans are made Strong support system within team Community is key Positive Residency experience motivated further to being teaching Self-reflective Exercise and morning routine help with exhaustion

Catherine James	2/5/2024	7th Inclusion for ELA and Math 14th year of teaching	Began in Pre-K Strong team is non-negotiable for both emotional and professional support Worries about students' needs being met Feels has to be all-in all the time Staying focused sometimes feels like whack-a-mole Knows there will be good days; bad days can be draining
Tiffany Pierce	2/6/2024	6th–8th ELA 10th year teaching Alternative School	Began elementary K-8th 4th year of teaching decided to teach middle school Joy and excitement in teaching Decision fatigue Adaptability is key—flip the switch Mindset is key to knowing every day is not like this; builds resiliency Shut it off when it's time to leave—do not take work home—there's always more to do, so do what you can in the hours given Home life is just as important as work
Jane Smith	2/7/2024	7th Math & Accelerated Math Student Council 2nd year teaching Magnet School	On feet and in it Different demographics of students Loves teaching 85% of the time; 15% not as much Feels really good—it's fun like a puzzle Feels super fulfilled Team support and change in schedule from last year defining points in choice to stay this year Math degree but working towards teaching degree (3 years for full licensure)
Patricia Langford	2/8/2024	7th ELA Junior Beta Sponsor After school tutoring 12th year teaching Magnet School	Excited and elated for teaching Need to disassociate for 5 minutes—distractions to get out of the box (environment) Trying really hard with boundaries Began counselling Anxiety medication School stuff doesn't deserve to be in the home space that she's created—closes it down at 3:15 Emotional exhaustion impacts others
Christine Jones	2/9/2024	6th Math	Began as interventionist Contentment

		21st year teaching	Part of the minority of feeling blessed Worry—lot of anxiety No moment to breathe Has not found out yet what helps with dealing with exhaustion Looks forward to breaks now more than ever Too much on teachers—not feasible for incoming teacher Traumatic experiences at school Glad to be resigning due to husband's work and new grandbaby
Joyce Hicks	2/13/2024	6th Social Studies 16th year teaching Second-career	Previous career assisted in preparation for teaching Former ELA before Social Studies No lull or downtime Frustration with apathetic students Fluctuating emotions in any given day Strong need to model calm adult presence for students' Traumatic experience at school Strong desire to foster resiliency in students
Amy Daniels	2/15/2024	8th Accelerated Math 21st year teaching Cheerleading Coach Magnet School	Started in high school Loves interacting with students Being a coach offsets the bad in the classroom and vice versa Traumatic experience at school Nobody is prepared on how to deal with trauma Constant bullseye on her as a state tested subject Feels like she is parenting 150 kids
Rachel Thompson	2/15/2024	8th Math PLC Lead Math Department Chair 23rd year teaching	Began teaching 5th grade in primary school Got to be around other teachers, drink lots of water, and read at desk to help regulate emotions at work Looks for small rays of light Frustration with apathetic students Not as many kids in class and someone else in the room helps with dealing with exhaustion New teachers don't realize how tough it is Torn between work and family like everybody else's job
Barbara Henderson	2/16/2024	6th–8th Art Art Club 3rd year teaching	Began as elementary interim Sometimes joyful Making a difference Looks to bright spots

		Job-embedded Second-career	Importance of creating a calm environment Need for assistant in room to help with organization and storing demands of content Overwhelmed as a new teacher Does not feel balanced between work and home

[2]

Summary

In this study, 19 middle school teachers from the 6th–8th grade band volunteered to participate in the interview process. Teachers varied in content areas that scoped core content areas (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies), exploratory content areas (Art and Band), and Special Education (Inclusion and Intervention). The teachers ages ranged from 24-62 with the average age of 45 and comprised of both first and second career educators. Seven themes emerged from the study: 1) Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance, 2) Value System of Student-Centered Care, 3) Not Enough to Go Around, 4) A Tired Teacher, 5) Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance, 6) Administration Sets the Tone, and 7) Bottling Up or Spewing Out.

Quantitative Analysis

The descriptive analyses for the three sub-part survey include: (a) demographic information percentages, frequencies, and participant qualities (i.e. content area, grade-level, and teaching certification), (b) descriptive statistics for the independent variables (e.g.

[2] To foster identity protection of participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the study (Heaton, 2022, p. 124)

Surface Acting, Deep Acting, and Naturally-Felt Emotions) assessed using the Teacher-Emotional Labor Scale (TELS), and (c) mean scores and standard deviations for the dependent variable of Burnout evaluated via the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT12). To further investigate the complex relationship between emotional labor (SA, DA, and NFE) and burnout (including combined factors of Exhaustion, Emotional Impairment, Mental Distance, and Cognitive Impairment), multiple linear regression was utilized.

Data Collection

The study was conducted during the Spring semester of the 2023-2024 school year. The population under study consisted of middle school teachers who currently teach during the 2023-2024 school year within a large, Southeastern school district serving over 50,000 students (approximately 15,000 middle school students served by 1,108 secondary educators, NCES, 2023). Teachers were recruited upon receiving permission to conduct research in the district via a signed form from the Chief Academic Officer. Subsequent letters were then emailed to each of the 17 middle school principals requesting the researcher's permission to both email the survey to faculty and further interview consenting participants. Of the 17 middle school principals, 11 (65%) granted permission returning 117 responses of raw data. Once the data set was cleaned (e.g. disqualifiers such as administration and coaches instead of current teachers, incomplete questions, duplicates, and previews), however, there remained an average of 91 (N = 91) valid responses total yielding a 78% overall completion rate.

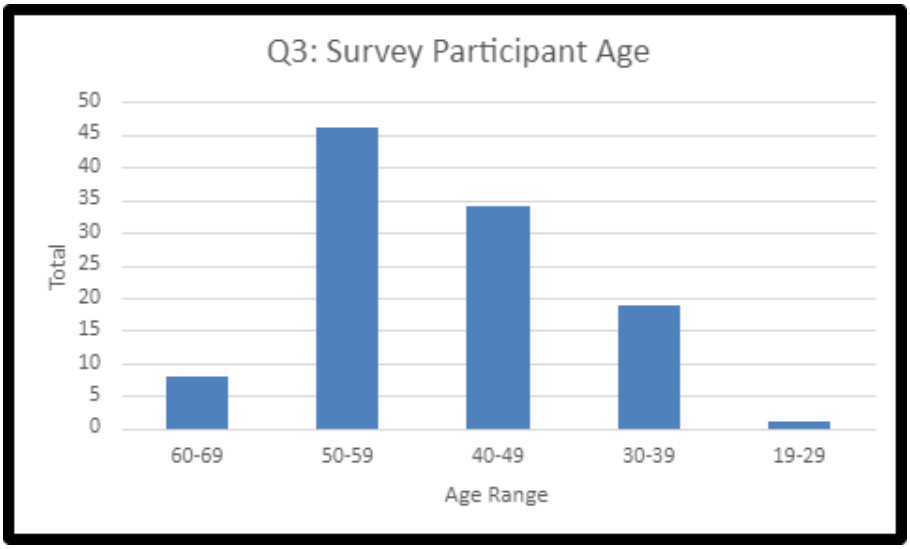
Descriptive Statistics

Teachers who completed the survey consisted of a mostly female sample with 79% female, 10% male, and 2% prefer not to say. This sample is consistent with the full population. The majority were Caucasian (84%); additional races included American Indian (1%), Asian (1%), Black or African American (5%), and Other (1%). The ages of participants

ranged from 24-63 years (age ranges: 50-59 = 43%; 40-49 = 31%; 30-39 = 18%; 60-69 = 7%; 19-29 = 1%). Participant Age results are presented in Figure 20.

Figure 20

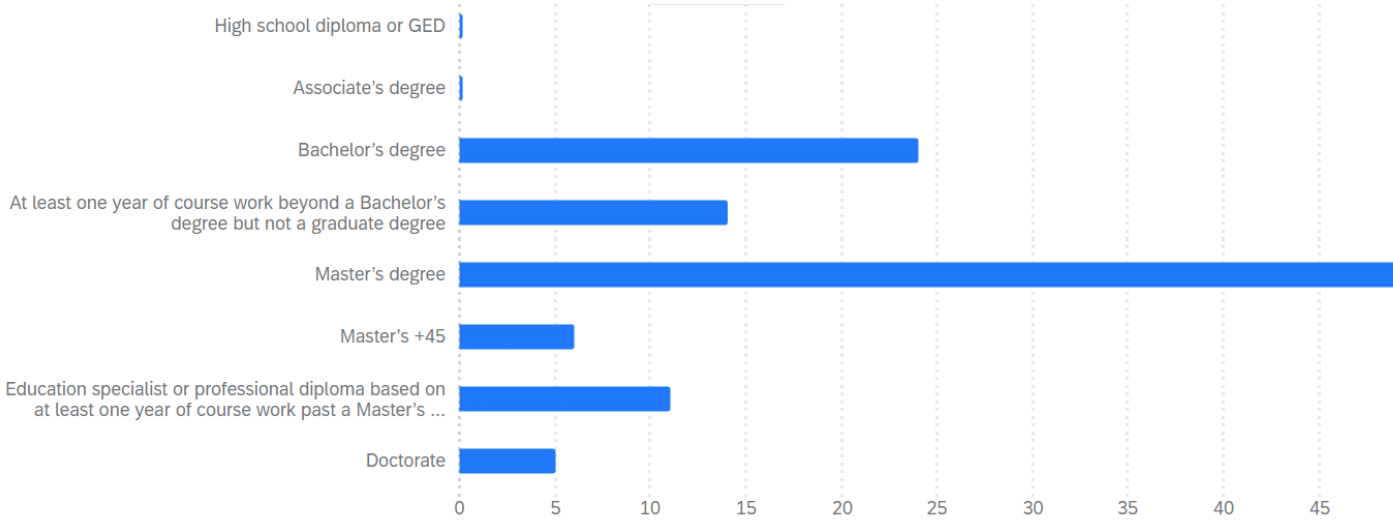
Participant Age



Participant's highest level of education received included Master's degree (42%), Bachelor's degree (20%), At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree (13%), Education Specialist or professional diploma past a Master's degree level (8%), Master's +45 (5%), and Doctorate (3%). Participant's highest level of education is represented in Figure 21.

Figure 21

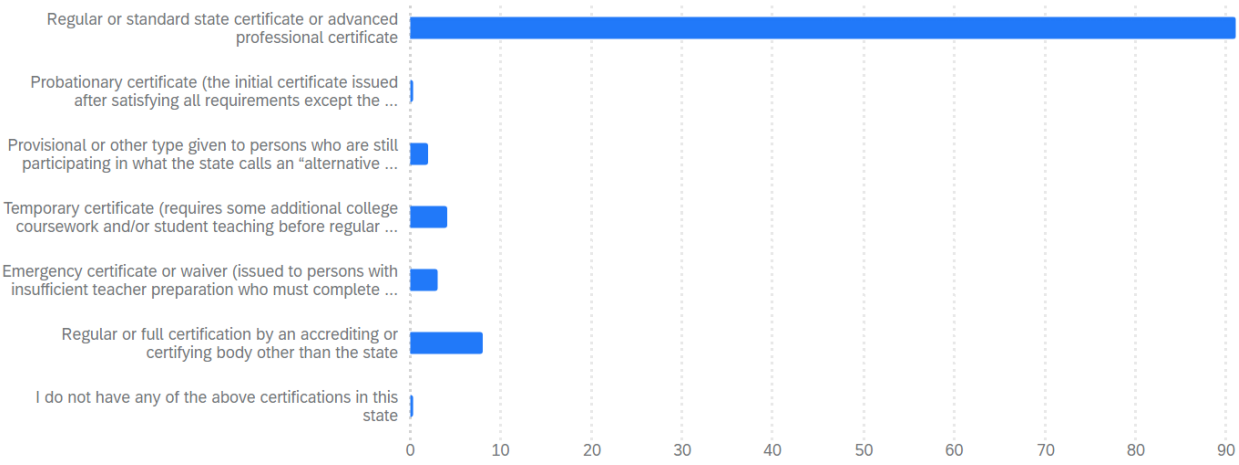
Highest Level of Education



For teaching certification in the state in which participants currently taught: Regular, Standard, or Advanced Professional Certificate (84%), Provisional or Alternative Certification Program (2%), Temporary Certificate requiring additional college coursework and/or student teaching (4%), Emergency Certificate or Waiver (3%), and Regular or Full Certification by certifying body other than the state (7%). The results of teaching certification are displayed in Figure 22.

Figure 22

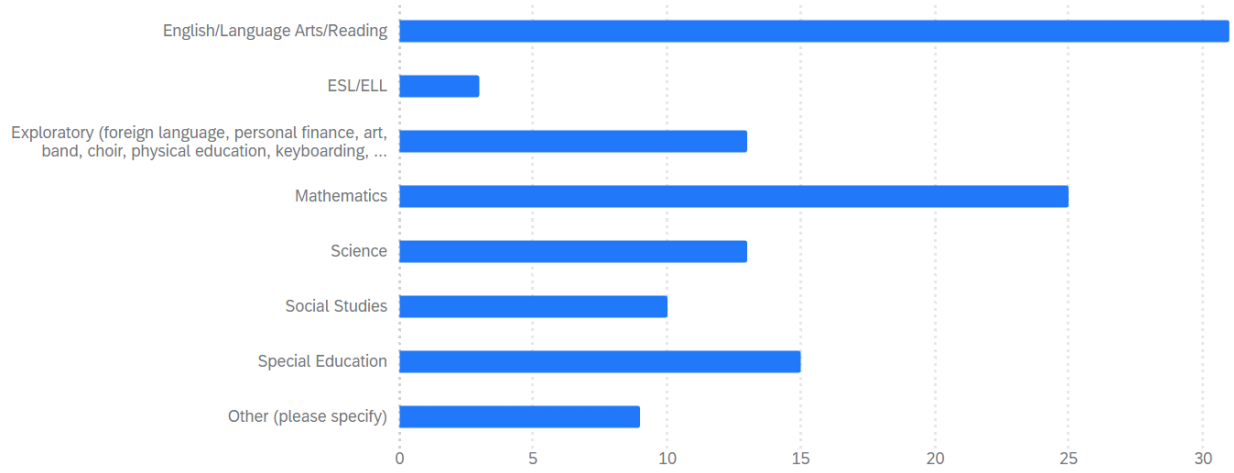
Teaching Certification



The content area(s) of participants encompassed: English/Language Arts/Reading (29%), English as a Second Language/ELL (3%), Exploratory (e.g. foreign language, art, band, keyboarding, health, etc.) (12%), Mathematics (23%), Science (12%), Social Studies (9%), and Special Education (14%). Participant content areas are illustrated in Figure 23.

Figure 23

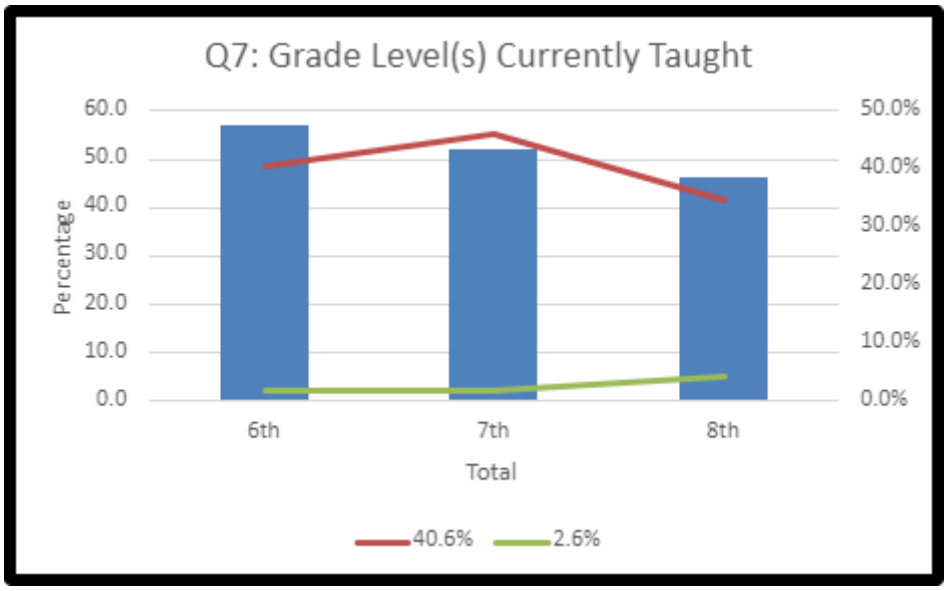
Content Area(s)



Participants taught middle school grade levels of 6th (57%), 7th (52%), and 8th (46%) including 40.6% teaching at least two grade levels and 2.6% teaching all three grade levels. Participant grade levels are represented in Figure 24.

Figure 24

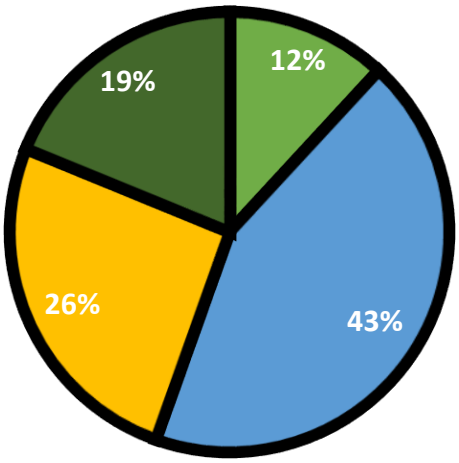
Currently Taught Grade Level(s)



Regarding years of teaching experience, the sub-groups of teachers encompassed: early career (0-5 years: 12%), the mid-career (6-15: 44%), the late career (16-23: 26%), and concluding career (year 24 and beyond: 19%) which included this year. The teachers' years of experience are summarized in Figure 25.

Figure 25

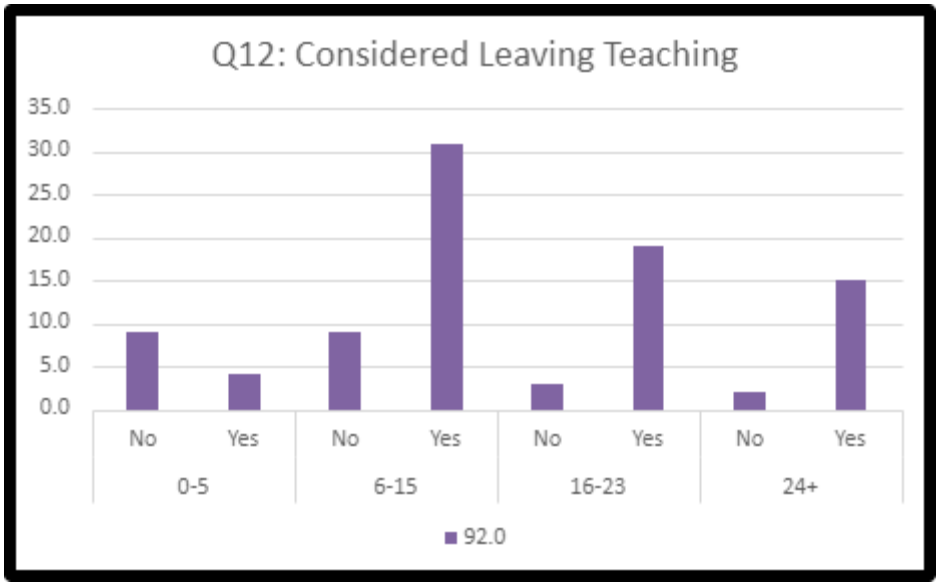
Teacher Sub-Groups



When asked about whether participants had considered leaving the teaching profession, the teachers responded “No” (27%) and “Yes” (73%). Figure 26 presents a summary of teachers’ consideration to leave teaching.

Figure 26

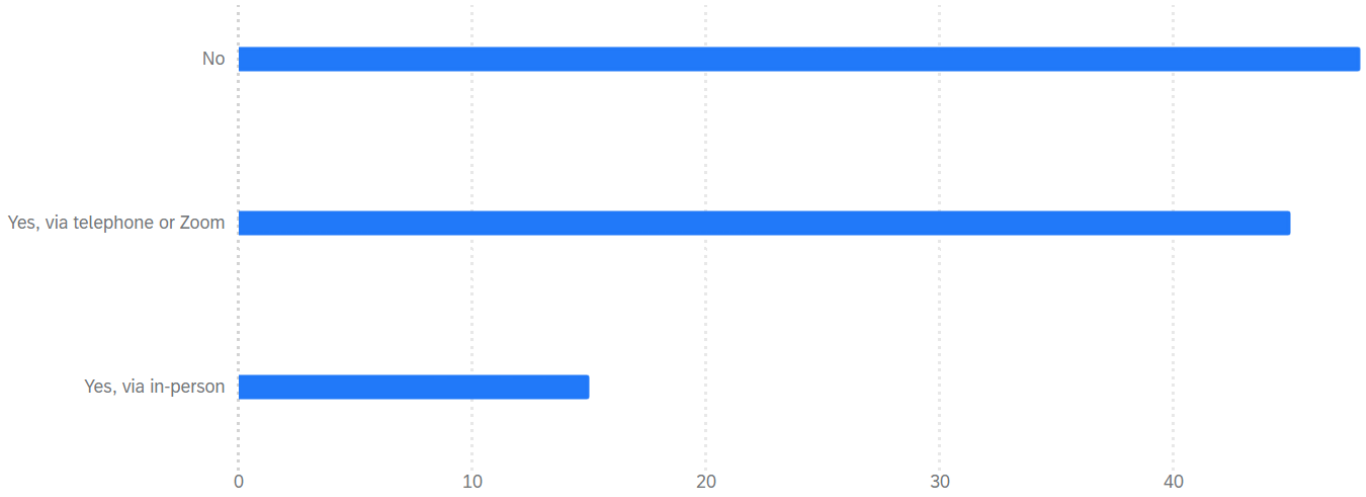
Considered Leaving Teaching



Participants were asked if they would be interested in a follow-up interview in which they could opt out at any time, and all identifying information would be strictly confidential and protected. Participants responded “No” (44%), “Yes, via telephone or Zoom” (42%), and “Yes, via in-person” (14%). Figure 27 displays participants’ response to participating in a follow-up interview.

