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Factors that Contribute to Motivation and Burnout among Teachers of Students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders

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FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MOTIVATION AND BURNOUT AMONG
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

A Dissertation

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The Faculty of the School of Education

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Doctor of Education

By

Adam J. Brown

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FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MOTIVATION AND BURNOUT AMONG
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

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Abstract

In this study, I explored motivation and burnout of novice (1-3 years of teaching experience) and veteran (10 or more years of teaching experience) teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD). The educators who participated in the study work in a regional public day school that serves school districts across a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. The study focused on one program within the public day school, which serves students with EBD in self-contained classrooms. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews of teachers who met the experience level of either novice or veteran status. Similar themes emerged throughout the data collected. The most prominent similarities included a perception of unrealistic expectations set by administration, need for increased support, and importance of establishing a routine to effectively disconnect from work. Additionally, there were differences between the groups of teachers interviewed. Novice teachers indicated a need to develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy and direct support from their administrators. Veteran teachers sought more emotional support from their administrators. These findings present an opportunity for the organization to explore ways to address these commonalities and differences being experienced by novice and veteran teachers and to reduce the experience of burnout among teachers of students with EBD.

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MOTIVATION AND BURNOUT AMONG
TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the United States, students who are identified with having an Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) are prone to increased disciplinary measures, including detentions, in- and out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. Wynne, Ausikatis, and Satchwell (2013) found that “47% of students with EBD have been suspended or expelled in elementary or middle school, while 73% have been suspended or expelled in high school” (p. 2). This negative educational experience is heightened by the high rates of teacher turnover that these students encounter. Adera and Bullock (2010) observed that teachers of students with EBD “quit their jobs in higher proportions compared with other special education positions” (p. 5). The turnover dilemma for this student population needs to be addressed.

Researchers have located various factors that contribute to teachers of students with EBD leaving the profession. One of these areas includes the demographics that are common for this group of teachers. Billingsley, Fall, and Williams (2006) found that these teachers “are significantly younger than other special educators...[have] significantly fewer years of special education teaching experience...[and have] significantly fewer overall years of teaching experience” (p. 256). Furthermore, students with EBD present challenging behaviors, including antisocial conduct, which can be physically and verbally aggressive, and violent and destructive conduct (Bersani & Heifetz, 1985; Buckhalt, Marchetti, & Bearden, 1990; Hastings & Brown, 2002; Male &

May, 1997). This inconsistent staffing is counterintuitive to a student population who requires additional supports to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes (Wynne et al., 2013). The stressors that lead to the turnover issue have been linked to a phenomenon called teacher burnout. For the purposes of this study, burnout will be defined through the work of Maslach (2003) who states that it is a “prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” (p. 189). Understanding the factors that lead to burnout might help reduce the occurrence of burnout of teachers of students with EBD.

Researchers have identified various burnout-reducing factors for teachers. These include providing administrative support that maintains consistent interaction with staff and students, allowing teachers to immerse themselves within the school culture and decision making, encouraging a sense of belonging with other educators, and increased teacher self-efficacy (Cherniss, 1988; Nelson, Maculan, Roberts, & Ohlund, 2001; O’Neill & Stephenson, 2011; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). While researchers have found patterns in the factors and preventive measures that lead to burnout, it is important to delve deeper into how teachers in this field perceive burnout and what measures can be used to combat them. Brunsting, Sreckovic, and Lane (2014) stated that “there is a need for an updated review of teacher burnout, specifically one focused exclusively on [special education teachers] to identify gaps in the research, make recommendations for practitioners, and improve teacher health” (p. 684).

Problem Statement

It is important to understand the factors that lead to burnout for teachers for students with EBD. The educators that participated in the study work in a regional public

day school that serves districts across a large metropolitan area. The organization is comprised of separate programs that attend to various student populations. The programs service over 1300 students in over 85 schools. The organization currently employs more than 750 professional classified staff. The study focused on one program within the organization—a program primarily serving 500 students with emotional behavioral disorders (EBD) in self-contained classrooms.

This study included interviews of both novice (1-3 years) and veteran (10 or more years) teachers of students with EBD. Currently in the organization, there are 25 novice teachers and 28 veteran teachers. I gathered evidence regarding how these teachers perceive what motivates them to teach, what burnout is, and what measures can be used to prevent it. A better understanding of these teachers provided the organization the ability to examine current practices and policies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What motivates novice and veteran teachers to choose to teach students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders?
2. How do novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders define teacher burnout and the factors that contribute to it?
3. What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders regarding the impact of teacher burnout?
4. What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders regarding measures that can be taken by teachers and/or building leaders to reduce teacher burnout?