Figure 27

Follow-Up Interview



Results

TELS & BAT12 Reliability

To assess the internal consistency and reliability of both the Teacher Emotional Labor Scale (TELS) and Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT12), Cronbach's Alpha was implemented. Cronbach's alpha is a common measurement used that calculates the internal consistency of an assessment instrument (Shi, J. et al., 2012 as cited in Raharjanti NW, et al., 2022). According to Crosby and Salazar (2021), the calculation of Cronbach's alpha takes into account "the number of items in the scale, the average covariance between item pairs, and the average variance" (p. 151). There remains debate among researchers regarding ranges of reliability. Crosby and Salazar (2021) suggest at least 0.70 value for public health research while Shi et al. (2012) deem 0.60-0.80 as acceptable. For psychology research, Price et al. (2017) suggest values greater than or equal to 0.80 while other methodologists recommend a minimum between 0.65 and 0.80 or higher in many cases (Komperda et al., 2018). Despite popular belief and frequent reporting, this diverse list of threshold ranges acceptable for Cronbach's alpha suggests that there is no clear consensus, standard, measure, or criterion value for an acceptable alpha (Komperda et al., 2018; Taber, 2018). Regardless of the

threshold used, both assessments combined had a Cronbach's alpha score of (0.844) which is considered reliable (range 0.84–0.90). Additional data tables regarding the reliability of the TELS and BAT12 are located in the Reliability Appendix Data as another point of reference. Table 17 illustrates the combined Cronbach's alpha for TELS and BAT12.

Table 17

Combined TELS & BAT12 Reliability

Reliability Statistics for Combined TELS & BAT12

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.844	.824	24

The TELS had an acceptable score of (0.645) (range 0.64–0.85). Table 18 displays the Cronbach's alpha for the TELS.

Table 18

TELS Reliability

Reliability Statistics for TELS

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.645	.633	12

The BAT12 was (0.930) (range 0.93–0.94) which is considered excellent. Table 19 portrays the Cronbach's alpha for BAT12.

Table 19

BAT12 Reliability

Reliability Statistics for BAT12

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.930	.931	12

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to determine the outcome of the dependent variable—burnout—on the predictive values of the independent variables—surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions. As a core burnout component is exhaustion (EX_1), its correlation was first examined between all IVs (NFE, SA, and DA). This would indicate that emotional labor collectively with the predictors does contribute to exhaustion. The corresponding core burnout component of mental distance was also assessed to determine correlation between all independent variables. Accordingly, this would indicate that emotional labor combined with the predictors does contribute to mental distance. Collectively, correlations found connecting the independent variables of emotional labor to exhaustion and mental distance would denote the prevalence of emotional labor as a predictor of burnout.

Assumptions of the Regression Model

Multiple linear regression was the method of analysis which assumes a general linear relationship between the dependent outcome variable (burnout) and the independent variables (surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions). According to Field (2018), a linear model is deemed useful if the data have a linear relationship and display normality. To verify

these assumptions, an initial check through histograms and scatterplots was initiated before engaging in further data analysis.

The assumption of multivariate normality assumes that the residuals are normally distributed and can be confirmed through examining a histogram. Given the bimodal representation of two peaks, there are two groups in the frequency table that have the most frequency of occurrence and two modes in the measures of central tendency. While there exists some mild left-skewed distribution, the large sample size used allows the central limit theorem in which "a variety of situations [can thus] assume normality regardless of the shape of the sample data" (Field, 2018). As such, sampling distribution will be normally distributed despite the potentially skewed shape and determines that a significance test of this skew should not be conducted. Figure 28 presents the histogram for exhaustion and all independent variables.

Figure 28

Histogram for Exhaustion and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)

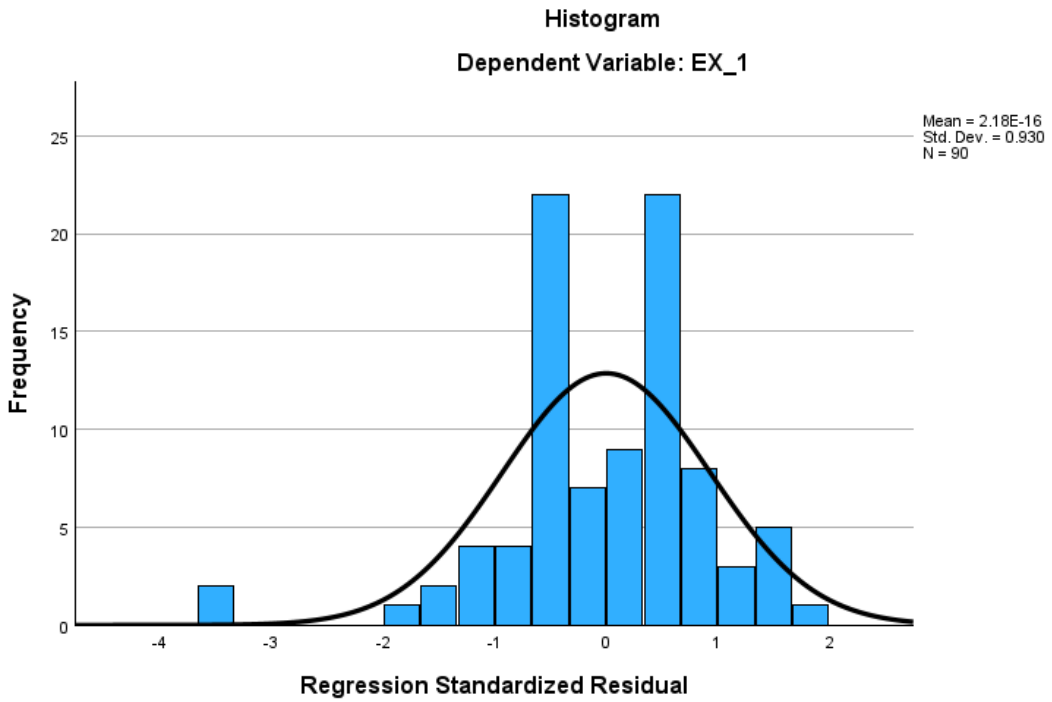
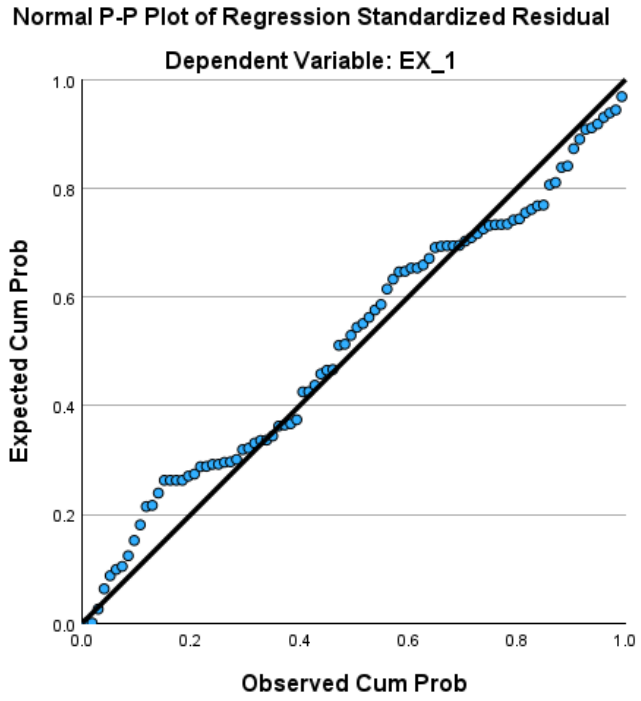


Figure 29 displays the normal probability plot for exhaustion.

Figure 29

Exhaustion Normal P-Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The next assuption was to test for multicollinearity in which the independent variables are too highly correlated with each other. To assess the assuption of no multicollinearity, tolerance statistics and variance inflation factors (VIFs) were checked to evaluate the degree to which the variances in the regression estimates are increased due to multicollinearity. Tolerance values below 0.2 indicate potential problems with the data's independence. Furthermore, should any VIF values present higher than ten, it would indicate that multicollinearity is a problem (Field, 2018). As expressed in Figure 30, no tolerance values were lower than 0.478 and each VIF value was below ten (no values higher than 2.091) indicating that the assumption of no multicollinearity has been successfully met.

Figure 30

Coefficients Table

Coefficients[a]

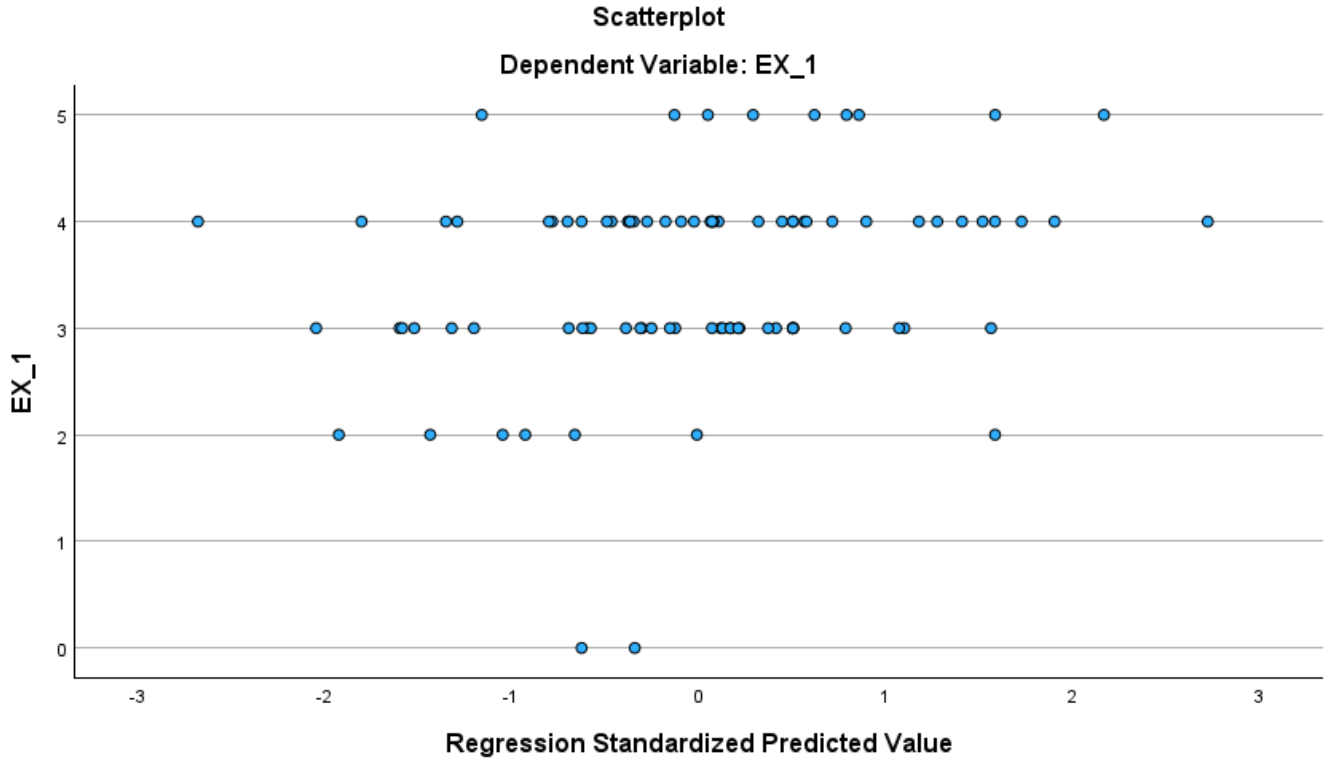
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.393	.718		4.722	<.001	1.962	4.823					
	NFE_1	.234	.210	.134	1.115	.268	-.184	.651	.146	.126	.122	.828	1.208
	NFE_2	-.153	.158	-.132	-.971	.334	-.467	.161	-.028	-.110	-.107	.651	1.536
	NFE_3	.171	.205	.109	.833	.408	-.237	.579	.088	.094	.091	.701	1.427
	NFE_4	.018	.148	.016	.124	.901	-.276	.313	-.005	.014	.014	.736	1.359
	SA_5	.152	.154	.132	.983	.328	-.155	.459	.028	.111	.108	.669	1.494
	SA_6	-.022	.180	-.015	-.122	.903	-.380	.336	-.020	-.014	-.013	.751	1.332
	SA_7	-.066	.183	-.050	-.360	.720	-.431	.299	-.044	-.041	-.039	.615	1.625
	SA_8	-.102	.158	-.084	-.647	.520	-.418	.213	-.112	-.073	-.071	.709	1.409
	DA_9	-.110	.171	-.099	-.645	.521	-.451	.230	-.062	-.073	-.071	.506	1.975
	DA_10	.112	.175	.094	.638	.525	-.236	.459	.014	.073	.070	.556	1.798
	DA_11	-.125	.169	-.117	-.739	.462	-.462	.212	-.153	-.084	-.081	.478	2.091
	DA_12	.005	.162	.004	.032	.974	-.317	.327	-.053	.004	.004	.658	1.521

a. Dependent Variable: EX_1

The final assuption of multiple linear regression is homoscedasticity in which the variance of residuals should be consistent across all levels of the independent variables. As such, scatterplot of residuals data versus predicted values should not display any discernible or clear pattern in the distribution. Additionally, the variables of exhaustion, surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions displayed a linear relationship further supporting the assumption of linearity. Figure 31 captures met assuptions of homoscedasticity and linearity.

Figure 31

Scatterplot for Exhaustion and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)



Results of the Regression Model

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), was a predictor of middle school teacher burnout. The linear combination of surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions and exhaustion (EX_1) showed a positive correlation ($p = <0.001$) between all independent variables though not individually statistically significantly related to exhaustion, $F (12, 77) = .509$, $p > 0.05$ (.903). The multiple correlation coefficient was .27, indicating that approximately 7% of the variance of exhaustion can be accounted for by the linear combination of surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions. Figure 32 provides a model summary for the exhaustion component of burnout.

Figure 32

Exhaustion Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.271[a]	.074	-.071	.972	.074	.509	12	77	.903

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

b. Dependent Variable: EX_1

To investigate the three independent factors' (SA, DA, and NFE) impact on the dependent variable (exhaustion component of burnout), a one-way ANOVA was analyzed to compare the variation between group means to the variation within the groups to determine statistically significant differences. Figure 33 displays exhaustion and all independent variables.

Figure 33

Exhaustion and All Independent Variables ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.774	12	.481	.509	.903[b]
	Residual	72.715	77	.944		
	Total	78.489	89			

a. Dependent Variable: EX_1

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

Figure 34 reveals the histogram for exhaustion and all independent variables.

Figure 34

Histogram for Exhaustion and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)

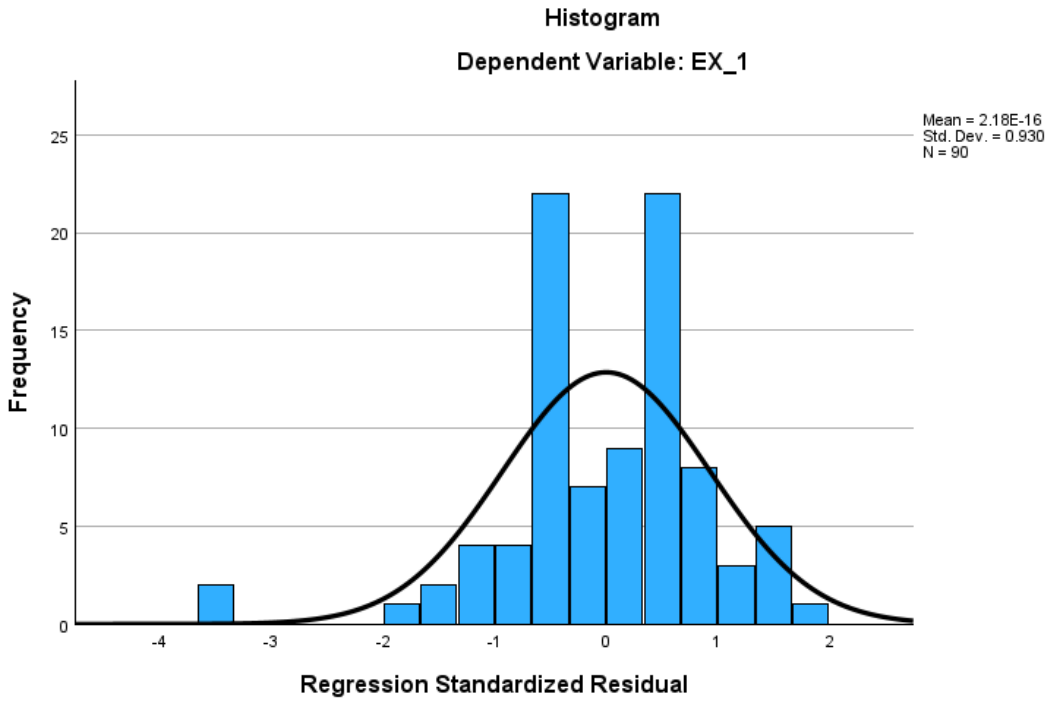
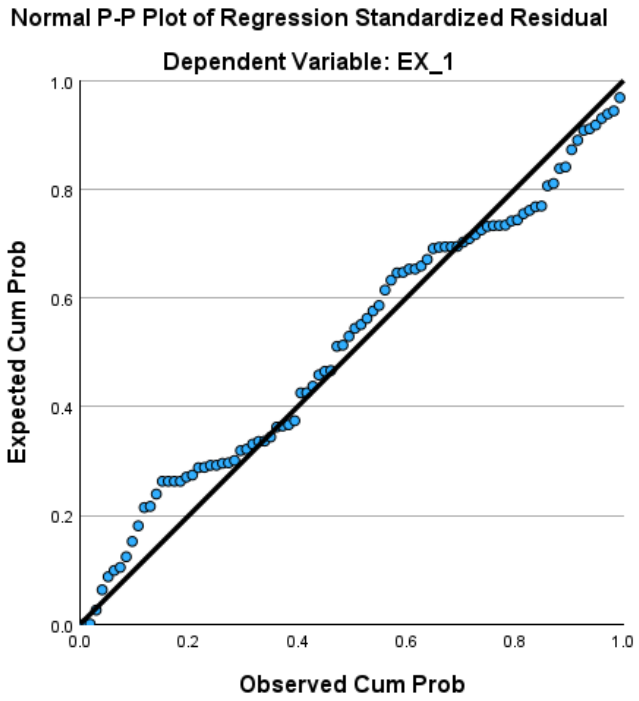


Figure 35 presents the normal p-plot for exhaustion and all independent variables.

Figure 35

Exhaustion Normal P-Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



To determine the association between exhaustion and surface acting, a standard multiple regression analysis was conducted. Surface acting was not statistically significant in relation to exhaustion, F (4, 85) = .356, p > 0.05 (.839). The multiple correlation coefficient was .13, indicating that approximately 2% of the variance of exhaustion can be accounted for by surface acting. Figure 36 indicates a model summary for exhaustion and surface acting.

Figure 36

Exhaustion and Surface Acting Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.128[a]	.016	-.030	.953	.016	.356	4	85	.839

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

b. Dependent Variable: EX_1

Figure 37 presents the ANOVA for exhaustion and surface acting.

Figure 37

Exhaustion and Surface Acting ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.292	4	.323	.356	.839[b]
	Residual	77.197	85	.908		
	Total	78.489	89			

a. Dependent Variable: EX_1

b. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

Figure 38 displays the coefficients table for exhaustion and surface acting.

Figure 38

Coefficients Table

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.736	.435		8.594	<.001	2.871	4.600					
	SA_5	.082	.142	.071	.575	.567	-.200	.364	.028	.062	.062	.760	1.316
	SA_6	-.048	.171	-.034	-.282	.779	-.389	.293	-.020	-.031	-.030	.795	1.258
	SA_7	-.012	.161	-.009	-.075	.940	-.332	.308	-.044	-.008	-.008	.770	1.299
	SA_8	-.145	.144	-.120	-1.012	.314	-.431	.140	-.112	-.109	-.109	.829	1.206

a. Dependent Variable: EX_1

Figure 39 represents the partial regression plot for exhaustion and surface acting.

Figure 39

Partial Regression Plot for Exhaustion and Surface Acting (SA_5)

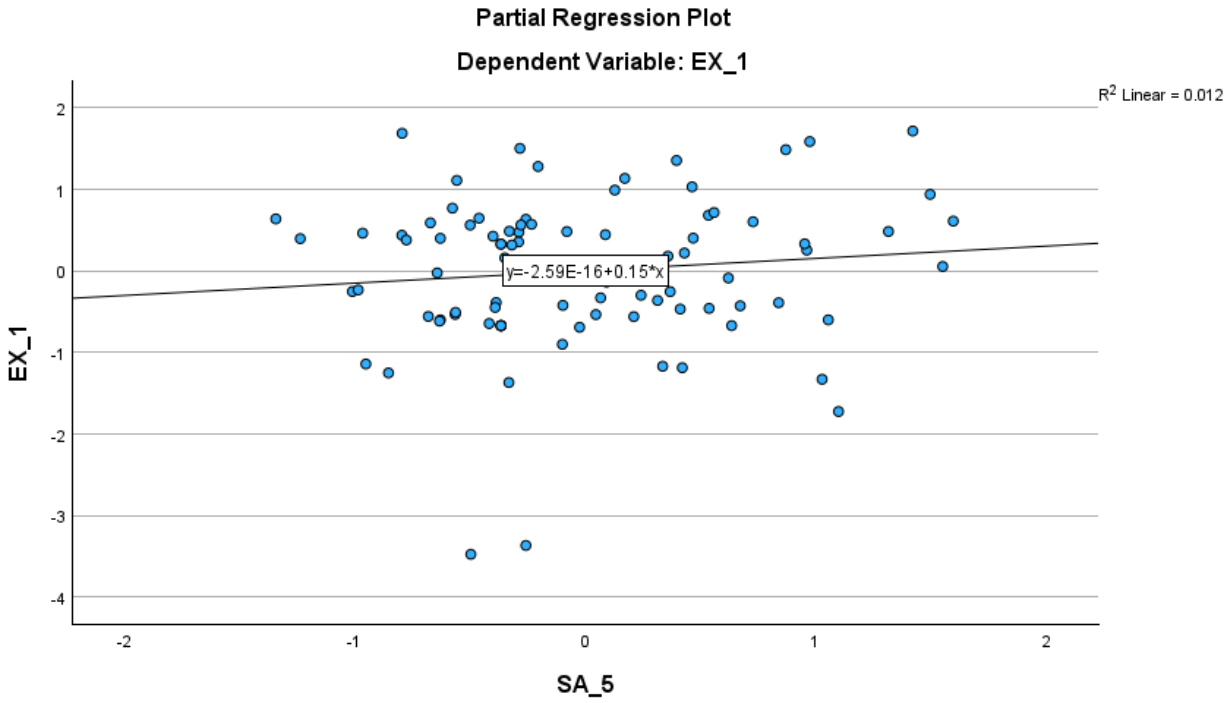


Figure 40 displays the partial regression plot for exhaustion and naturally-felt emotions.

Figure 40

Partial Regression Plot for Exhaustion and Naturally-Felt Emotions (NFE_1)

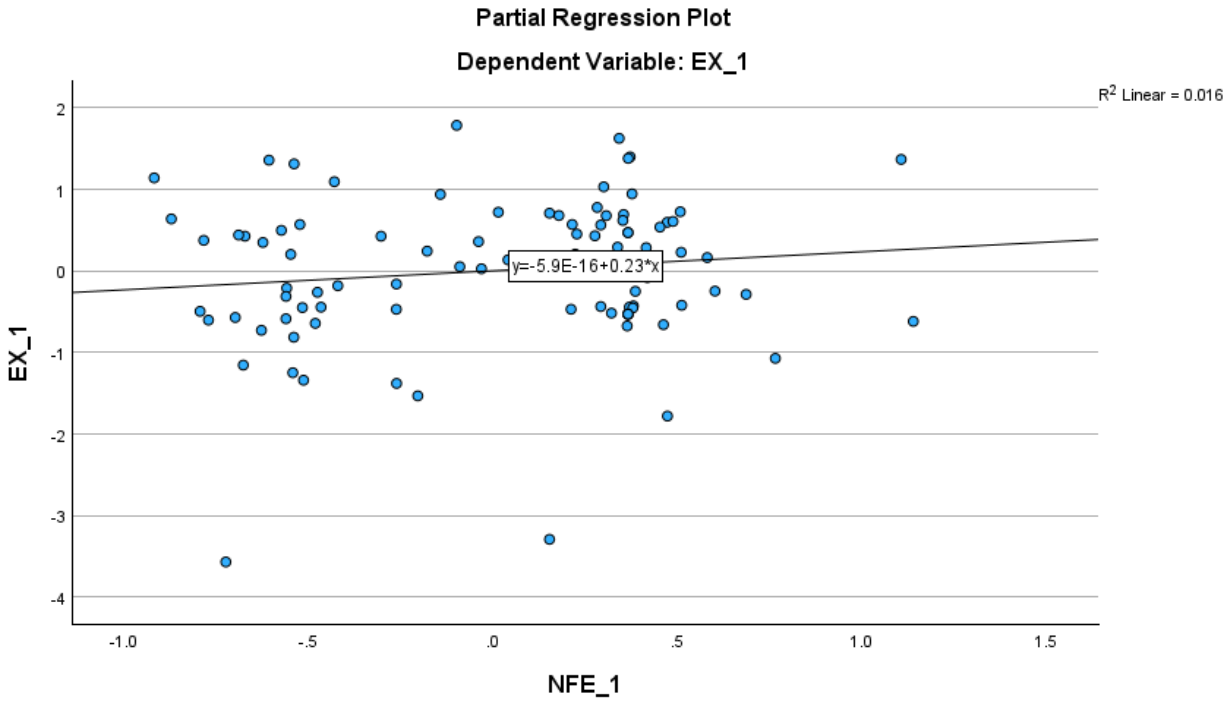
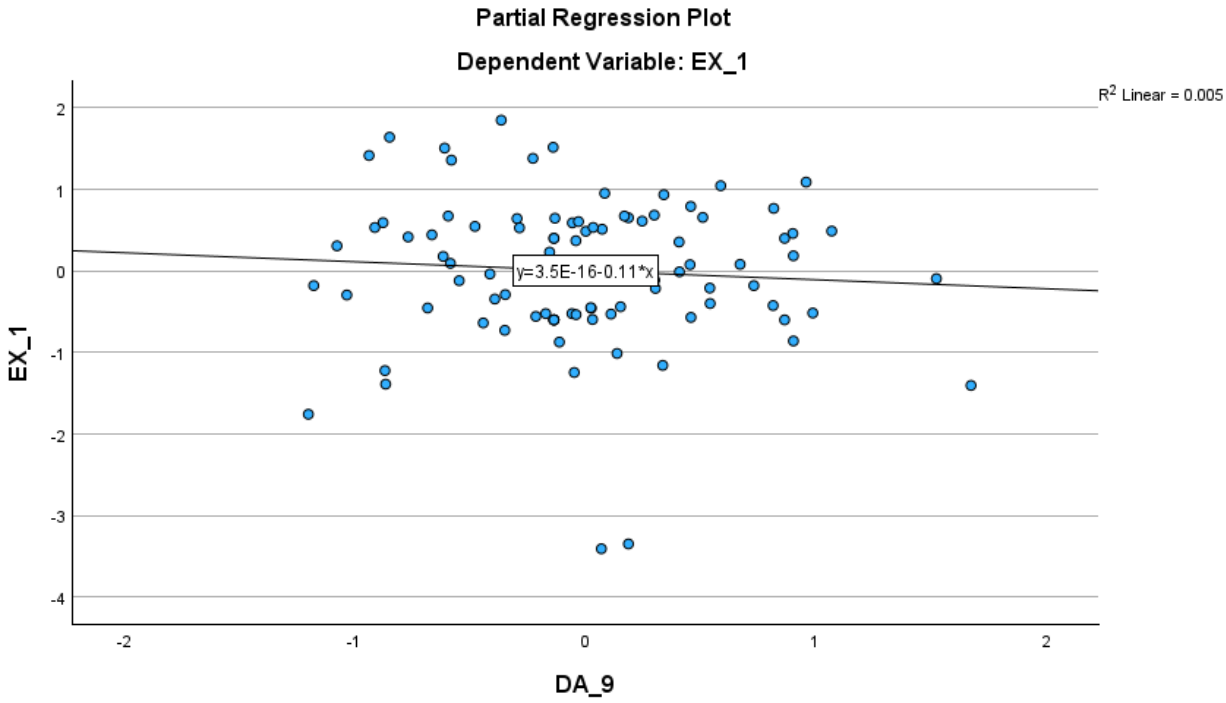


Figure 41 displays the partial regression plot for exhaustion and deep acting.

Figure 41

Partial Regression Plot for Exhaustion and Deep Acting (DA_9)



Mental Distance (MD_6), the corresponding core factor of burnout, showed a positive correlation (p = 0.139) between all independent variables (NFE, SA, and DA) with both NFE_1 (0.051) and SA_6 (0.017) being independently statistically significant, in which F (12, 78) = 1.508, p > 0.05 (.139). The multiple correlation coefficient was .44, indicating that approximately 19% of the variance of mental distance (MD_6) can be accounted for naturally-felt emotions, surface acting, and deep acting. Figure 42 presents the model summary for the mental distance (MD_6) component of burnout and all independent variables.

Figure 42

Mental Distance (MD_6) and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.434[a]	.188	.063	1.181	.188	1.508	12	78	.139

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, SA_8, NFE_1, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_7, SA_5, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

b. Dependent Variable: MD_6

To investigate the three independent factors' (SA, DA, and NFE) impact on the dependent variable (mental distance component of burnout), a one-way ANOVA was analyzed to compare the variation between group means to the variation within the groups to determine statistically significant differences. Figure 43 displays the ANOVA for mental distance (MD_6) and all independent variables.

Figure 43

Mental Distance (MD_6) and All Independent Variables ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.258	12	2.105	1.508	.139[b]
	Residual	108.852	78	1.396		
	Total	134.110	90			

a. Dependent Variable: MD_6

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, SA_8, NFE_1, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_7, SA_5, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

Figure 44 indicates the coefficients table for mental distance (MD_6) and all independent variables.

Figure 44

Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.305	.873		1.495	.139	-.433	3.042					
	NFE_1	.500	.252	.221	1.984	.051	-.002	1.002	.178	.219	.202	.840	1.191
	NFE_2	-.178	.185	-.118	-.961	.339	-.545	.190	-.108	-.108	-.098	.686	1.458
	NFE_3	-.216	.247	-.106	-.874	.385	-.709	.276	-.061	-.099	-.089	.710	1.408
	NFE_4	.321	.180	.212	1.787	.078	-.037	.679	.130	.198	.182	.736	1.358
	SA_5	.337	.187	.225	1.800	.076	-.036	.710	.139	.200	.184	.668	1.498
	SA_6	-.531	.217	-.286	-2.445	.017	-.963	-.099	-.134	-.267	-.249	.761	1.314
	SA_7	.041	.208	.025	.197	.844	-.374	.456	.102	.022	.020	.655	1.527
	SA_8	.162	.192	.102	.842	.402	-.221	.545	.100	.095	.086	.709	1.411
	DA_9	.096	.207	.066	.466	.642	-.315	.508	.015	.053	.048	.512	1.953
	DA_10	-.151	.212	-.097	-.709	.481	-.573	.272	-.047	-.080	-.072	.556	1.798
	DA_11	-.188	.205	-.135	-.914	.363	-.596	.221	.018	-.103	-.093	.481	2.080
	DA_12	.216	.195	.138	1.108	.271	-.172	.604	.120	.125	.113	.667	1.499

a. Dependent Variable: MD_6

Figure 45 depicts the histogram for mental distance (MD_6) and all independent variables.

Figure 45

Histogram for Mental Distance (MD_6)

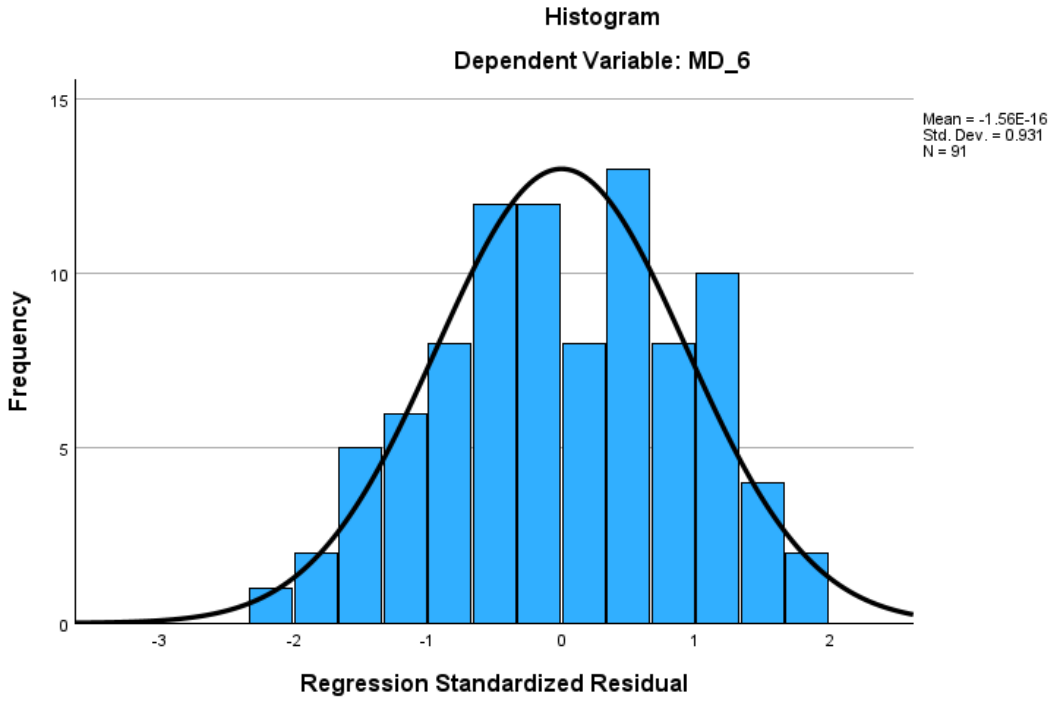


Figure 46 specifies the normal p-plot for mental distance (MD_6) and all independent variables.

Figure 46

Normal P-Plot of Mental Distance (MD_6)

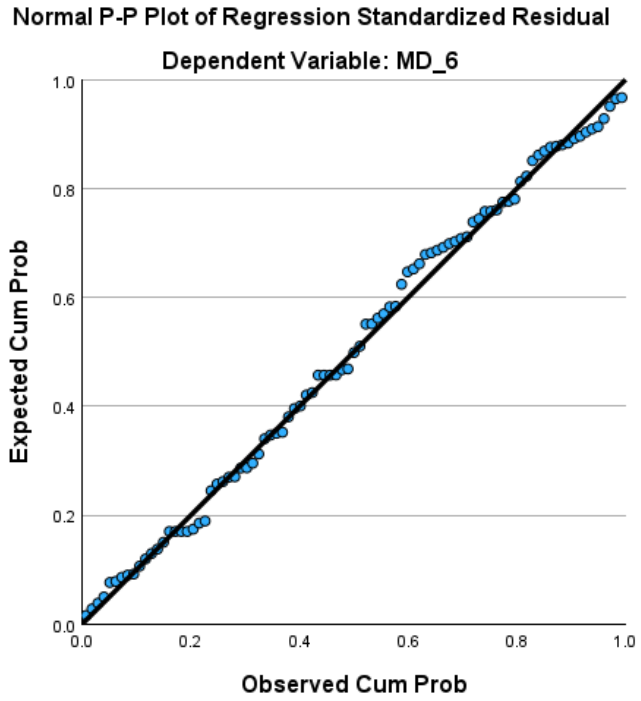


Figure 47 indicates the scatterplot for mental distance (MD_6) and all independent variables.

Figure 47

Scatterplot for Mental Distance (MD_6)

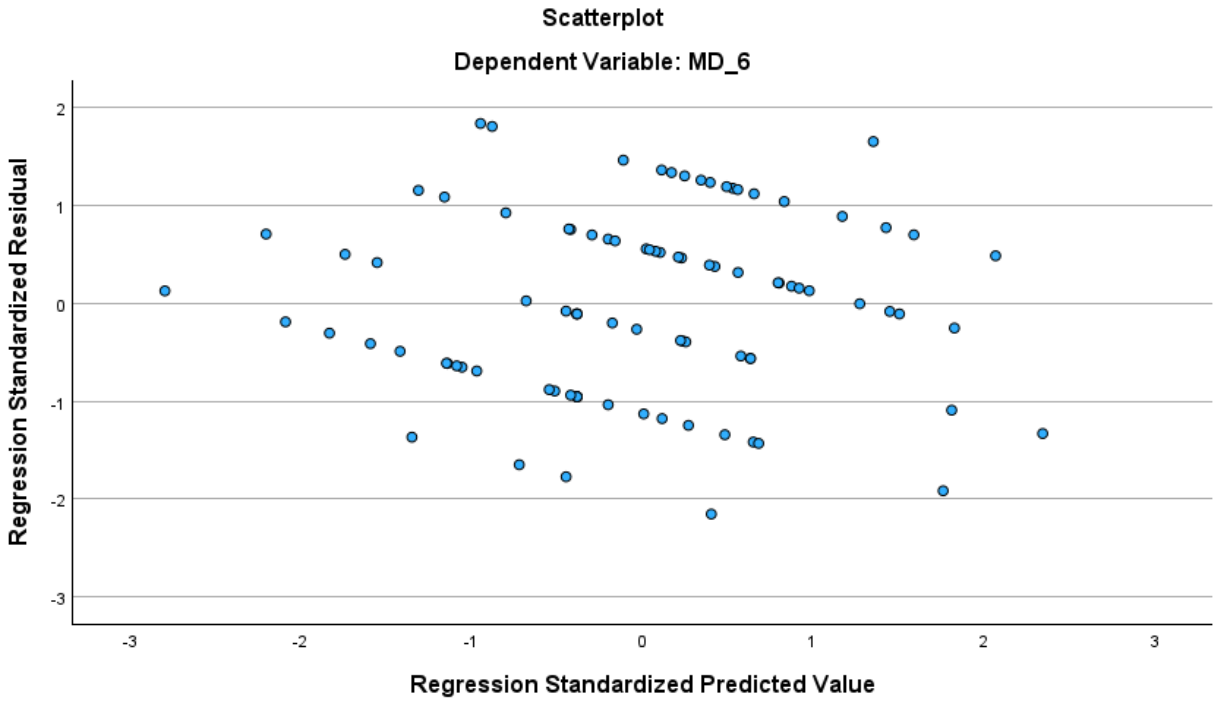


Figure 48 displays the partial regression plot for mental distance (MD_6) and naturally-felt emotions.

Figure 48

Partial Regression for Mental Distance (MD_6) and Naturally-Felt Emotions (NFE_1)

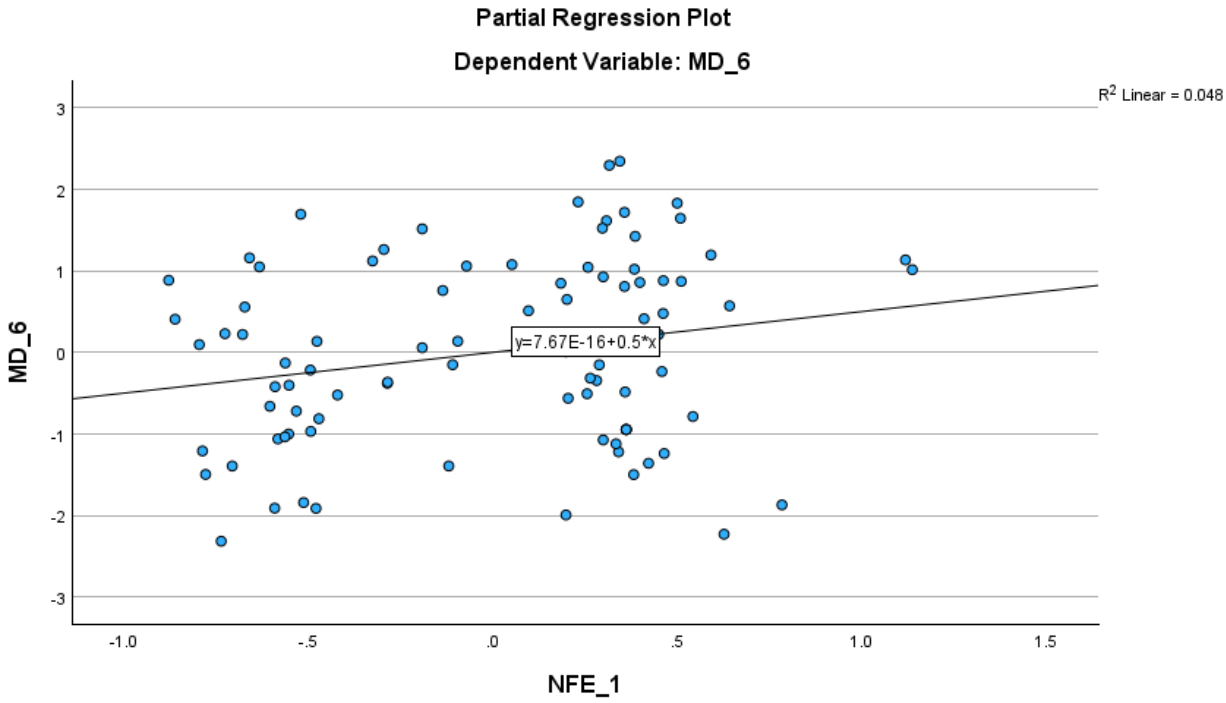
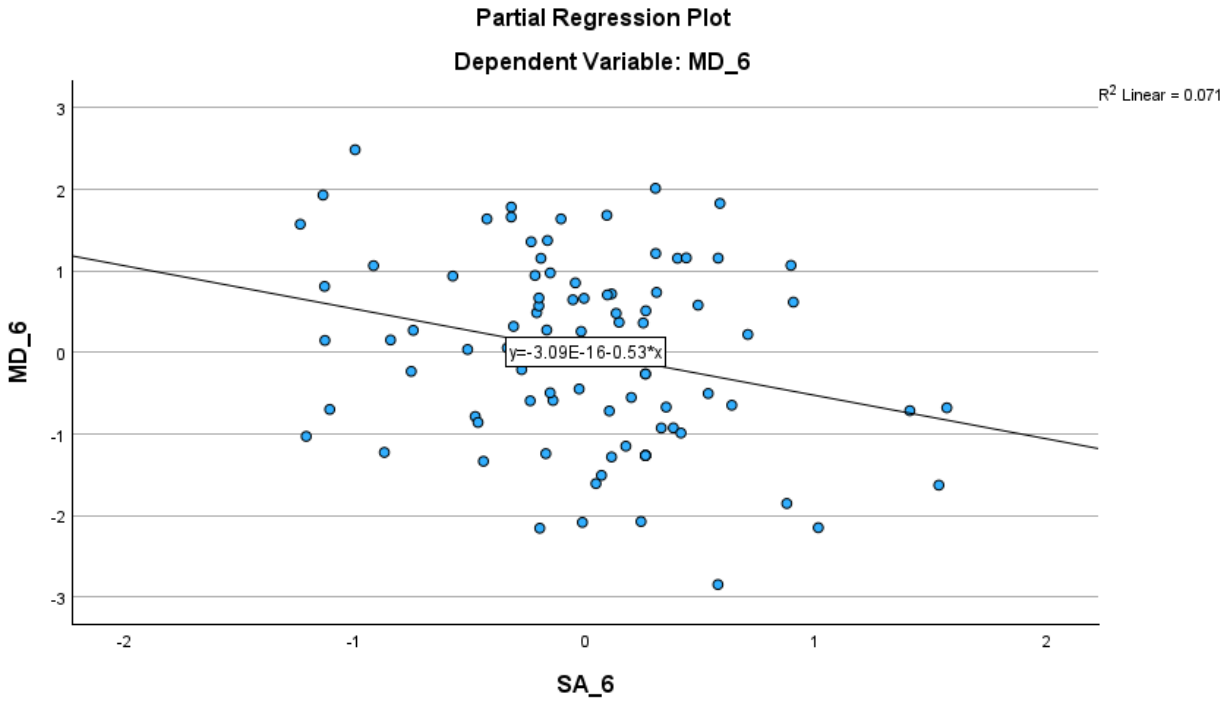


Figure 49 denotes the partial regression plot for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 49

Partial Regression for Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting (SA_6)



Mental Distance (MD_6) shows positive correlation (p = <0.001) between surface acting with SA_6 (0.033) being independently significant, in which F (4, 86) = 1.781, p > 0.05 (.140). The multiple correlation coefficient was .28, indicating that approximately 8% of the variance of mental distance (MD_6) can be accounted for surface acting. Figure 50 illustrates the model summary for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 50

Model Summary for Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting (SA)

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.277[a]	.077	.034	1.200	.077	1.781	4	86	.140