Significance of the Study

The level of burnout experienced in novice and veteran teachers of students with EBD leads to significant attrition in the field. The greatest shortage of teachers in the special education field is among those who instruct students with EBD (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013). Sutherland, Denny, and Gunter (2005) stated that, “about 43% of teachers of students with EBD did not hold appropriate certificate credentials” (p. 42). This can result in the need for schools to fill open teaching spots with teachers who are not certified in the areas they hired to instruct in. This cyclical process impacts this student population by exposing them to inconsistent staffing patterns. The significance of this study is the potential to gain an understanding of the perceptions of burnout among novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with EBD within the regional public day school.

The influence of a teacher’s perception has an impact on his/her approach to daily practice. A teacher’s perception of self-worth, caring, and overall emotion toward his/her occupation impacts their performance and efforts on a daily basis (Borg, 2003). Perception of the strength of the teacher-student relationship that develops serves as source of job satisfaction or anxiety (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). This strain on the value of the student-teacher relationship can be particularly difficult when working with a student population that experiences difficulty establishing and maintaining relationships (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). Furthermore, teachers’ perception of the amount of support they receive from administration can lead to burnout (Teven, 2007). Teachers who have resilient beliefs about their profession can lead to various levels of burnout.

These beliefs include self-downing attitude, attitudes towards school organization, and role-related stress (Bermejo-Toro & Preito-Ursúa, 2005). However, an identification of one's perceptions and being able to modify them can play a large role in improving daily practice (Borg, 2003).

An indication of the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who work with students who have EBD can help determine differentiated interventions that are needed to address these factors of burnout. The ability to delve deeper into what factors and interventions are determined necessary for teachers of students with EBD could allow the regional public day school an opportunity to determine the measures necessary in order to contest the cyclical process of replacing unqualified teachers with other unqualified teachers.

Definitions of Terms

The definitions in this section will assist the reader in understanding important terms used throughout this study:

Burnout – Maslach (2003) defines burnout as a “prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” (p. 189).

Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) - a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

1. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

3. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004).

Motivation – An affective factor directing and reinforcing human behaviors to reduce or drive or to achieve a goal (Wright & Wiediger, 2007).

Novice Teacher – Licensed instructor for students with emotional behavioral disorder who has taught for no more than 1 to 3 years.

Perception – Rao & Narayana (1998) define perception as the “process whereby people select, organize, and interpret sensory simulations into meaningful information about their work environment” (p. 330).

Veteran Teacher – Licensed instructor for students with emotional behavioral disorder who has taught for 10 years or longer.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD) face a variety of challenges within their daily practice. Burnout among this teaching population is a consideration for high levels of attrition and turnover, which have created shortages within the field. Therefore, one purpose of research in the field of education has been to gain a better understanding of how burnout impacts them.

Researchers have examined the characteristics that are unique to various students with disabilities who teachers are tasked with instructing. One category of disability that has emerged as experiencing the highest rate of burnout was teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD). Brunsting et al. (2014) conducted a synthesis of studies from 1979-2013 that centered on teacher burnout, including 23 studies that included quantitative measures and SETs as participants. It was found that teachers of students with EBD have the highest rate of burnout when compared to other teaching populations (Banks & Necco, 1990; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002). Additionally, Brunsting et al. (2014) found no quantitative or qualitative studies examining teachers' awareness of their level of burnout or the risks associated with burnout. This chapter will review the existing literature and examine the research conducted on why teachers are motivated to teach students with EBD and burnout for teachers who teach this student population.

Motivation to Teach

The motivation for a teacher to work with students with EBD can be influential in their approach to daily practice. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) wrote that the idea of motivation and what leads to employees remaining in their position is based on factors that lead to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well as maintenance to remain in a work field. Factors that lead to satisfaction are considered motivators and those that lead to maintenance in a given work field are considered hygiene factors. Herzberg and colleagues. (1959) states that “motivators were the primary cause of satisfaction, and hygiene factors the primary cause of unhappiness on the job” (p. 57). These motivators include creating an environment that includes recognizing achievements, providing opportunities for growth, and providing work that is rewarding. Hygiene factors include intrusive supervision, lack of job security, and a lack of respect for staff members. In order to motivate employees, an organization must eliminate hygiene factors and create conditions for job satisfaction.