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

b. Dependent Variable: MD_6

Figure 51 denotes the ANOVA for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 51

Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.260	4	2.565	1.781	.140[b]
	Residual	123.850	86	1.440		
	Total	134.110	90			

a. Dependent Variable: MD_6

b. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

Figure 52 displays the coefficients table for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 52

Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.025	.544		3.720	<.001	.943	3.108					
	SA_5	.320	.179	.213	1.791	.077	-.035	.675	.139	.190	.186	.758	1.320
	SA_6	-.466	.215	-.251	-2.168	.033	-.894	-.039	-.134	-.228	-.225	.800	1.250
	SA_7	.122	.194	.074	.630	.530	-.264	.509	.102	.068	.065	.776	1.288
	SA_8	.087	.180	.055	.482	.631	-.271	.445	.100	.052	.050	.833	1.200

a. Dependent Variable: MD_6

Figure 53 represents the histogram for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 53

Histogram of Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting

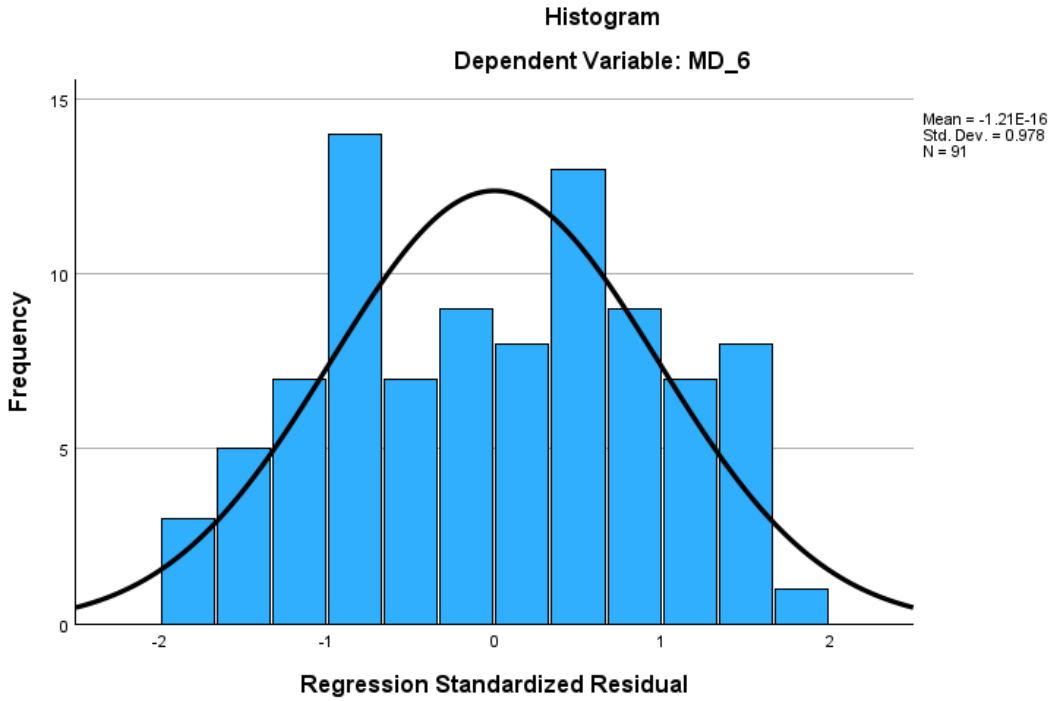


Figure 54 demonstrates the normal p-plot for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 54

Normal P-Plot of Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting

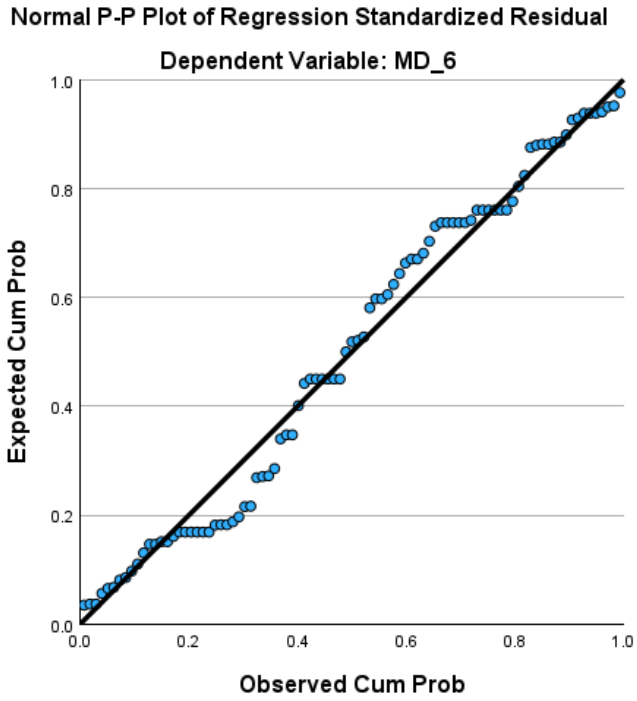


Figure 55 exhibits the scatterplot for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 55

Scatterplot of Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting

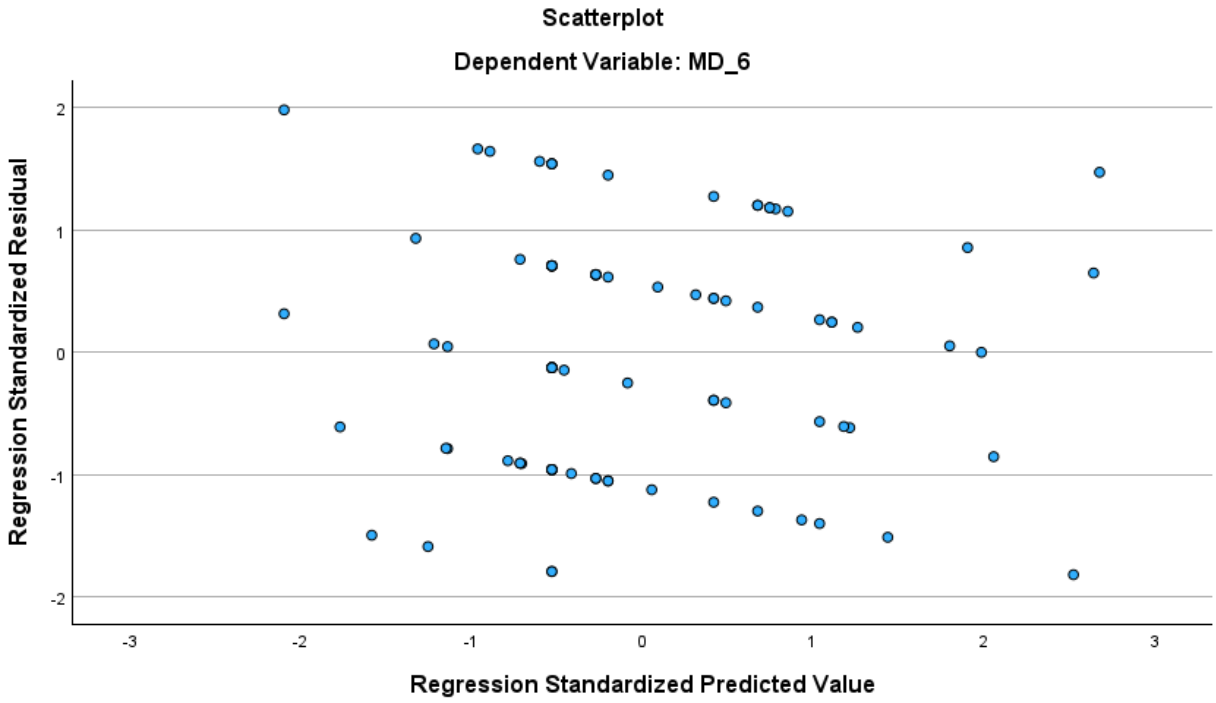
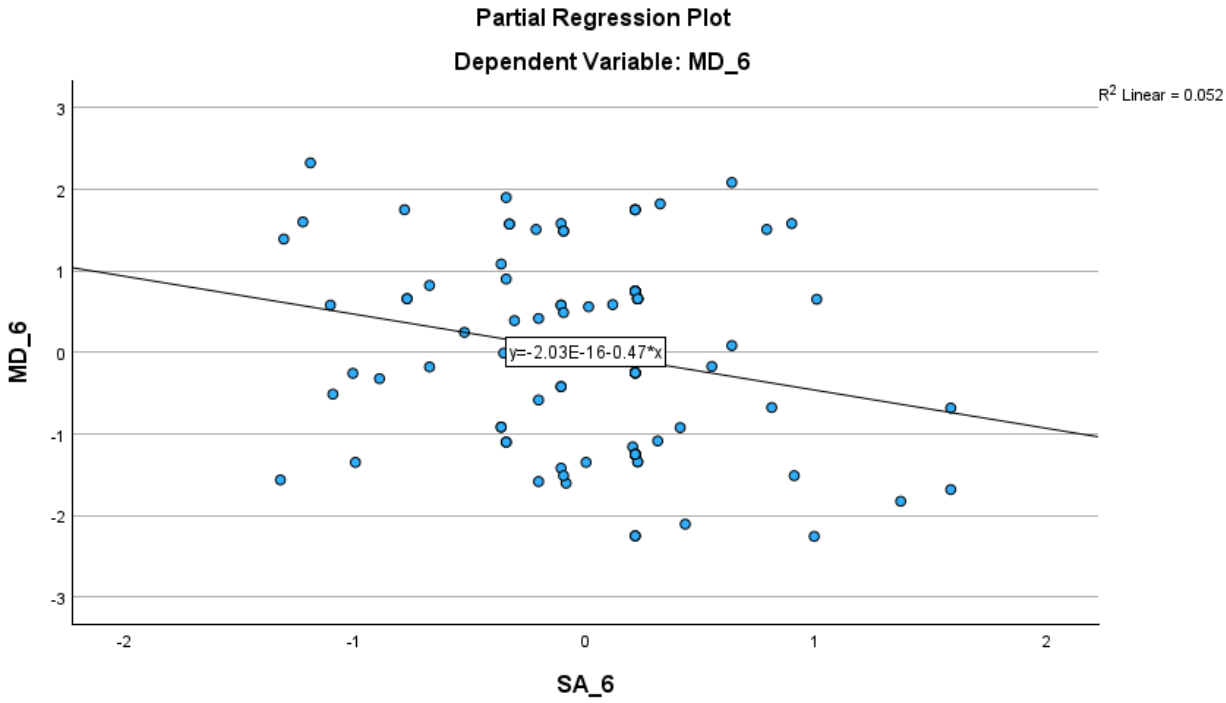


Figure 56 indicates the partial regression plot for mental distance (MD_6) and surface acting.

Figure 56

Partial Regression of Mental Distance (MD_6) and Surface Acting (SA_6)



Mental Distance (MD_5) shows positive correlation (p = 0.03) between all independent variables (NFE, SA, and DA) though no independent variables are statistically significant independently in which F (12, 77) = 1.090, p > 0.05 (.380). The multiple correlation coefficient was .38, indicating that approximately 15% of the variance of mental distance (MD_5) can be accounted for naturally-felt emotions, surface acting, and deep acting. Figure 57 displays the model summary for mental distance (MD_5) and all independent variables.

Figure 57

Model Summary for Mental Distance and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.381[a]	.145	.012	.895	.145	1.090	12	77	.380

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

b. Dependent Variable: MD_5

Figure 58 illustrates the ANOVA for mental distance and all independent variables.

Figure 58

Mental Distance and All Independent Variables ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.469	12	.872	1.090	.380[b]
	Residual	61.631	77	.800		
	Total	72.100	89			

a. Dependent Variable: MD_5

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

Figure 59 demonstrates the coefficients table for mental distance and all independent variables.

Figure 59

Coefficients Table

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.456	.661		2.201	.031	.139	2.773					
	NFE_1	.353	.193	.212	1.829	.071	-.031	.738	.157	.204	.193	.828	1.208
	NFE_2	-.275	.145	-.247	-1.893	.062	-.564	.014	-.173	-.211	-.199	.651	1.536
	NFE_3	.019	.189	.013	.100	.921	-.357	.394	-.064	.011	.011	.701	1.427
	NFE_4	.034	.136	.031	.249	.804	-.237	.305	-.043	.028	.026	.736	1.359
	SA_5	.208	.142	.189	1.468	.146	-.074	.491	.206	.165	.155	.669	1.494
	SA_6	.054	.166	.039	.323	.747	-.276	.383	.113	.037	.034	.751	1.332
	SA_7	-.142	.169	-.113	-.844	.402	-.478	.194	.037	-.096	-.089	.615	1.625
	SA_8	.024	.146	.021	.164	.870	-.266	.314	.044	.019	.017	.709	1.409
	DA_9	.068	.158	.064	.433	.666	-.246	.382	.117	.049	.046	.506	1.975
	DA_10	-.048	.161	-.042	-.297	.767	-.368	.273	.025	-.034	-.031	.556	1.798
	DA_11	-.123	.156	-.120	-.788	.433	-.433	.187	-.027	-.089	-.083	.478	2.091
	DA_12	.191	.149	.167	1.287	.202	-.105	.488	.129	.145	.136	.658	1.521

a. Dependent Variable: MD_5

Figure 60 exhibits the histogram for mental distance and all independent variables.

Figure 60

Histogram for Mental Distance and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)

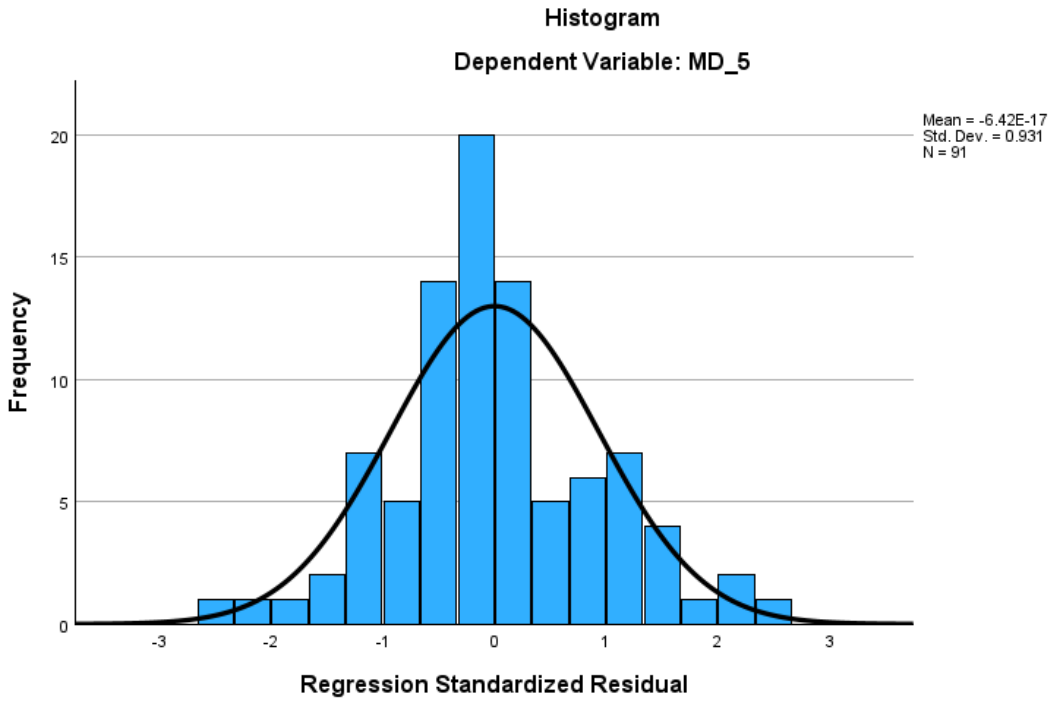


Figure 61 depicts the normal p-plot for mental distance and all independent variables.

Figure 61

Mental Distance Normal P-Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

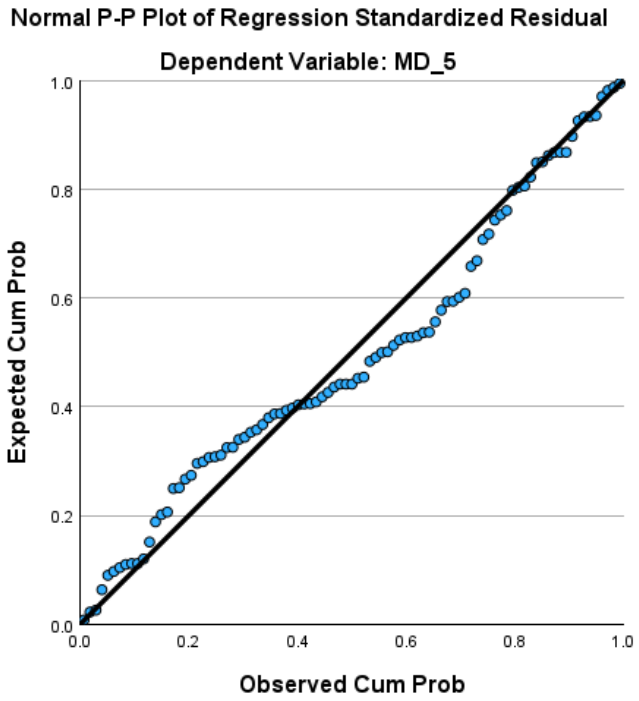
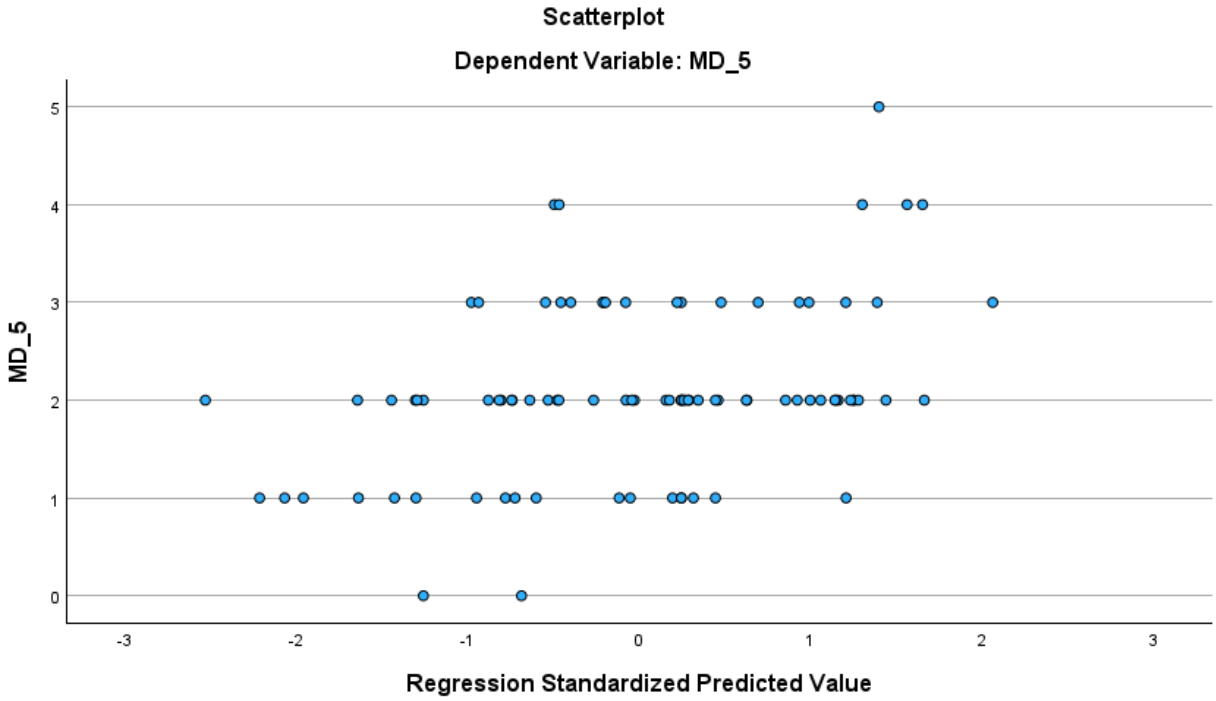


Figure 62 portrays the scatterplot for mental distance and all independent variables.

Figure 62

Scatterplot for Mental Distance and All Independent Variables (SA, DA, and NFE)



Mental Distance (MD_5) shows positive correlation (p = <0.001) with SA. None of the SAs are statistically significant independently in which F (4, 86) = 1.042, p > 0.05 (.390). The multiple correlation coefficient was .22, indicating that approximately 5% of the variance of mental distance (MD_5) can be accounted for surface acting. Figure 63 exhibits the model summary for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 63

Model Summary of Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.215[a]	.046	.002	.921	.046	1.042	4	86	.390

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

b. Dependent Variable: MD_5

Figure 64 represents the ANOVA for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 64

Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.535	4	.884	1.042	.390[b]
	Residual	72.927	86	.848		
	Total	76.462	90			

a. Dependent Variable: MD_5

b. Predictors: (Constant), SA_8, SA_6, SA_7, SA_5

Figure 65 portrays the coefficients table for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 65

Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.449	.418		3.467	<.001	.618	2.279					
	SA_5	.223	.137	.197	1.628	.107	-.049	.496	.212	.173	.171	.758	1.320
	SA_6	.018	.165	.013	.108	.914	-.310	.346	.106	.012	.011	.800	1.250
	SA_7	.045	.149	.036	.301	.764	-.251	.341	.098	.032	.032	.776	1.288
	SA_8	-.009	.138	-.008	-.067	.947	-.284	.266	.051	-.007	-.007	.833	1.200

a. Dependent Variable: MD_5

Figure 66 represents the histogram for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 66

Histogram for Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting

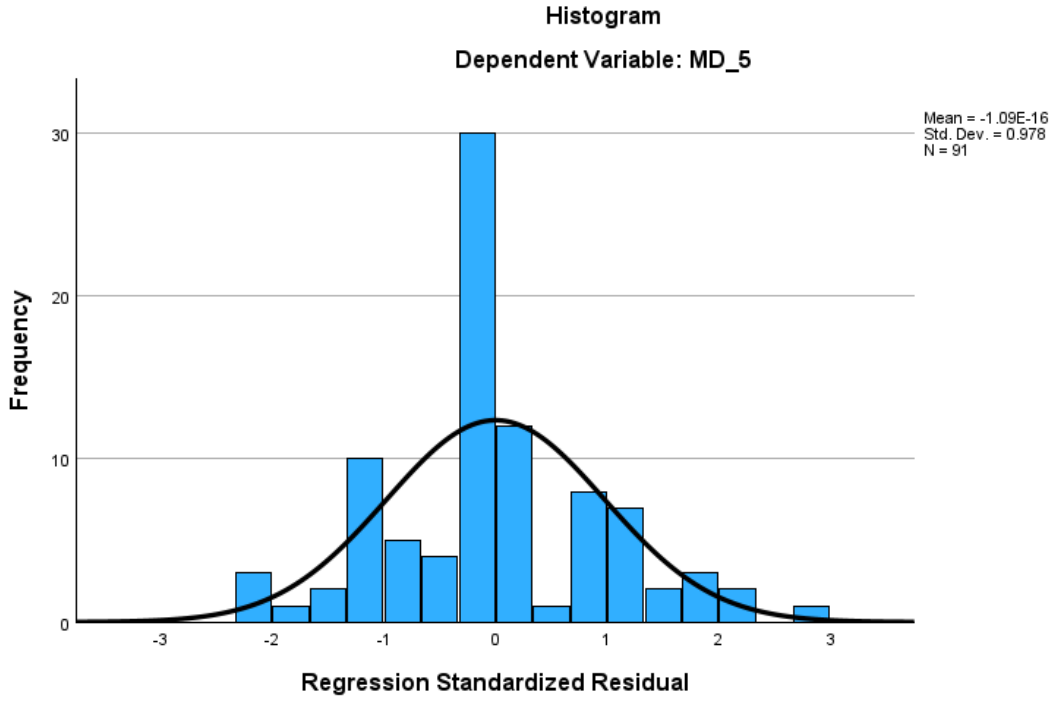


Figure 67 describes the normal p-plot for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 67

Normal P-Plot of Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting

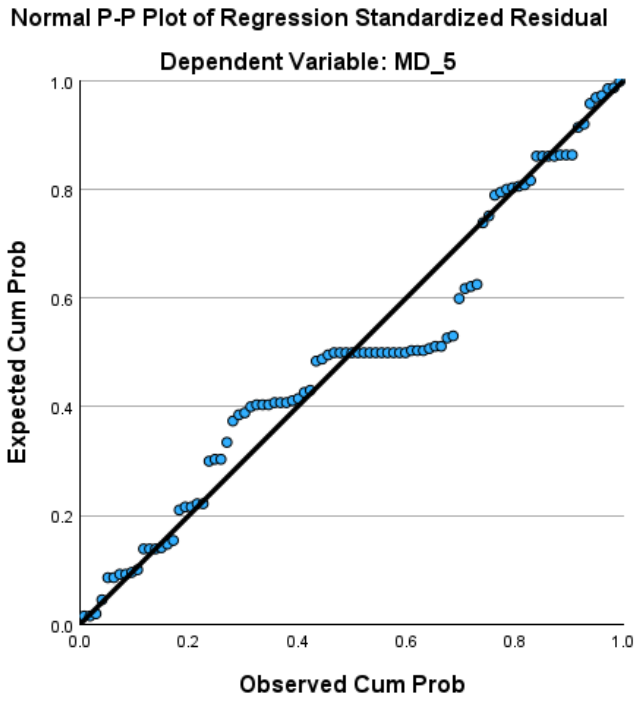


Figure 68 denotes the scatterplot for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 68

Scatterplot for Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting

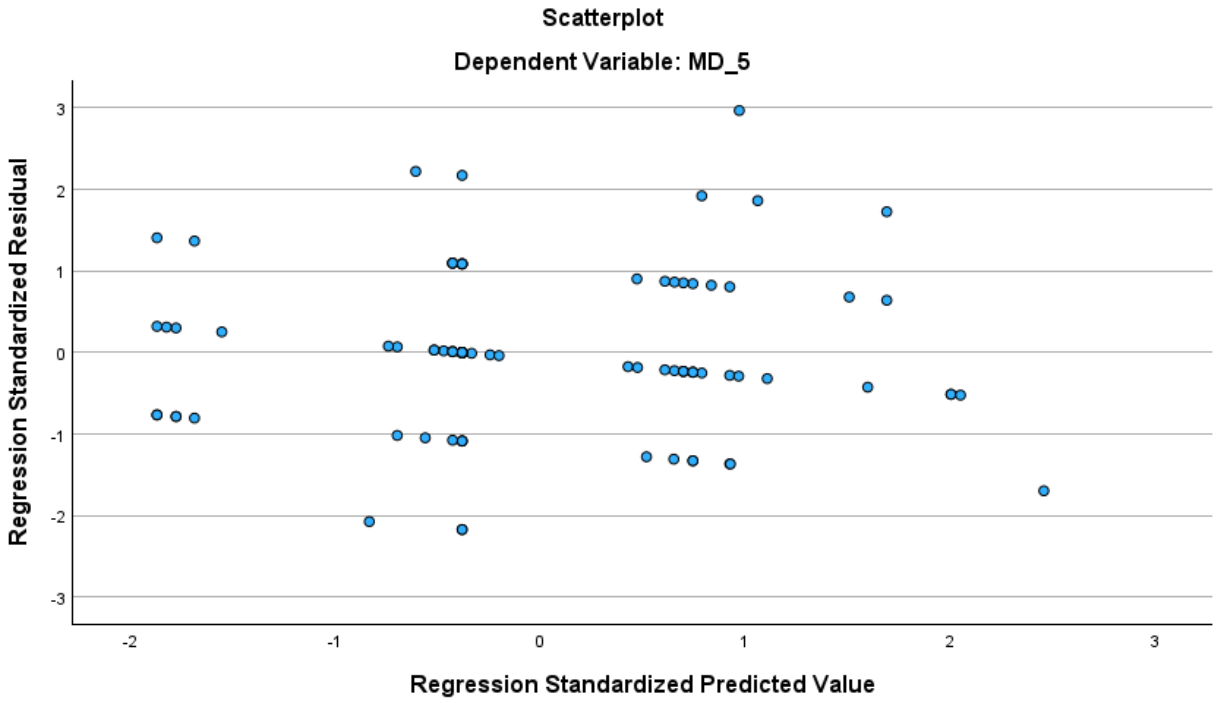
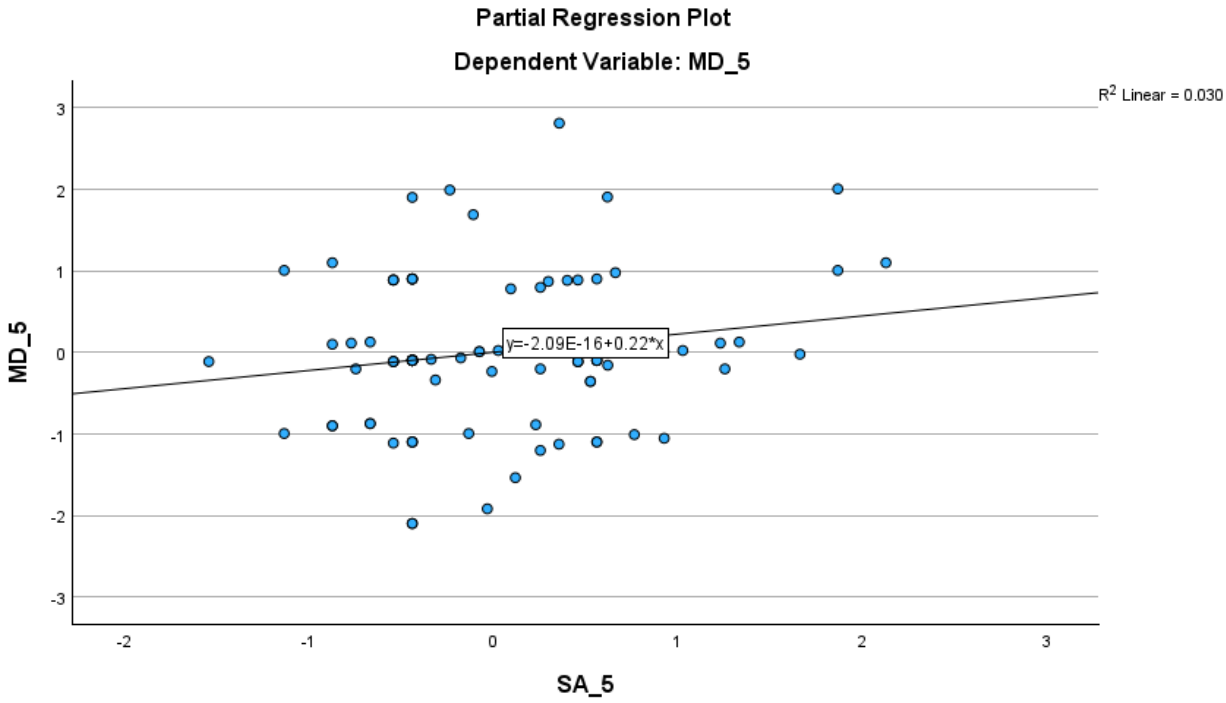


Figure 69 illustrates the partial regression plot for mental distance and surface acting.

Figure 69

Partial Regression for Mental Distance (MD_5) and Surface Acting (SA_5)



Emotional Impairment (EI_10) shows a positive correlation (p = <0.001) between all independent variables (NFE, SA, and DA) with only DA_12 (0.050) being independently statistically significant, in which F (12, 77) = .698, p > 0.05 (.749). The multiple correlation coefficient was .31, indicating that approximately 10% of the variance of emotional impairment (EI_10) can be accounted for naturally-felt emotions, surface acting, and deep acting. Figure 70 displays the model summary for emotional impairment (EI_10) and all independent variables.

Figure 70

Model Summary of Emotional Impairment and All Independent Variables

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.313[a]	.098	-.042	.765	.098	.698	12	77	.749

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

b. Dependent Variable: EI_10

Figure 71 reveals the ANOVA for emotional impairment and all independent variables.

Figure 71

Emotional Impairment and All Independent Variables ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.904	12	.409	.698	.749[b]
	Residual	45.096	77	.586		
	Total	50.000	89			

a. Dependent Variable: EI_10

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA_12, NFE_3, SA_6, NFE_1, SA_8, NFE_4, DA_9, SA_5, SA_7, NFE_2, DA_10, DA_11

Figure 72 depicts the coefficients table for emotional impairment and all independent variables.

Figure 72

Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.487	.566		4.396	<.001	1.361	3.614					
	NFE_1	-.054	.165	-.039	-.325	.746	-.382	.275	.000	-.037	-.035	.828	1.208
	NFE_2	-.088	.124	-.095	-.706	.482	-.335	.159	.037	-.080	-.076	.651	1.536
	NFE_3	.075	.161	.060	.467	.642	-.246	.397	.050	.053	.051	.701	1.427
	NFE_4	.106	.117	.115	.911	.365	-.126	.338	.111	.103	.099	.736	1.359
	SA_5	-.064	.121	-.069	-.525	.601	-.305	.178	-.110	-.060	-.057	.669	1.494
	SA_6	-.087	.142	-.077	-.616	.540	-.369	.195	-.113	-.070	-.067	.751	1.332
	SA_7	-.039	.144	-.037	-.272	.787	-.327	.248	-.063	-.031	-.029	.615	1.625
	SA_8	-.134	.125	-.138	-1.077	.285	-.382	.114	-.136	-.122	-.117	.709	1.409
	DA_9	-.074	.135	-.084	-.550	.584	-.343	.194	-.124	-.062	-.059	.506	1.975
	DA_10	-.078	.138	-.082	-.568	.571	-.352	.196	-.076	-.065	-.062	.556	1.798
	DA_11	-.064	.133	-.075	-.479	.634	-.329	.202	-.085	-.054	-.052	.478	2.091
	DA_12	.253	.127	.265	1.989	.050	.000	.507	.095	.221	.215	.658	1.521

a. Dependent Variable: EI_10

Figure 73 demonstrates the histogram for emotional impairment and all independent variables.

Figure 73

Histogram of Emotional Impairment and All Independent Variables

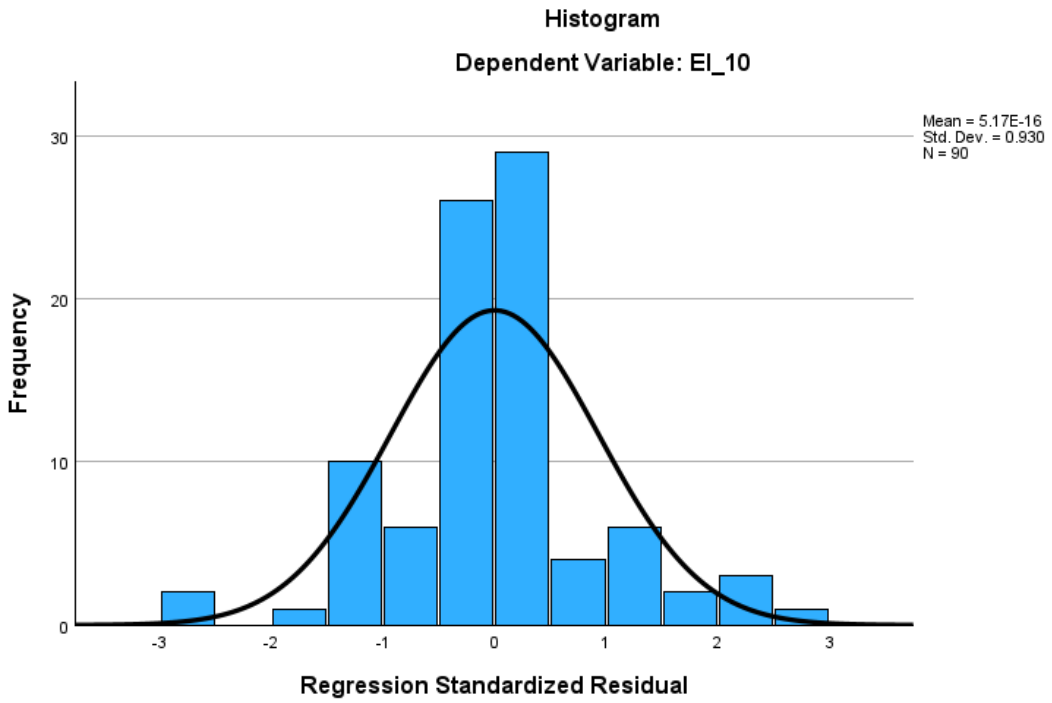


Figure 74 expresses the normal p-plot for emotional impairment and all independent variables.

Figure 74

Normal P-Plot of Emotional Impairment

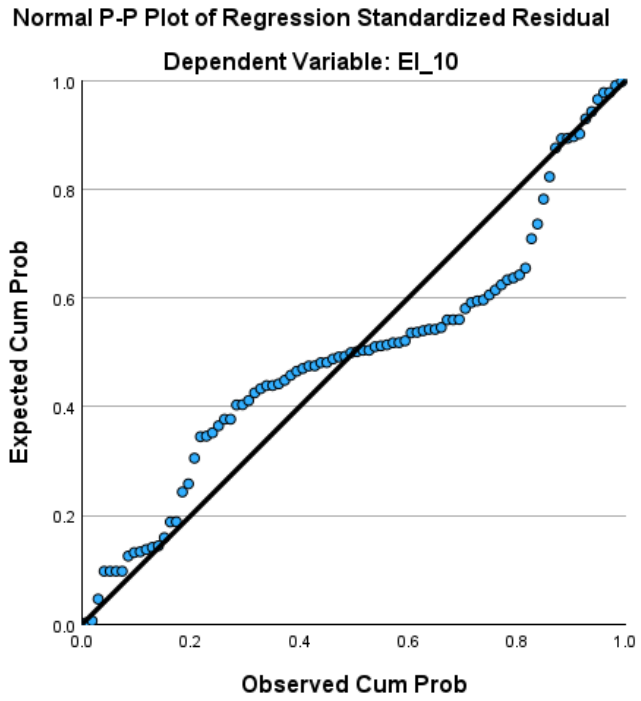


Figure 75 signifies the scatterplot for emotional impairment and all independent variables.

Figure 75

Scatterplot of Emotional Impairment

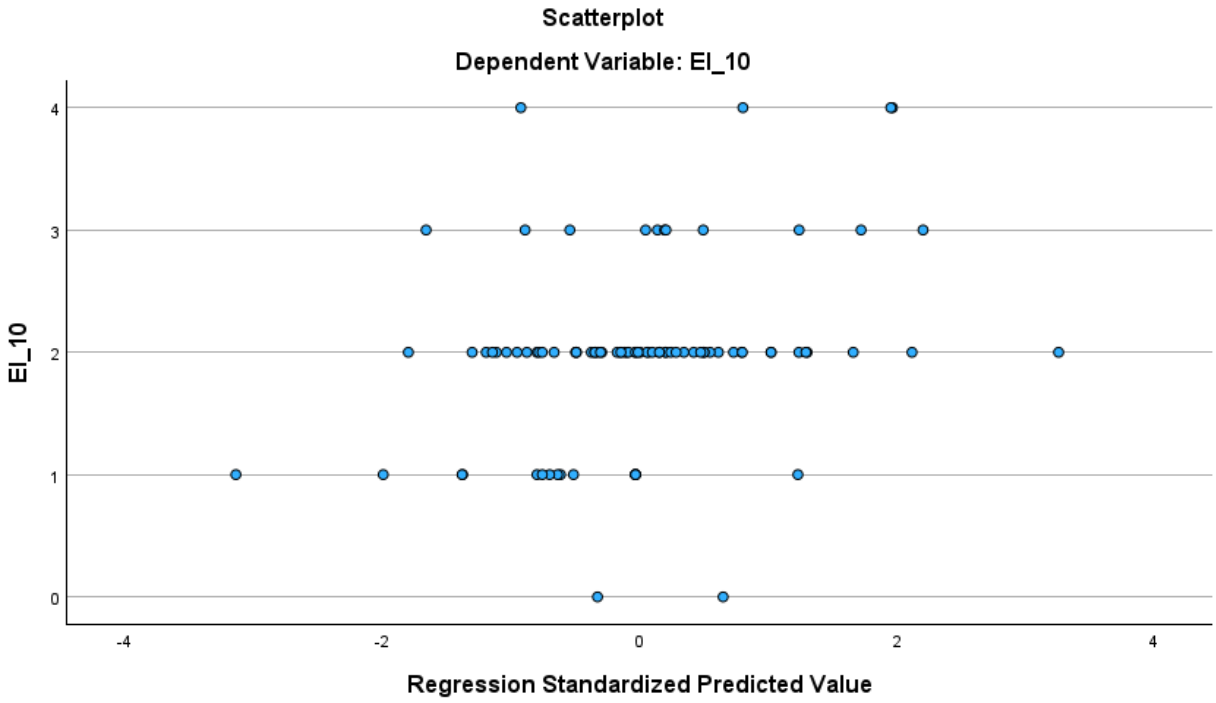
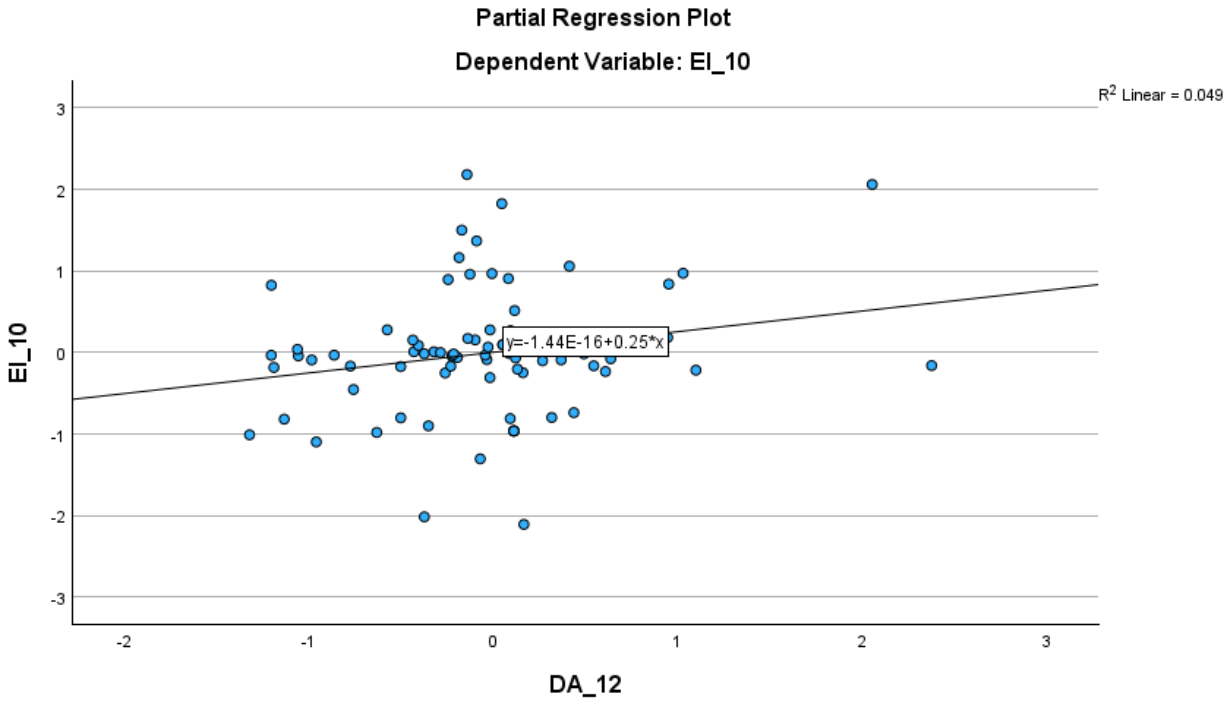


Figure 76 indicates the partial regression plot for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 76

Partial Regression of Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting (DA_12)



Emotional Impairment (EI_10) shows a positive correlation (p = <0.001) between all DA (10, 11, and 12) with none being independently statistically significant, in which F (3, 87) = 1.059, p > 0.05 (.371). The multiple correlation coefficient was .19, indicating that approximately 4% of the variance of emotional impairment (EI_10) can be accounted for deep acting. Figure 77 displays the model summary for emotional impairment (EI_10) and deep acting.