Teachers have been found to be impacted by two types of motivation. The first type of motivation is intrinsic. This type of motivation relates to a teacher who places an emphasis on job satisfaction that is contingent on completing a task within the organization (Lin, 2007). Teachers were found to have higher levels of motivation through the ability to collaborate with colleagues and receive constructive feedback aimed at their professional growth when provided by administration (Hongying, 2007; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). The second type of motivation is extrinsic in nature. These factors are external in nature and motivate teachers through the use of factors that include rewards and punishments. The ability to provide these necessary supports to

support both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors can allow organizations to provide supports and interventions for teachers.

Factors That Lead to Burnout Among Teachers of Students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders

Teacher turnover is a persistent problem in education. In 2008, 13.1% of teachers left the profession (Fuller, Waite, & Irribarra, 2016), with one of the main reasons attributed to burnout. Maslach (2003) compartmentalized burnout into three categories. These categories include depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and a lack of personal accomplishment. She described experiencing any of these categories as a “prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressor” (p. 189). This framework is vital in understanding how burnout affects the individual and others they serve.

Brunsting et al. (2013) found that special education teachers (SETs) experience a higher rate of burnout in comparison to teachers in general education. Within the SET field, teachers of students with EBD are subjected to the highest level of burnout (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Banks & Necco, 1990; Billingsley et al., 2006; Nichols & Sosnoswsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). The American Association for Employment in Education, as cited in Prather-Jones (2011) states that the research “consistently finds that teachers of students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders to be among the highest rank areas of need” (p. 2). Noting the shortages, it would appear necessary to understand what factors lead to burnout among these teachers.

Student Behaviors Related to Teacher Burnout

One of the unique challenges that can be attributed to burnout is the behavior that is displayed by students with EBD. In a study examining classroom motivational systems,

Cancio and Johnson (2013) stated that students with EBD “engage in disruptive, destructive, aggressive and defiant behaviors that have been linked to teacher stress, burnout, and attrition” (p. 49). These behaviors, which can be difficult to manage and require increased intervention, have been identified as one of most stressful factors related to job satisfaction among teachers for EBD (Adera & Bullock, 2010). The level of behaviors displayed by these students can lead to lingering effects that hinder their educational success. Bradley, Henderson, & Monfore (2004) have written that students with EBD “tend to be placed in more restrictive settings, and have lower educational, behavior, and social outcomes than other disability groups” (p. 252). The ability to manage these behaviors while providing quality instruction requires additional skills and responsibilities from teachers. Therefore, the need to address the behaviors displayed by these students might be a factor that leads to burnout. In addition to the behaviors, students with EBD have been found to experience difficulties in achieving academic success throughout their educational careers.

Role Overload

In a study that looked at the learned helplessness that is evident in this student population, Sutherland and Singh (2004) wrote that students with EBD are prone to a “combination of repeated school failure, little reinforcement for success, low rates of opportunity to respond, low expectations from teachers, and harsh criticisms” (p. 177). The need to address the varying needs for these students can lead to a sense of role overload for teachers. This responsibility of role overload has been found to be one of the primary stressors that leads to burnout for teachers (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Albrecht, Johns, Mounstevan, & Olorunda, 2009). In order to meet the demands of role overload, it

would be beneficial for teachers to be organized and maintain a high level of self-efficacy. Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2000) described self-efficacy as the teacher's confidence in his or her ability to promote student learning. This will be defined in greater detail in the next section. This is counter to the findings that the teachers of students with EBD are significantly younger and possess fewer years of SET experience as documented in a study of the profile of teachers of students with EBD (Billingsley et al., 2006). It would appear that the populations of teachers who face the most challenging students are tasked with the most responsibility.