Figure 77

Model Summary of Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.188[a]	.035	.002	.752	.035	1.059	3	87	.371

a. Predictors: (Constant), DA_11, DA_10, DA_12

b. Dependent Variable: EI_10

Figure 78 exhibits the ANOVA for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 78

Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.796	3	.599	1.059	.371[b]
	Residual	49.193	87	.565		
	Total	50.989	90			

a. Dependent Variable: EI_10

b. Predictors: (Constant), DA_11, DA_10, DA_12

Figure 79 depicts the coefficients table for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 79

Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.074	.270		7.691	<.001	1.538	2.610					
	DA_12	.175	.115	.182	1.522	.132	-.054	.404	.095	.161	.160	.775	1.291
	DA_10	-.085	.113	-.088	-.751	.455	-.309	.139	-.074	-.080	-.079	.801	1.249
	DA_11	-.112	.104	-.131	-1.077	.284	-.319	.095	-.088	-.115	-.113	.754	1.326

a. Dependent Variable: EI_10

Figure 80 signifies the histogram for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 80

Histogram of Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting

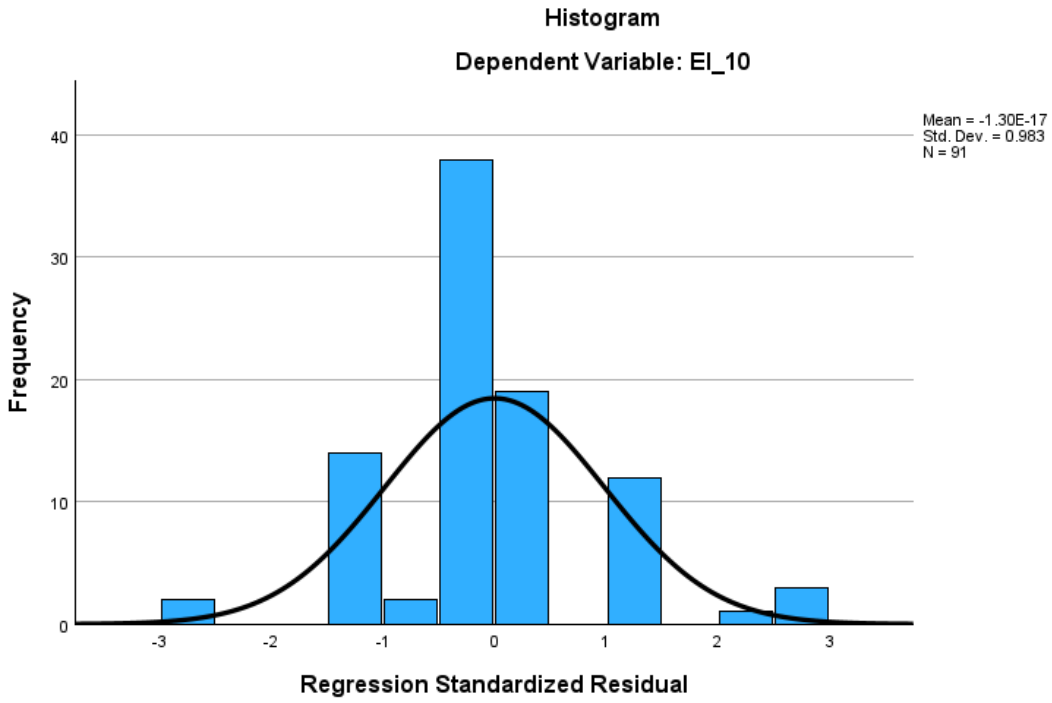


Figure 81 indicates the normal p-plot for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 81

Normal P-Plot of Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting

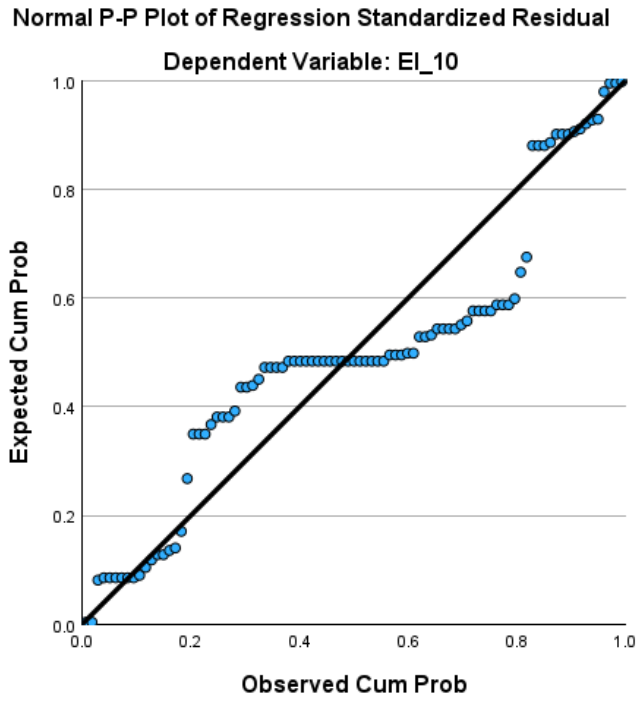
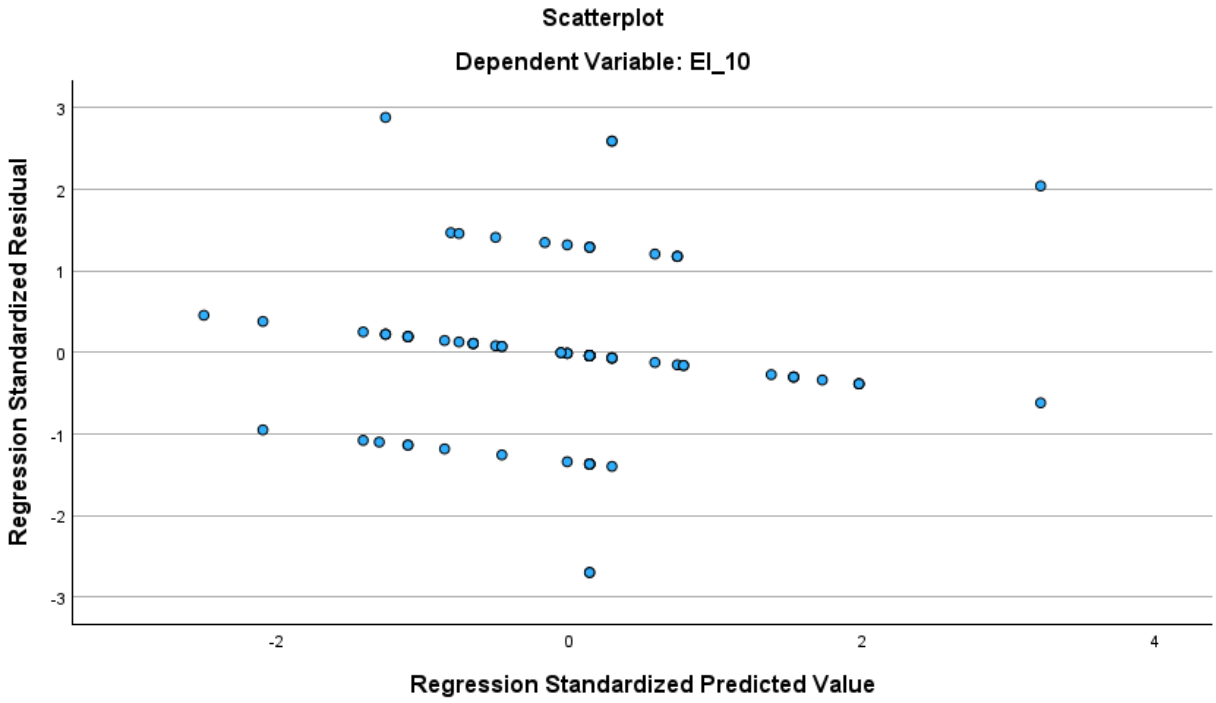


Figure 82 illustrates the scatterplot for emotional impairment and deep acting.

Figure 82

Scatterplot of Emotional Impairment and Deep Acting



Burnout Results

To measure the level of burnout, cut-off values for both total-core burnout [average score range = 1-5 (low-high)] and individual components thereof (Exhaustion, Mental Distance, Emotional Impairment, and Cognitive Impairment) are indicated in Table 20 below (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020).

Table 20

Burnout Scores overall mean and within component groups

*Table 2. Statistical norms for Flemish employees (BAT-12)**

	Total-core	Exhaustion	Mental distance	Emotional impairment	Cognitive impairment
Low	1.00 –1.50	1.00 –1.66	1.00	1.00	1.00 – 1.66
Average	1.51 – 2.35	1.67 – 2.99	1.01 – 2.65	1.01 – 2.00	1.67 – 2.33
High	2.36– 3.17	3.00 – 3.99	2.66 – 3.99	2.01 – 3.00	2.34 –3.32
Very high	3.18 – 5.00	4.00 – 5.00	4.00 – 5.00	3.01 – 5.00	3.33 – 5.00

Note: * Secondary symptoms are not included in the table because no short version of this scale exists. Manual BAT - Version 2.0, Table 69, p.116.

Source: Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020

The following represents the level of burnout middle school teachers experienced (N = 91):

Independent Factors:

- EX (M =3.48) indicating a High level of exhaustion (3.00-3.99)
- MD (M = 2.38) indicating an Average level of Mental Distance (1.01-2.65)
    - (0.27) difference away from High level
- CI (M = 2.47) indicating a High level of Cognitive Impairment (2.34-3.32)
- EI (M = 2.02) indicating a High level of Emotional Impairment (2.01-3.00).

Overall Factors Total-Core (full picture of Burnout):

- EX + MD + CI + EI (M = 2.59) indicating a High level of overall Burnout (2.36-3.17)

The total-core burnout score for each teacher sub-group is indicated in Table 21 below.

Table 21

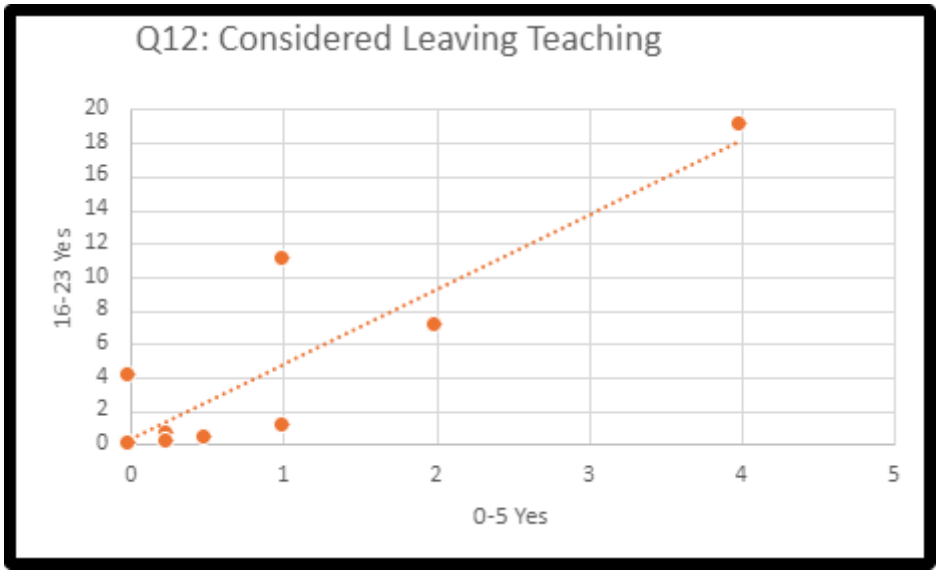
Burnout Score by Teacher Subgroup

Sub-Group	0-5 years	6-15 years	16-23 years	24+ years
Sub-Categories (EX, MD, CI, EI) Sum	1 +2.16 + 1.6 + 4 = 8.76	1.66 +2.33 + 2.33 + 3.6 = 9.92	2 + 2 + 2.33 + 3.5 = 9.83	2.33 + 2.16 + 2.5 + 3.33
Overall Burnout Total Core =	(M = 2.92)	(M = 3.30)	(M = 3.28)	(M = 3.44)
Level (Range)	High (2.36-3.17)	Very High (3.18-5.00)	Very High (3.18-5.00)	Very High (3.18-5.00)

The total-core burnout score between groups is indicated in Figure 83 below.

Figure 83

Between Groups Considered Leaving Teaching



Summary of Findings

Research question 1 encompassed the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considered leaving teaching. From the qualitative data, seven themes emerged including: 1) Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance, 2) Value System of Student-Centered Care, 3) Not Enough to Go Around, 4) A Tired Teacher, 5) Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance, 6) Administration Sets the Tone, and 7) Bottling Up or Spewing Out. In research question 2, the topic of interest included whether emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), was a predictor of middle school teacher burnout. The null hypothesis was rejected, as emotional labor was found to be a predictor of middle school teacher burnout. Surface Acting was associated with the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of middle school teachers when combined with Deep Acting and Naturally-Felt Emotions. Additionally, Mental Distance and emotional labor (SA, DA, and NFE collectively) were found to be the correlated with Surface Acting being statistically significant. Emotional Impairment showed a positive correlation between emotional labor (SA, DA, and NFE collectively) with Deep Acting found to be statistically significant. The findings do support the impact of emotional labor on factors of burnout as core burnout components are exhaustion and mental distance. The research findings, discussion, reflections, limitations, and implications will be discussed and indicated further in Chapter 5.

Chapter V: Discussion

This study was designed to investigate if emotional labor has an impact on potential burnout of middle school teachers. The researcher implemented both teacher interviews and multiple linear regression analysis to test the study's research questions and hypothesis. The hypothesis did correspond with the results from this study and the findings provide further information that can help guide future research associated with the different types of emotional labor and any effects on burnout for middle school teachers. As the hypotheses of the study was fully supported, researchers may be able to extend the literature to further establish: the presence of emotional labor in teaching, the impact of exhaustion, the influence of mental distance, the increased risk of burnout based upon the combined factors of surface acting, deep acting, and naturally-felt emotions, seeking interventions to mitigate the risk of burnout among middle school teachers—especially in consideration of the uniqueness of each career sub-group, and discovering various features of resiliency that cause teachers to remain within the teaching profession.

Contextual Information

The study was conducted during the Spring semester of 2024 with middle school teachers across a large suburban public school district in the Southeast. A 38-item survey consisting of three sub-parts: 1) Demographics 2) Teacher Emotional Labor Scale (ÇUKUR, 2009) and 3) Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli, De Witte, & Desart, 2020) was distributed via email. Teachers accessed the survey through an email forwarded by the participating schools' principals. A total of 117 surveys responses were attempted; however, a final total of 91 responses were considered as qualified and complete to pursue further analysis. Of the survey responses, nineteen teachers volunteered to participate in a follow-up interview. A purposeful sample was used to study teachers with the selection criteria of varying years of

professional experience levels early career (0-5 years), mid-career (6-15 years), late-career (16-23 years) in addition to adding an emergent concluding career (24+ years) category based upon survey data. Middle school teacher content areas among the sub-groups included: English/Language Arts/Reading, ESL/ELL, Exploratory (Art, Band, Choir, Foreign Language, Physical Education), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Special Education. These sub-groups contained current middle school teachers who could articulate their experiences of emotional labor in teaching. Based on this important criterion, all cases meeting it were studied to implicitly and explicitly compare with those that do not manifest it. The two data analysis procedures implemented in this mixed-methods study included a convergent parallel design of qualitative interviews and multiple regression analysis. The null hypothesis was tested at the 95% confidence interval. A discussion of the findings by each research question, implications of the results, limitations, and recommendations for future research, and concluding thoughts are presented in this chapter.

Summary of Results

Research Question 1

The first research question inquired the perspectives of middle school teachers who have considering leaving teaching. Findings were informed and organized by the survey, interviews, and emotion log journals. Data gathered from survey participants and those who volunteered to interview were cross-referenced and reviewed for commonalities and differences. Seven themes emerged from the data including: (1) Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance, (2) Value System of Student-Centered Care, (3) Not Enough to Go Around, (4) Teacher Tired, (5) Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance, (6) Administration Sets the Tone, and (7) Bottling Up or Spewing Out.

Theme 1: Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance

Though the demands of teachers have steadily increased over the years (Petr Hlado & Harvankova, 2024), there lacks consistency in how to best mitigate the stress associated with the intense workload (Mielke, 2023). Of the study sample, one strategy employed by teachers was the concept of addition by subtraction through collective, agreed upon work of PLCs, but this was still at the cost of a packed daily schedule which continually fueled strain upon individual teachers. Some teachers utilized personal time after school to complete additional tasks related to completing their work which effected their home lives. Others were able to draw and maintain a firm boundary line between school and home. Across each teacher career stage, it was reported that even with the best intentions and finest efforts, teachers showed variance in their ability to maintain a healthy emotional balance between work and home with the majority questioning, "Do I?" This collective experience points to severe problem still yet to be resolved at its root cause: improving teachers working conditions. Black (2003) reported that stressful working environments caused high absenteeism among teachers. High teacher absenteeism creates a negative domino effect within schools as students become grossly underserved. To combat the effects of students' deficit with impactful learning experiences caused by inconsistent teachers' presence, Mielke (2023) suggests reducing teachers' workload as a means to improve their working conditions. This is an integral and foundational piece of the solution to reducing teacher attrition and burnout.

Theme 2: Value System of Student-Centered Care

A common thread among teachers was their desire to become the most effective teacher possible to meet their students' needs. These needs encompassed academic, social, and emotional and teachers often reported overextending themselves for the betterment of their students. The findings are consistent with Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) theory of self-efficacy in which teachers navigate the process of attaining the confidence to know how to do

what is best for students. This was also displayed in teachers' desire to produce specific performance attainments along with the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. Mielke (2023) notes, "…teacher motivation, resilience, and endurance have deep roots in teachers' sense of purpose." As teaching is a highly relational field, it is paramount that teachers feel assured in their convictions and that they can successfully accomplish their goals of facilitating student success. A consequence of the tension between teachers' fostering student success and sacrificing their own personal needs leads to more teachers leaving the profession—even talented teachers. The lack of training on emotional labor along with the persistent societal expectation of teachers to persist in draining themselves to always do more for students perpetuates a defeated mindset.

In essence, teachers with more self-efficacy will perceive more challenge demands and fewer hindrance demands which in turn relates to more engagement and less burnout (Ventura et al., 2015). Leroy et al. (2007) found that teachers with high levels of autonomy and efficacy created a classroom climate that supported student autonomy and increased student's motivation to learn. Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas (2000) reported that teachers placed pressure on themselves because of the constant threat of negative public attention for low performance high-stakes testing. In contrast, an overflow from empowered teachers yields vast dividends dispersed to students.

Theme 3: Not Enough to Go Around

Teachers' professional and personal resources were often noted as insufficient, unsustainable, and depleted despite their consistent efforts to find contentment with the current state of resources. This persistent stretching of teachers to extend beyond their means to accommodate both State and student demands often lead to a high rate of burnout risk even among the most optimistic of teachers. Persistent throughout interviews was the sentiment for teachers to "be the best teacher for their students' success." While the strong desire to evolve

into to their best version of their teaching self was abundant, the consequences of persistent lack of sufficient resources created a deficit mindset towards teachers' efficacy. Teachers often questioned their abilities and reported weakened confidence to carry out their mission to be their most effective for students' success. This mindset follows Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self Determination Theory in which a teacher who feels defeated needs competence to help them become efficacious (Mielke, 2023). In essence, defeated teachers are adopting the mentality that "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes, 1637) even though their level of effectiveness as measured by positive student relationships or even student achievement data may note otherwise.

Berry, Daughtery, & Wieder (2010) found that teachers who were pressured by high-stakes testing and a prescribed curriculum felt their effectiveness stifled. These findings support Hobfall's (1989, 2011) Conservation of Resources theory that suggests stress results from threatened or actual loss of resources. As teachers' resources steadily decreased, decisions were forced between self-preservation or prioritizing students. This led to an increase in teachers' stress levels with implications on both their work performance and well-being. Conversely, the availability of job resources leads to high work engagement, high organizational commitment, low cynicism, and excellent performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Ventura, 2015).

Theme 4: A Tired Teacher

Teachers encounter a unique daily experience of balancing both students' emotions and their own in which every day poses a different situation. As teachers spend 180 days of the school year with students and more waking hours in a day than students spend with their own family, there befalls inherent demands for emotional regulation and connection as teachers develop rapport and build relationships with students. These emotional demands were described by teachers as a substantial source of exhaustion, citing, "I'm just done at the

end of the day. I can't make another decision." The exhaustion that teachers felt was described as both mental and physical. The decision fatigue that teachers faced daily due to constantly making minute-by-minute decisions, inflicting cognitive overload, and often manifested itself in the form of physical exhaustion. Teachers' exhausted and depleted states often "distorted decision making [leading] to undesirable outcomes (Murata et al., 2015) that would have otherwise been sound judgements had teachers experienced well-being. Consequently, when teachers' stress and exhaustion go up, teachers perform worse and student achievement goes down (Mielke, 2023).

The mental to physical exhaustion cycle is consistent with Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labor which involves regulating or managing emotional expressions with others as part of one's professional work role (i.e. display rules). As such, emotional labor is parallel to physical labor in which both situations tend to require a lot of effort. Additionally, the findings supported Grandey's (2000) extension of Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotion regulation to operationalizing emotional labor as teachers engaged in the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for the organizational goals (e.g. feeling rules). Exhaustion reduces performance and student achievement creating a lose-lose situation for all stakeholders (Mielke, 2023).

Teacher well-being is consistently supported as the 'X-factor' of high-performing schools (Harding et al., 2019; Jennings, 2011; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Mielke, 2023). While students' social and emotional needs are often the forefront of teachers' efforts and attention, far less consideration has been placed on the emotional well-being of teachers. Throughout the study, teachers frequently described their role as educators to "teach the whole child," yet their philosophy was often interrupted becoming secondary instead to State and district pressures for student achievement and propelled teachers further into an exhaustive cycle. Consistently reverberated throughout interviews was teachers' frequent

expression to be the best role model for students. This noble feat is coming at a high cost of their own personal well-being that has been neglected for so long that feelings of exhaustion are unfortunately becoming a normal consequence of the teaching career. The typical reality of exhausted teachers grappling with their effectiveness is skating on the fine line of normalcy bias believing that things will remain the same as before (Forsberg, 2019). As such, there must be a shift focus on meeting teacher's psychological needs to assist in managing the taxing and often most challenging emotional elements of teaching.

Theme 5: Safe Spaces Impact Work Perseverance

As teachers navigate the demands of their profession, their safety need of trusted peers was considered a valuable asset and motivator in choosing to persist in their work. This is consistent with findings from Henson (2001) regarding teacher collaboration as a strong predictor of teacher morale. In similar fashion, Louis (2009) posited teacher morale was higher in schools that fostered a culture of support and collegial relationships. When support systems are lacking within a school, public and contagious cynicism can invade the climate and bring a myriad of difficulties. Teachers who feel mentally disconnected often become cynical and can infiltrate their negative mindset into the fabric of the school environment. According to Mielke (2023), the cynical teacher needs relatedness to help them become engaged. Repeatedly in this study, teachers reported their respective teams and colleagues to be a continual source of connectedness which fostered understanding and increased their sense of belonging. As a result, teachers spoke of feeling more engaged with the school community and were more apt to persevere through the challenges of their workday echoing "I couldn't do this job without my people."

Supported by this study's findings and foundational to each of previously mentioned studies is Maslow's (1954) theory of Hierarchy of Needs. There is general consensus that belonging is a fundamental human need that all people seek to satisfy. Teachers often sought

peers who allowed them the freedom to express themselves without judgment. This free expression and space to feel heard created a tapestry of emotional safety within their groups and brought people closer to achieving both personal goals and the goals of the school. Conversely, should a safety net of trusted peers be absent from the school environment, it could deter teachers from persisting in teaching and potentially pursue other careers.

Theme 6: Administration Sets the Tone

Parallel to finding and maintaining safety in trusted peer groups was teachers' need for administrative support. Leader quality is cited more often than salary as a teacher's reason for staying or leaving indicating that the causes of teacher burnout are at the organizational level (Mielke, 2023). Throughout the study, teachers referred to administrative support or lack thereof as a defining reason for either staying or leaving their school. Teachers in the study found deep appreciation for leaders who led with integrity and actively encouraged them in their various roles. This finding is supported by Davis (2010) regarding teachers who were working in healthy work environments having higher morale and being more likely to remain in the profession. Andrews (1985) asserted that teachers with high morale put more effort into their jobs, thus increasing student achievement. On the other hand, teachers who had negative experiences with administration reported those experiences as a "breaking point" in their careers and adamantly decided to leave their school in pursuit of either another school environment conducive to their well-being or, in some instances, another career field altogether. Overall, school environment has been linked to teacher morale, retention, and student achievement (Jacobson, 2005; Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002) and is directly linked to the tone set by administration.

Within their need for administrative support in their teaching goals, teachers also expressed their need for mattering within the school. When faced with challenges in their workday, teachers conveyed the reactions of administration to teachers' needs as a human

being—not only a teacher—as contributing to their sense of value. For teachers whose leadership did not perceive them as human and instead as performing the role of teacher only, there was disappointment and decreased sense of efficacy. Teachers felt as if their contributions were either overlooked or as if they were never meeting expectations. Teachers often felt discouraged in their efforts because they were pouring everything into others, but they were not considered as being worthy of investment by their own administration for whom teachers sought to be their best. Teachers' sense of frustration and subsequent source of stress furthered as a result. This is consistent with Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) concept of mattering in which perception of importance acts as a protective shield against the cumulative burden of chronic stress and life events (Liu et al, 2023). A sense of mattering is often predicated by the belief in one's significance and being valued by others which is pivotal to healthy working relationships and the execution of the mission of the school. In essence, teachers needed to feel like as people they were supported, valued, and that they played a distinct role within the school community.

Theme 7: Bottling Up or Spewing Out

Teachers often reported feeling as though they had to be a positive role model for students and always had to "show positivity" despite uncomfortable emotions and situations that they faced within the school environment. This is consistent with findings by Lumpkin (2008) in which teachers serve as role models due to teachers' influential role in the lives of young people, public expectations for teachers to display behaviors reflective of moral virtues, and adherence to professional codes of conduct. The study also supports Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory in which learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. This creates an emphasis on social influence and its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement as teachers have been incited by society to show appropriate emotions predicated upon school display

and feeling rules. This unspoken rule of teachers always having to display a positive emotional state has thus permeated expectations of teachers to always *feel* happy in their workplace or be labeled as negative. In the study, this pressure to always put on a happy face was found as simply not feasible given the unique nuances of the teaching experience and certainly not realistic for other service professions as humans are neither robotic nor one-dimensional (Sciotto and Pace, 2022). Providing awareness and adequate support on emotional regulation was perceived as a benefit to enhancing teachers' mental state. This is consistent with Houchard (2005) suggesting a teacher's state of mind and ability to foster a positive climate can have an impact on student learning. As teachers endeavor to create positive climates within their classrooms, they also must heavily consider how their emotional reactions contribute to or hinder that goal.

Research Question 2

The second research question inquired as to whether emotional labor, as measured by surface acting (SA), deep acting (DA), and naturally-felt emotions (NFE), was a predictor of middle school teacher burnout. The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that emotional labor was regarded as a predictor of middle school teacher burnout. Surface acting was associated with the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of middle school teachers when combined with deep acting and naturally-felt emotions. Additionally, mental distance and emotional labor (SA, DA, and NFE collectively) were found to be correlated with surface acting being statistically significant. Emotional impairment (EI) showed a positive correlation between emotional labor (SA, DA, and NFE collectively) with deep acting found to be statistically significant.

Emotional Labor

While the existence of emotional labor itself was not lost on the teachers of this study, what remained elusive was teachers' understanding of how to best navigate it. At various

times throughout the day, teachers felt the need to engage in surface acting (faking emotions), deep acting (summoning up appropriate feelings they wanted to display), and naturally-felt emotions (genuine feelings) depending upon the given situation which inflicted intense mental and physical exhaustion. Surface acting has been found to be positively associated with the need for recovery and negatively with general health (Sciotto and Pace, 2022) while deep acting has been found to generally have positive outcomes: does not harm employee well-being, is positively related with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and customer satisfaction (Humphrey et al., 2015).

In the statistical analysis of the survey data, surface acting did not rank as the highest indicator of exhaustion though many interviewed teachers complained of exhaustion stemming from the draining work of putting on a happy face throughout the day and suppressing negative emotions. Conversely, teachers in the interviews who were more adept in deep acting described themselves as "connected to their students" and were better able to recover from the challenges of the workday though the statistical analysis data showed deep acting to be statistically significant and positively correlated with emotional impairment. As emotional impairment is the feeling of being overwhelmed by one's emotions and having intense emotional reactions such as anger or sadness (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020), it would not be indicative of a teacher who is striving to display an even-temperament or calming presence for students unless the penetrating emotion was more positive in nature (i.e. joy, pride, and satisfaction). To this extent, important notes in the study point to the dual perceptions of emotional labor and work demands. Recent research (Crawford et al., 2010; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005) indicates that demands do not necessarily have to be factors that increase strain, but rather it depends on how they are perceived, that is, whether they are seen as challenges or hindrances.

Exhaustion and Burnout

In 2023, 44% of teachers surveyed said they were likely or very likely to leave their job within the next two years. By 2025, unfilled teaching positions are expected to approach 200,000 (Mielke, 2023). In this study, exhaustion was evidenced as a core dimension of burnout in both the statistical analysis and teacher interviews. Mental distance was also evidenced as a core dimension of burnout. Taken together, the combination of inability (exhaustion) and unwillingness (mental distance) to perform were core factors of teacher burnout. These findings are consistent with Schaufeli & De Witte (2020) in which the Mental Distance (MD) factor of burnout refers to depersonalization or when a person feels dissociated and disconnected to their job. This is also connected to self-efficacy because of being unable and unwilling to spend effort at work (Taris, et al., 2005; Schaufeli, 2020). These results support Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) theory of self-efficacy as a predictor of psychosocial self-care behavior (i.e. burnout and engagement) following the Social Cognitive Theory. Teachers often reported feeling a lack of confidence in their abilities to adequately meet students' needs due to their mental and physical exhaustion which perpetuated a cycle of feeling as if they were underperforming in their role.

Exhaustion and Mental Distance

Taris et al., (2005) found that exhaustion leads to depersonalization and depersonalization leads to reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout results in acute phycological fatigue where motivation and effort are critically declined. To combat this fatigue, the act of mental distancing serves aide in recovery as a protective mechanism to prevent the teacher from spending additional energy and entirely depleting his or her resources. In this study, teachers experienced extended fatigue promoting the dysfunctional protective mental distancing and risking relatively permanent impaired motivation (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020). Accordingly, during teacher interviews, mental distancing was evident at times as an inadequate coping strategy that promotes rather than reduces exhaustion (Taris,

Le Blanc, Schaufeli & Schreurs, 2005). Teachers who adopted an "I don't care" attitude or who expressed feelings of resentment towards administration did so with the intent to defend themselves from future harm and to protect what little personal resources may remain. Teachers' consistent lack of personal resources is consistent with Hobfall's (1989; 2011) Conservation of Resources theory. Teachers' mental distancing caused by exhaustion either threatened or generated actual loss of resources. As a result, teachers defaulted to self-preserve and recover energy through mental distancing.

Cynicism, a sub-component of mental distance, was a prevalent experience for teachers who were feeling hopeless and powerless. Much of the underpinnings of their cynicism was due to their feelings of being unsafe, devalued, or unheard. At times during the study, some administrative leaders were viewed as being ineffective or as not truly having teachers' best interests at heart. Many teachers experienced this facet of mental distancing as evidenced in their lack of faith that administration will change things for the better and, for some, has been reinforced as their reality since they began teaching (Studer, 2019). This need for teachers to be valued by others and for their significance to be recognized is consistent with Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) concept of mattering. As levels of exhaustion and cynicism have increased, the teachers who remain in their jobs may be burned out beyond effectiveness which deeply impacts schools and students (Mielke, 2023).

Discussion

Teachers' self-efficacy, attitude, and engagement are influenced by various factors, encompassing personal, school contextual, and behavioral aspects (Sokha, 2024). In the study, both survey and interview questions were streamlined to focus on the environmental (school culture, social interactions with colleagues and students, and resources) and personal (interpersonal self-awareness, perception, expectation, self-confidence, resilience, social support networks, emotions, and well-being) influences of teaching to explore these

dimensions. Of the results, there emerged some synchronization between the quantitative and qualitative data along with some points of contrast.

Exhaustion is a precursor for burnout. Across each career stage and within each teacher interview, exhaustion was consistently referenced with phrases including “there’s always more to do,” “I cannot make another decision when I get home,” and “at the end of the day, I’m just done…there’s nothing left.” Christine Jones, late career teacher, expressed her exhaustion from “all the noise, and being bombarded with questions and all that, as soon as you walk through the door” and how she managed to finally understand what she needed to help alleviate it after many years of searching:

> I found out that it was really hard not to bring everything home. So, I learned to tell my family that I need 30 min of silence and don't bother…as soon as I get home, and it is absolutely my time. Nobody. Yeah, I'd decompress. I can sleep, I can cry, I can do whatever I need to process what occurred that day. Transition to ‘You're not there anymore. This is this is home. This is family.’ And ever since I started doing that a long time ago, it has really made coming home a lot easier and not dwelling on what happened at school and holding on to it.

Mental and physical exhaustion can also affect emotions as the reserves for each of the former become depleted. One such consequence is emotional impairment (EI). During the statistical analysis, emotional impairment showed a positive correlation between all three components of emotional labor (NFE, SA, and DA) with deep acting (DA) displayed as independently statistically significant. Emotional impairment referred to “At work, I feel unable to control my emotions.” In a well-balanced emotional and physical state, teachers are more likely to exercise patience and compassion towards students and others when faced with challenging situations. However, the intense emotional reactions and feeling overwhelmed by

one's emotions associated with emotional impairment surface more frequently as the mind body are already so heavily taxed. The nature of deep acting requires an effortful process to change one's internal feelings to align with the school's display rules. As teachers change their emotional state to conform to the emotion that they are displaying, it can prove emotionally taxing. This exchange between teachers' felt emotions and the emotions that are appropriate to display is a daily occurrence—especially in the classroom environment. The balance of demands between the appropriate display of emotions of teachers themselves and students generates innate tension between deep acting and emotional impairment as teachers could already be overwhelmed by their own emotions, let alone regulate their emotions to suit the students' needs—portraying the role model of a caretaker and nurturer.

The tension between whether and how to express emotions extends into professional teams. For the deep acting survey question, "Collaborating in an ineffective team (PLC)," teachers could feel pressure from administrative presence in the PLC meeting to conform to an appropriate emotional display even if the teacher naturally-felt intense anger, frustration, disappointment, or sadness towards the ineffective team member. The result of the teacher being unable to genuinely express their true emotion in that setting could increase stress and exhaustion. The common experience of exhaustion saturated several dimensions of teachers' lives and created a sense of defeat in falling short to burdensome workloads, navigating emotions, collaborating among professional teams, balancing home lives, and threating their teaching efficacy.

As exhausted teachers forged ahead each day, it was paramount to understand which of the three emotional labor components was the prime suspect in contributing to their exhaustion. While the statistical analysis reported that exhaustion showed a positive correlation among all three components, no component was found independently statistically significant. The combined components of emotional labor thus collectively contributed to

exhaustion, a core factor of burnout. This nuance in the data suggests further exploration into the specific impacts of individual components of emotional labor on teacher well-being as teachers continue working under prolonged exhausting conditions and the risk of reduced student achievement looms in the balance.

Another core factor of burnout, mental distance, encompassed feeling a strong aversion towards one's job and showed a positive correlation between all three components of emotional labor (NFE, SA, and DA). However, none of the three components were statistically significant independently. This raises the question regarding the inherent exhaustion of the emotional labor process and perhaps causing teachers' reluctancy towards work-related tasks. Teachers were already feeling overwhelmed and fatigued by the exercise of emotional labor which could incite feelings of aversion towards their equally demanding job duties. Should teachers not be faced so frequently with incessant workloads, the tide of their aversion stands a preferable chance of turning instead towards engagement.

The high correlation between mental distance and collective components of emotional labor outlined the toil that these emotional processes took on teachers' sense of engagement. A disengaged teacher can become subject to cynicism. Since the degree to which cynicism arises is established upon teachers' sense of engagement, this can become a vicious cycle if not mediated. During the interview process, mid-career teacher Jordyn Patterson displayed significant signs of disengagement in which common phrases included "I don't care" and "I have since adopted this 'F*** you' attitude" that were deeply rooted in distrust of former administration. The administration did not protect her from physical harm caused by a student that triggered her own childhood trauma despite her pleas for administrative intervention. Her perception of administration's lack of integrity in upholding a safe working environment and holding the student accountable thus caused her to distance herself emotionally and mentally as a protective mechanism. Mrs. Patterson's attitude towards her students, however, emulated

that of continued care, pride, and striving to serve them excellently. She attributed much of her ability to persist in providing superb service to her students to her supportive group of trusted colleagues who understood both the challenges of the day and honored her as a human being with vulnerabilities.

When teachers were surveyed concerning being cynical about what their work means to others, there resulted statistical significance of both naturally-felt emotions and surface acting. Naturally-felt emotions are genuinely expressed feelings and surface acting is controlling one's feelings to have emotions needed to display thus creating inverse and tension of one another. The survey question for NFE referred to "I receive a compliment about my students" constituting a more positive connotation while SA referred to "Sharing sad news with students" comprising a more negative connotation. Despite the opposing elements, both impacted mental distance. This raises the question as to whether teachers have mentally distanced themselves for so long that, regardless of the positive or negative connotation, they have already become cynical about what their work means to others indicating a deficit in empowerment rooted in mattering.

During the statistical analysis, mental distance displayed more correlation with surface acting than that of surface acting and exhaustion. Because surface acting requires controlling one's feelings to fit into the school's display rules, its impact on mental distance could be exacerbated when a teacher feels neither supported nor valued by their leadership. Teachers professionally engage with administration on a consistent basis, and it is this relationship that can either propel a teacher further into increased success or demise. During the interviews, the trajectory of the teacher was often cited as a responsibility of administration who set the tone for the school culture at large and between individual rapport with teachers. Teachers such as Amy Daniels who "always feels supported whether right or wrong" by her administration reported increased confidence in teaching along with feeling

understood as a human who is faced with challenging decisions throughout the day and may not always make the right call. Conversely, Susan Sanderson recalls the lack of administrative support for teachers in favor of students and parents as stifling her identity as a teacher, noting, “At the end of the day, I have got to be true to the teacher that I am.” Both interviews suggest the need for teacher autonomy that is fostered through intentional leadership who continue to learn about their teachers and encourage them as people. An earmark of sound leadership is evidenced in how administrators spend their time as that is an indicator of what they value. An administrative paradigm shift away from sheer management and into building genuine teacher relationships is a necessary first step in protecting teachers from burnout.

Reflections

During the study, teachers were asked to share about their experiences and perspectives. Some responses extended beyond the original question and opened unexpected doors to unexplored pathways. One such interview question asked teachers to describe an emotionally challenging experience that they encountered while at work. Surprisingly, teachers reported ‘traumatic’ experiences while at work—often regarding administration’s attentiveness or negligence as being the determining factor of whether they persisted or endured in their job. Before this study, nine schools in the district had undergone Trauma-Informed training spanning two years beginning in 2021 (Evans, 2021). This district focus may have influenced the emphasis on trauma outside the scope of the current study, yet it may have been influenced by the contextual emphasis on this topic. Teachers’ frequent use of the word ‘trauma’ though the word ‘trauma’ was not in the original question is a new dimension that I would like to explore in the future as it deeply influenced teachers’ perspectives on their careers.

In similar fashion, neither any of the questions on the BAT12 nor any specific interview questions mentioned the word ‘stress,’ yet many interviewees expressed this feeling regarding their day. Another startling discovery was teachers’ lack of reference to the COVID-19 pandemic effecting their emotions in the context of teaching. In fact, COVID-19 was not mentioned except by teachers who either began their trajectory as an educator during the first year of the pandemic (EPP program and second career) or when they expressed general personal discomfort due to life changes caused by the pandemic. Though COVID-19 was marked as a reference of time, teaching challenges were not embedded within their expressed COVID-19 experiences.

A persistent question that I kept mulling over was, “Are we continuing to promote a toxic positivity environment within school culture?” If this is so, then are schools a genuinely safe emotional space for teachers? It is common for schools to be focused on students’ emotional well-being, but why are teachers’ emotional well-being still being neglected? The ‘business as usual’ mantra is not effective, and teachers are all too aware. Why are administrators aloof to teachers’ psychological needs and sense of purpose? Neglecting the teachers is thereby neglecting the students.

Limitations

As noted in Chapter 3, there were several limitations to this study. Since the study only focused on middle school teachers, generalizability among other grade bands could not be therefore presumed. The survey elicited self-reporting responses which contain inherent bias. Due to the inherent personal nature of the Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli, De Witte, & Desart, 2020), there could be discomfort with some question types that participants felt might lead to revealing too personal of information and/or risk of being judged, reprimanded, or fear of potential job loss. Also, participants may have chosen not to respond to questions that they felt unapplicable to themselves. Further still, teachers could have

chosen more socially desirable answers or stopped answering questions altogether creating a skew in the data.

Participant confusion over unfamiliarity (e.g. surface acting) could also have been created by the question phrasing or scale used. Participants could respond in the opposite fashion of what response was initially intended (i.e. mistakenly exchanging "Strongly Disagree" with "Strongly Agree" or "Never" with "Disagree") given the TELS and BAT12 did not have the same Likert-scale (TELS = 4-point scale *Strongly Agree-Strongly Disagree*; BAT12 = 5-point scale *Never-Always*). A lack of sufficient diversification of question type due to all being Likert-scale could lead to the participant giving the same answer each time. Completion fatigue could also be a factor due to depth of questions and personal reflection required creating a potential cognitive overload and exceeding the average 15-minute completion window (Hopper, 2017) (e.g. Demographics questions 1-14 section had 108 responses then dropped to 94 (-14 decrease) once participants reached question 15 beginning the TELS). Lastly, variances in Cronbach's alpha for individual TELS and BAT12 could have impacted overall results. While the BAT12 Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 (0.93-0.94 = excellent), the TELS Cronbach's alpha was 0.654 (0.64–0.85 = adequate) making a difference of 0.285. Combined, however, their total Cronbach's Alpha was 0.844 (0.84–0.90 = reliable) (Price et al., 2017; Taber, 2018).

Given the study was not longitudinal for the entire school year to include both Fall and Spring semesters as originally intended, a holistic picture of the school year to determine any patterns and/or nuances was reduced to include only the Spring semester. According to Chen, et al. (2022), emotions may evolve as time changes, and the context or related environmental factors change. The decreased timeframe of study could have impacted the study significantly as emotions of the school year tend to fluctuate for different reasons (i.e. Fall: August = refreshed from summer; October = fatigue from mid-semester; December =

anticipating a break; Spring: January = refreshed from Winter Break and on the downhill of finishing the school year; March = fatigue from mid-semester; final preparation for state testing; April-May = state testing; uptick in disruptive student behavior). Additionally, completion rate data from the Emotion Log Journal submission could have increased to further compare/contrast with survey data sets and interviews. Due to the participant option of their preferred interview method (in-person, telephone, or Zoom), each method posed its unique limitations. In-person interviews provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees. Interviews with the researcher's presence may bias responses. Telephone and Zoom interviews lack a natural field setting to fully experience the teacher's environment. In the validity of capturing additional data, emotion log journal entries may not be authentic, accurate, or may be incomplete. In similar fashion, not all people are equally articulate and perceptive. Lastly, a larger sample size may lead to more generalizability of the research results in relation to the population.

Implications

Implications for Practice

The emotional dimension associated with teaching should be integrated into teacher preparation programs as well as within current teacher professional development. Often regarded as an unexplored subject in teacher preparation (Molyneux, 2021), incoming teachers are consequently caught off guard when entering a classroom environment in which they were only partially prepared for with pedagogical approaches. This sense of uncertainty can induce fear and cripple teachers' efficacy which is emergent as a beginning teacher and evolves within current teachers. Conversely, positive emotions that occur from successful emotional experiences play a critical role in the formation of efficacy and increase teachers' motivation to increase effort and practice. This could likely lead to mastery experiences (Mielke, 2023) that are modeled for teachers and are a necessary part of teacher formation.

This would align with the findings of Kitching et al. (2009) suggesting routine everyday positive and negative experiences impact teachers' motivation to teach. The discoveries of Demetriou et al. (2009) would also be supported regarding emotional responses of new teachers to adversity and challenge in classroom, strategies used, consequences for teacher retention, and implications for teacher training.

Across each end of the teaching spectrum, teacher efficacy can be delicate journey, and it is imperative that there be vigilance in protecting this essential cornerstone of teaching. As such, there should be more attention given to spanning the awareness and implementation of strategies to enhance emotional labor from both ends of the teaching career stage. Teachers would become well-equipped to navigate the emotional side of teaching in healthier ways that develop into embedded parts of their teaching practice and foster resilience. As preservice and current teachers grow in their adeptness of emotional labor, it could contribute to the findings of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) supporting self-efficacy beliefs of novice and more experienced teachers about their capabilities in teaching. The findings of Le Cornu (2009) could also be extended as initial teacher education, particularly practicum experiences, can play a role in developing resilience in prospective teachers.