Within role overload, role ambiguity can emerge as a source of burnout. In a field that can be dominated by inexperienced teachers who face role overload, it is the level of complexity that can be a factor that leads to burnout. This level of complexity can create an issue of role ambiguity. Jones and Youngs (2012) found that role ambiguity is prevalent among novice special education teachers that can lead to a level of isolation from general education teachers. In particular, novice teachers were found to experience role ambiguity as a primary cause of burnout when compared to veteran teachers (Fimian & Blanton, 1987; Jones & Youngs, 2012). The impact of role ambiguity creates difficulty in managing a classroom for students with EBD, which results in higher levels of burnout (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Banks & Necco, 1990; Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002). In order to handle these factors of burnout, a teacher is expected to demonstrate a level of self-efficacy to handle these matters in an effective way.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy can have a large impact upon the daily practice of teachers. Brown (2012) found that “the lower a teacher's self-efficacy the more negative and detached the

teacher could become towards their work and recipients of the services” (p. 60). The difficulty with this for teachers of students with EBD is the struggle of meeting the level of challenges that can be present and of creating a safe learning environment for their students. Researchers have found that a high degree of self-efficacy is needed from SETs to establish consistent classroom management strategies and manage behaviors (Banks & Necco, 1990; Hastings & Brown, 2002; Nichols & Sosnoswsky, 2002; Oliver & Reschly, 2010; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010). Self-efficacy can vary depending on the characteristics of the SET. Teachers with more years of teaching experience were found to have lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of self-efficacy (Banks & Necco, 1990; Carlson & Thompson, 1995; Weber & Toffler, 1989). The development of self-efficacy could be equated to the teachers developing these skills as they progress throughout their career.

Administrative Support

Administrative support is often factor mentioned in studies about burnout. Research has found that direct support received from supervisors can reduce stress among their employees (House, 1981). In this research, House conceptualized social support into four dimensions, including emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. These supports all provided a significant impact on employees. Prather-Jones (2011) conducted a qualitative study involving 13 veteran teachers of students with EBD in regard to administrative support. The researcher found three specific criteria of administrative support. These included the need for principals to enforce reasonable consequences for students’ misconduct, to provide actions that make the teachers feel respected, and to encourage support from colleagues and a sense of

inclusiveness. The researcher suggested that “having adequate support had enabled [teachers] to remain in the field of teaching students with emotional and/or behavioral disorders for a significant amount of time” (Prather-Jones, 2011, p. 6). The attrition of SETs can be directly related to support they receive from administrators (DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran, & Walter-Thomas 2004). However, it is important to understand how the supports provided to teachers of students with EBD are unique.

Cancio et al. (2013) identified unique strategies that administrators can provide for teachers of students with EBD. These include effective induction and mentoring programs, outside resources and support, professional development opportunities, staff acknowledgement, and adequate resources. Administrative support that teachers of students with EBD receive can have a moderating effect on burnout and has been directly linked to the factors of burnout for novice and veteran teachers (Embrich, 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). However, it is important to note that teachers in this field are often younger and more inexperienced when compared to teachers of students with other disabilities (Billingsley et al., 2006). This leads to inexperienced teachers facing a variety of stressors within their first years of teaching. It is important not only to understand the factors that lead to burnout, but also the impact that it can make on the individual who is affected by it.

Impact of Teacher Burnout

Teachers who instruct students with EBD face rates of burnout that lead to higher turnover when compared with general education and SETs of other categories of students (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Banks & Necco, 1990; Billingsley et al., 2006; Brunsting et al., 2014; Nichols & Sosnoswsky, 2002). To enrich this understanding, it is necessary to

understand how burnout impacts these teachers. These specific impacts made on this teaching population will better define appropriate interventions that are necessary to combat them.

Psychodynamic Impact

Teachers of students with EBD face the impact of burnout that can impact them intrinsically. Pines (2002) conducted a mixed-methods study of 100 teachers regarding the psychodynamic impact that burnout can have on the individuals affected. Pines (2002) stated that the psychodynamic aspect could be viewed as the teacher's commitment to their profession and their ownership over a lack of student progress and failures. The findings of this study suggest that this connection from teachers to the learning of their students can lead to burnout when the effort of their work does not result in student progress (Pines, 2002).

This issue might be heightened for teachers of students with EBD. Hecker, Young, and Calderella (2014) sought to understand teachers' perceptions of the external and internal behaviors displayed by students with EBD. A total of 20 teachers participated in focus groups. Teachers in the study perceived students with EBD as experiencing difficulty maintaining positive relationships with peers and teachers. Similarly, Hastings and Brown (2002) found that the behaviors, including physical and verbal aggression that can be displayed by the EBD student population had a negative psychological effect that ranges from "minimal irritation to debilitating fear and anxiety" (p. 455). Failure to see student progress with this challenging population, along with extreme behaviors, could negatively impact teachers psychologically and physically.