Along with the responsiveness and application of strategies to enrich emotional labor, another area to invest time and resources into is valuing and prioritizing the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. The incorporation of SEL curriculum into schools has been shown to bolster teachers' emotional intelligence and well-being. As noted in previously, focusing on SEL can help educators build and maintain stronger relationships with students and manage classrooms. Additionally, educators with strong social and emotional competence report higher levels of job satisfaction and less burnout (Jones and Kahn, 2017). Improved job satisfaction and lower levels of job-related anxiety can lead to increased efficacy which is another added benefit of embracing SEL curriculum school-wide.

Integrating SEL curriculum would align with the findings of Chan (2008) in which roles of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy benefited teachers in coping with stress. Such application of SEL practices would also contribute to the discoveries of Manuel (2003) that examined the ways beginning teachers negotiate transition from student to professional, explored the dimensions of early career teachers' decisions to continue in the profession, and illuminated the factors that influence their decision to leave.

Creating organizational change to improve teachers' working conditions is an area in which school leadership should commit their focus and concerted efforts. These conditions include the teaching workload, expectations of extra responsibilities outside of the school day, physical and emotional protection, actively listening and responding to teachers' voices, and building rapport with teachers. Recent research has revealed that teachers who say they are unlikely to leave their job have a median number of hours worked per week of 52 versus 57 hours per week for teachers who say they are very likely to leave (Mielke, 2023). This indicates a clear need for teachers' workloads to be lessened—especially as teachers' added work does not always come with monetary compensation—contrary to that of the business world. While administrators cannot physically add hours to a day, they can add time to teachers' workday by subtracting tasks from teachers that are either non-essential or do not actually promote the school's mission. This adjustment would assist teachers in the area of Theme 1, Striving to Thrive with Healthy Balance. School leadership should implement the Addition by Subtraction Rule (Adams & Bowers, 2021) to maximize teachers' work time and continue to seek alternative, innovative methods to empower teachers in accomplishing their goals. This endeavor would support the findings of Davis (2010) in which teachers working in healthy work environments had higher morale and were more likely to remain in the profession.

That which people value most is often reflected in how they spend their time. Establishing momentum in employment of a school's initiative requires an initiative that is strategically targeted. If school leadership truly values preserving and protecting their teachers, they must prioritize targeted initiatives that are customized to their teachers and the contexts in which they serve (Maslach and Leiter, 2022, p. 200). Some ways that targeted initiatives could be achieved is by providing opportunities for teacher voice through initiating surveys, reflecting on survey data and quickly providing feedback, and actively listening in conversations with a curious stance and the intent to understand. Administration that determines to shift in the direction of organizational change for the betterment of teachers and minimizes teacher work demands aligns with prior research that has shown teacher morale to be influenced by work environment (McCormack & Thomas, 2005) and could prove beneficial.

Implications for Policy

Policymakers in the education sector must be privy to the reality of burnout, understand its persistent presence within the field of teaching, and advocate for legislation that bears teachers in mind, heart, and action. Job stress is considered one of the main complaints suffered by workers in relation to health at work (Eurofound, 2012; Ventura et al., 2015). The job stress that teachers are subject to creates feelings of energy depletion and exhaustion, one of the three characteristics of burnout. Since 2019, burnout has been defined as a by the World Health Organization as an "occupational phenomenon" that "results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed" (WHO, 2019). This definition was determined even before the COVID-19 pandemic which raises questions as to how long teachers have carried symptoms of burnout without receiving the help that they deserve. Improvements initiated at the policy level surrounding teachers' working environments and decreasing their workloads could prevent high absenteeism caused by

stressful working environments consistent with the findings of Black (2003). A proactive versus reactive approach in this regard would also alleviate unnecessary costs to fill substitute positions and therefore allow funding within state and local budgets to be allocated to other essential resources for teachers. Burnout is a slippery slope that begins with exhaustion, evolves into increased mental distance from one's job or cynicism, and ultimately manifests reduced professional efficacy. Because burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context, it is within the occupational context that true solutions to burnout reside. As policymakers engage in relationships that connect various stakeholders, they have the influence, power, and voice to become catalysts for positive change in the working conditions for teachers.

Another avenue to be considered is bringing public awareness in highlighting the daily work of teachers and vocalizing the need for teacher well-being to generate transparency between parents and society. This could bridge gaps between parents' perception and the visible realities of what teachers endure within their field. Parents' past negative school experiences can create a barrier to parental involvement (Comer et al., 1999; Chavkin and Gonzalez, 1996; Petersen and Warnsby, 1992; Garcia, 1990; Schwartz, 1997). This barrier can become so prevalent that many parents can become hesitant to work with schools or even enter the school building (Chavkin and Gonzalez, 1996, as cited in Sanchez-Horn, 2005). Parents may not fully understand decisions made concerning the curriculum, master schedule, instructional practices, or classroom management techniques and providing a clearer lens into the work of teachers would be a benefit to the community. If parents were knowledgeable of the external pressure and internal stress experienced by teachers, they could be more involved in making decisions regarding state and district policies regarding teacher well-being. The partnership between parents and teachers could contribute to increasing teacher resources and support which would mitigate Theme 3, Not Enough to Go

Around. Reciprocity of gratitude from the community stakeholders and parents could help alleviate factors of burnout because teachers would feel valued and supported. This would align with Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) theory of mattering as "a motive that exercises a powerful influence on our actions" (as cited in Flett, 2022). Teachers' sense of mattering to community and school would increase as the work that teachers do would be considered meaningful to themselves and others.

Implications for Future Research

Quality teacher retention has been sorely neglected as recruitment of new and second-career teachers to satisfy severe gaps in job fulfillment has taken precedence. The effects of both burnout and strategies for resilience involving highly effective teachers need further attention and closer examination. What may seem on the surface as a teacher who is confident and fully engaged with their school community, may not reveal the full picture of what they are feeling on a regular basis. Many effective teachers are tasked with additional roles that they may not be compensated creating an added dynamic of work demands to their already full workload. In keeping pace with their school's expectations for academic excellence, some highly effective teachers can face burnout rapidly. Teachers of high caliber may strive to pick up the slack of their colleagues, adjust their sense of autonomy to meet a new school initiative, continue to perform well in State-tested content areas, and/or feel extra pressure to positively promote the school's mission as they are the ones who have remained teaching for longer periods of time. Among the interviews, nine of the 19 teachers (47%) served in leadership roles (Dean, department chair, coach, and/or club sponsor) that required immense time commitment extending the regular school day. Of the nine teachers serving as leaders in their schools, each one described the exhaustion associated with additional tasks in their leadership roles. The pressure to not let down the administration or school-at-large can often be more than seasoned teachers can handle in being able to sustain that quantity and

quality of workflow for so long. As noted earlier in Theme 4, A Tired Teacher, the consequences of such intense demands under the same poor working conditions are not a matter of *if* they will happen but rather *when* they will happen. Accordingly, future research promoting quality teacher retention in tandem with further exploration of factors that contribute to teacher resiliency could help provide a piece in solving the evolving challenge of teacher attrition. This dimension would expand Brunetti's (2006) results in how resilience is conceptualized and what motivates teachers to remain in challenging teaching positions.

Future research including longitudinal data would prove beneficial as increased, varied, and nuanced information could be collected from teachers as they progress throughout the school year. Of particular interest would be a case study following teachers of each distinctive career group (early, mid, late, concluding, or second-career) to observe and compare/contrast how they engage with students, the school environment, and emotional labor. In following Anders Ericsson and Smith's (1991; 1993) Expertise Theory of Deliberate Practice and Gladwell's (2008) furthering of the 10,000 Hour Rule (or around 10-years), a case study of mid-career teachers would provide insight concerning this unique demographic. The mid-career stage has been described as a period of "stabilization (Huberman, 1993), settling down, the opportunity to experiment, grow, and diversify (Day et al., 2006), career frustration, and the time when teachers decide to stay or leave the classroom and/or the profession" (as cited in Cawte, 2020, pp. 75-76). Clear (2013) posits that expertise is a process, not an outcome. Experts are constantly asking themselves: "What am I missing? What new information is out there? What can I learn? How can I grow?" As such, the mid-career teachers are most likely to experience a career 'mid-life crisis' (Cawte, 2020). During this time, a mid-career teacher is at a pivotal point in his or her career and has likely reflected often about whether their future plans are to include teaching. Studying this career stage would help understand their needs, resilience, motivation to stay or leave the profession, and

provide a blueprint for retaining these seasoned teachers so that students may benefit from their continued presence in their schools.

Another group of teachers to study could consist of varying teaching certifications (EPP, temporary, transitional, etc.) to explore how they navigate the teaching profession and manage emotional labor. Still another avenue for future research could be an experimental design that incorporates either SEL or emotional labor interventions to test the effectiveness of the intervention on risk of burnout. Such future research endeavors could broaden the results of Tsouloupas et al. (2010) regarding links between burnout and emotional exhaustion, teacher efficacy in handling student misbehavior, attrition, and migration.

The clarion call for tangible support and further advocacy around teachers' health and well-being to mitigate and combat burnout has been demonstrated throughout this study. One such area for future research is to provide a method of burnout prevention that could be applied across school districts. Such an instrument could be used for the early detection of burnout (IVOB; Federal Public Service, 2017) as evidenced in BAT12 configuration (Schauefli & De Witte, 2020, p. 25). The instrument could also be used for monitoring and/or return to work (e.g. traffic-light model) (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020, p. 125). The implementation of the instrument to satisfy the dire need for early detection and intervention to mitigate burnout could prove highly beneficial in the reduction of teacher turnover.

Conclusion

Teaching is highly contextual and the relationship between outside and inside factors continually interplay. As evidenced in this study, there remain foundational principles that must be implemented if the teacher workforce stands a fighting chance against burnout. Such foundation principles first begin with shifting paradigms for school leadership who understand that, if teachers are not steadily and intentionally poured into, then students

ultimately suffer. As teacher burnout did not occur overnight, the solutions to mitigate it will not produce an overnight resolution.

Desperation stems from having a deficit for so long that it becomes a habit to settle for less than what is deserved. This was evident in teacher interviews where teachers either scrounged to find the best support for students that they could or convinced themselves to be content going without necessary resources. On the other side of that coin, while there is an apparent teacher attrition problem, that does not imply leadership should default to a lackadaisical nature in building up existing teachers to be their individual best or simply settling for poor school culture because that may have been the norm for so long. The clock is quickly ticking towards schools facing critical status of unmet teaching positions and those teachers that remain are often hanging on by a thread.

Teaching is an act of service. Administrators should operate under servant leadership and model care and attention in their relationships with teachers. There often lies a dichotomy within schools between prioritizing relationships or producing visible results. In the data-driven culture of schools, the inherent pressure to see immediate, tangible growth in numerical form is commonly felt by administrators who must provide evidence of increased, progressive student learning. Relationships are not built overnight, but they are instead built over time. Administration must be privy to the process of gradual results and, in essence, slow down to speed up. School leadership must take time to invest in teachers and actively improve working conditions to then accelerate student achievement and overall positive school culture.

Administrators must model for teachers the value and respect that they desire to see fostered within the communities of teachers' classrooms. Leaders should be learners who are insistent on learning teachers as a whole person, take actionable steps towards improving their environments, and amplify their voice. This includes being open to initiating feedback

from teachers and being willing to adapt to the results. The sense of openness fostered through open, trusting, healthy communication grows better and easier with time with a goal as becoming the very fabric of the school. By investing time and necessary resources to teachers within the school, administrators can enjoy a positive school culture brimming with strong relationships, student success, and enjoyable environments that retain teachers who enjoy serving in their schools. This increased sense of mattering across the school thus creates a safeguard against setbacks that will occur in the future. In a sense, a school can build up immunity to thwart off hinderances to their collective progress. The school community is multiplied in its value together and thus becomes more resilient over time.

Teachers are people and the work that they do is highly relational. In fact, teachers who prioritize positive classroom climates outperform those who do not (Baumeister et al., 2003; Ross et al., 2012). The ripple effect of teacher well-being positively influencing student outcomes and school climate (Carroll et al., 2021) is not reflected through school leadership that continues to operate under the business model of school. When teachers are the mere means to an end product of student achievement gains, administration miss the mark of setting a standard of relational excellence for their student body, hindering continued teachers' and students' success that would otherwise stem from a healthy school culture in the long run. If administrators expect teachers to persist in the challenges of their workday, they too, must model persistence in finding solutions to improve teacher working conditions and promote administration-teacher rapport.

Teaching is a work of heart and leadership must not neglect the outcry of teachers' emotional needs. The extent to which necessary improved working environments conducive to producing a robust harvest of connected, healthy school communities balanced with fruits of student achievement is dependent upon a cooperative effort of education stakeholders from the top-down who must "skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been"

(Gretzky, 2007) in addressing the current and future needs of teachers. There can no longer be ‘business as usual’ in schools as schools reflect society that continues to evolve along with the challenges associated with it. “The best defense is a good offense” (George Washington, 1799) and, as such, a proactive approach to education and training on emotional labor, risks of burnout, and providing organizational change to improve teachers’ working conditions are necessary steps to providing the unmistakable support that teachers and students deserve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Part I:

Demographics

Instructions- For each question below, please select the answer that best matches your response.

1. What is your name? (First and Last)
2. What is your gender?
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer
3. In what year were you born?
4. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Yes
5. Which best describes your race? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ American Indian
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ Black or African American
   - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Other (please specify)
6. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? Check only one, please.
   - ☐ High school diploma or GED
   - ☐ Associate's degree
   - ☐ Bachelor's degree
   - ☐ At least one year of course work beyond a Bachelor's degree but not a graduate degree
   - ☐ Master's degree
   - ☐ Master's +45
   - ☐ Education specialist or professional diploma based on at least one year of course work past a Master's degree level
   - ☐ Doctorate
7. Which grade level(s) do you currently teach? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ 6^{th}
   - ☐ 7^{th}
   - ☐ 8^{th}
8. Which content area(s) do you currently teach? Check all that apply.
   - ☐ English/Language Arts/Reading
   - ☐ ESL
   - ☐ Exploratory (foreign language, personal finance, art, band, choir, physical education, keyboarding, health, etc.)

- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Special Education
- Other (please specify)

9. Including this year, how many years have you been a school teacher?
   - 0-5
   - 6-15
   - 16-23
   - 24+
10. Are you a tenured teacher?
   - No
   - If yes, please list the number of years of tenured _____
11. Including this year, how many years have you taught in your current school?
   - 0-1
   - 2-5
   - 5-10
   - 10-15
   - 15-20
   - 25+
12. Have you considered leaving the teaching profession?
   - No
   - Yes
13. In the state in which you teach, what type of teaching certification do you hold?
   - Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
   - Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
   - Provisional or other type given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an "alternative certification program"
   - Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework and/or student teaching before regular certification can be obtained)
   - Emergency certificate or waiver (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
   - Regular or full certification by an accrediting or certifying body *other than* the state
   - I do not have any of the above certifications in this state
14. Would you be interested in a follow-up interview? You may opt-out at any time and all identifying information will be strictly confidential and protected.
   - No
   - Yes, via telephone or Zoom
   - Yes, via in-person

Appendix B

Survey

Part II:

Teacher Emotional Labor Scale (TELS)

Instructions- For each scenario below, please select the answer that best matches your response according to how you typically experience the situation. A definition for each emotional labor term is *italicized* for clarification.

Naturally-Felt Emotions (NFE) *"I genuinely express how I feel" when…*	**Strongly Agree (1)**	**Agree (2)**	**Disagree (3)**	**Strongly Disagree (4)**
I receive a compliment about my students.				
One of my students is constantly disruptive.				
Explaining very low grade of one of my favorite students.				
Getting blame from my supervisor about the way I deal with one of my students.				
Surface Acting (SA) *"I try to control my feelings to have emotions I need to display for my job" when…*	**Strongly Agree (1)**	**Agree (2)**	**Disagree (3)**	**Strongly Disagree (4)**
My students unexpectedly get very high grades.				
Sharing sad news with students.				
A coworker receives a promotion that I disagree with.				
One of my coworkers making rude jokes about me.				
Deep Acting (DA) *"I try to put an eff ort to actually feel the emotion I need to display" when…*	**Strongly Agree (1)**	**Agree (2)**	**Disagree (3)**	**Strongly Disagree (4)**
Getting very bad news from my family before the class.				
Interacting with difficult parents.				
My supervisor generally makes negative and hurtful comments.				
Collaborating in an ineffective team (PLC).				

Çukur CS. The development of the teacher emotional labor scale (TELS): validity and reliability. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice.* 2009;9(2):559–574.

**adapted with permission*

Appendix C

Part III:

Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT12)

Work-related version

Instructions: The following statements are related to your work situation and how you experience this situation. Please state how often each statement applies to you.

Core symptoms	**Scoring**				
	Never (1)	**Rarely (2)**	**Sometimes (3)**	**Often (4)**	**Always (5)**
Exhaustion (EX)					
1. At work, I feel mentally exhausted.					
2. After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy.					
3. At work, I feel physically exhausted.					
Mental distance (MD)					
4. I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work.					
5. I feel a strong aversion towards my job.					
6. I'm cynical about what my work means to others.					

Cognitive impairment (CI)					
7. At work, I have trouble staying focused.					
8. When I'm working, I have trouble concentrating.					
9. I make mistakes in my work because I have my mind on other things.					
Emotional impairment (EI)					
10. At work, I feel unable to control my emotions.					
11. I do not recognize myself in the way I react emotionally at work.					
12. At work, I may overreact unintentionally.					

Hadžibajramović E, Schaufeli W, De Witte H. Shortening of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)-from 23 to 12 items using content and Rasch analysis. BMC Public Health. 2022 Mar 22;22(1):560. doi: 10.1186/s12889-022-12946-y. PMID: 35313849; PMCID: PMC8939057.

Schaufeli, W.B., De Witte, H. & Desart, S. (2019). Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) – Test Manual. KU Leuven, Belgium: Internal report. **Note: Items condensed from original BAT23 to generate BAT12 (short version) based upon author's suggestion as follows: EX = 1, 3, 4; MD = 9, 11, 13; CI = 14, 17, 18; EI = 19, 20, 23*

Appendix D

Interview Protocol
Semi-Structured

Opening Information:

Intro: I am completing this interview based on a protocol I developed for the purpose of a qualitative research study for my dissertation. This interview is part of an ongoing study. This interview protocol will be looking into the idea of the "emotional labor of teaching," or regulating emotions as part of the work role. Particularly, I am interested in how some teachers experience emotional labor, how that experience relates to burnout and resilience, and exploring personal views of participants. I am going to record today's interview and will first ask some demographic types of questions but will give you a pseudonym to ensure that your personal identity is kept confidential in anything written. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

If no – Thank you for your time, but if I cannot record the interview, I will need to find another interviewee. I appreciate your willingness to meet with me and wish you a wonderful day.
If yes - Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Now, we will begin. As we go throughout the interview, I am going to follow a set list of questions but also may ask a few follow-up questions along the way, request examples, and so forth. Mostly though, I want you to provide as much detail and honesty in responses as you can. Thank you so very much in advance for doing so.

Are you ready to begin?
If no, provide time so that they are ready and then continue.

Continue: I am going to begin by asking you a few basic demographic questions and a few about your perspective on the idea of the emotional labor of teaching. From there, I will ask a set of questions that explore your perspective and lived experiences.

Interview 1:

Set I: Demographics

1. How did you find yourself teaching middle school?
2. Which subject(s) do you currently teach?

Set II: Perspective of Emotions in Teaching

3. What does a typical day look like for you?
4. Describe the various emotions you feel on a regular basis.
    - Can you elaborate on _____?
5. How would you view your emotional life as a teacher?
6. Describe how you express emotions during your typical workday.

Set III: Perspective of Emotional Labor

7. Tell me about a time that you experienced an emotionally challenging situation during your teaching career.
    - How did you emotionally manage that situation?
8. Explain the process you use to regulate your emotions daily at your job.
    - How did you come to understand and utilize that process?

9. Describe instances where you felt supported in dealing with emotional challenges while at work.

Set IV: Perspective of Exhaustion

10. How would you describe exhaustion in your work?
11. What factors are most helpful in dealing with exhaustion?
    - What factors would be helpful to support you in dealing with exhaustion?

Set V: Perspective of Mental Distance

12. Tell me about how you feel towards your job mentally.
13. How would you describe your ability to stay focused at your job?
14. How are you maintaining a healthy emotional balance between teaching and your personal life?

Set VI: Debriefing

15. Is there anything else you would like to share given what we have talked about today?

*Additional layers of interview rounds pending continual participant consent for reliability and validity of findings:

Interview 2:

1. In our last interview, I asked you about your emotional life as a classroom teacher.
    - Can you tell me more about that?
2. When we last met, you said _____ are the emotions you experience on a regular basis.
    - Can you explain each emotion in more depth?
3. As we have entered a new quarter/semester, how has it affected your emotional life as a teacher?
    - Tell more about _____.

Interview 3:

1. As you mentioned previously in our most recent interview, you tend to experience emotions such as _____. I analyzed or interpreted this to mean _____.
    - Can you confirm this interpretation to be accurate? If not, please help me to better understand what you meant so that I may accurately convey your experience.

Appendix E

Emotion Log Prompts

- Among the emotions listed below, which one do you relate to when teaching?

  - happiness/joy/frustration
  - sadness/grief/disappointment
  - anger/irritation/disillusion
  - fear/anxiety/guilt
  - disgust/despair
  - fascination/caring
  - pride/love
  - wonder/understanding
  - enthusiasm/loss
  - boredom/powerlessness
  - awe/compassion
  - confusion/confidence
  - other

- How do you react when you have such a feeling? Do you think that reaction will help your teaching?
- Where do you think your reaction stems from?
- Which feelings did the students have today? What was their reaction?
- Are there feelings that you try to have by doing something regularly in your teaching?
- Did you find yourself frequently adjusting your naturally felt emotions? If so, what motivated the adjustment?
- Any good/bad experience? Any change in a relationship with (a)student(s)?
- Any change in relationship with (a)colleague(s)?
- Any emotional mood you had on students or you gained from them?
- Did you share any feelings with students?
- How did you deal with the situation?

Ghyasi M, Gurbuz N. Emotional labor and emotional capital: An interpretive phenomenological analysis of teachers of English. PLoS One. 2023 Apr 27;18(4):e0283981. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0283981. PMID: 37104388; PMCID: PMC1