Health Issues

Teachers who experience burnout have been found to experience physical symptoms and anxiety that can lead to depression and health issues. Teachers who experience burnout can encounter bouts of depression. In a quantitative study of 46 teachers, Bianchi, Boffy, Hingray, Truchot, and Laurent (2013), found that individuals who encounter burnout share eight out of the nine symptoms of a depressive episode which is detailed as identified in the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV-TR. These symptoms can lead to dissatisfaction within the individual, which factors into his or her overall approach to being an educator. Additionally, researchers have found that health symptoms can be physically debilitating as well. Armon, Melamed, Shirom, and Shapira (2010) found that individuals who were experiencing burnout experienced symptoms such as colds, flu, and bodily pain, including musculoskeletal pain. These effects can impact their approach to their position and daily practice.

These factors lead to a potential decrease in motivation in a teacher's approach to daily practice. The impact of burnout includes a lack of intrinsic motivation, zeal, enthusiasm, and career idealism. In a study conducted by Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, and Baumert (2008), secondary teachers in Germany were subjected to a multilevel analysis focused on engagement and emotional exhaustion. Teachers who experienced higher levels of pedagogical supports experienced higher levels of engagement. Similarly, Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, and Kaplan (2007) studied teachers from Israel and the students they served. This study found that students of teachers who reported higher levels of self-confidence also reported higher levels of self-motivation. These individuals experience an increase in absenteeism and poorer performance in the

classroom when compared to SETs who have high levels of engagement (Schaufeli & Bunnk, 2003). The level of engagement and exhaustion can directly impact the performance of teachers in their daily practice.

Impact on Students

Burnout for teachers of students with EBD can impact the educational experience for students with EBD. Teachers experiencing burnout might feel a desire to distance themselves from their students (Schaufeli & Bunnk, 2003). Ryan (1971) stated that depersonalization is a feeling of dehumanization towards their clients. These teachers are prone to lack a desire to seek out ways to build relationships with their students. These can include commonalities between the teacher and student. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) have attributed this to a sense of depersonalization as a consequence of experiencing burnout. Unfortunately, this can be damaging to students with EBD, who often require strong working relationships in order to progress academically and behaviorally. Additionally, these students have been found to engage in disruptive behaviors, struggle with social and emotional development, and demonstrate difficulty in maintaining progress on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Ruble & McGrew, 2013). Students with EBD are prone to experiencing negative relationships with teachers consistently throughout their educational careers (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012).

Measures to Reduce Teacher Burnout

Extensive research has been conducted on the factors that lead to burnout and its impact on the overall well-being of the individuals who experience it. These factors include symptoms that could physically and psychodynamically impact the individuals,

and that result in sickness, depression, and decreased performance in the classroom. For teachers of students with EBD, the burnout experienced is heightened by the amount of care needed to ensure a safe and effective teaching environment for the student population.

Teachers of students with EBD who experience burnout are in need of interventions in order to reduce the negative impact of burnout. Therefore, it is important to gain a better understanding of the measures necessary to reduce the impact of burnout. However, there appears to be a limited amount of research available in this area. It has been found that when researching the topic of burnout in education, there is a need to look at the perceptions that teachers have on how to alleviate burnout in the field (Pishghadam, Zabihi, & Shayesteh, 2014). The following is a summary of the research that has been conducted in the area of teachers' perceptions regarding measures that need to be taken to reduce burnout.

Effective Classroom Management and Reduction of Burnout

Research has found that teachers of EBD students have found that high self-efficacy for classroom management has led to reduction in burnout. This includes teachers who have experienced less burnout when they have a commitment to an intervention philosophy (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). A strong commitment to the practices in place for the classroom leads to potential ownership of the room. This buy-in to their classroom can be enhanced through administrative support. A commitment to increased support for teachers of students with EBD can help reduce the level of burnout experienced. Wasburn-Moses (2005) found that administrative support aimed specifically at solving issues to reduce stress and provide emotional support can be impactful.

Additionally, professional development aimed at increasing classroom management abilities can be powerful (Lane, Oakes, & Cox, 2011; Oliver & Reschley, 2010). These factors are essential for teachers of students with EBD, but certain characteristics are unique to teachers when they are first entering the profession.

Novice teachers who experience burnout can draw from various factors that are unique to an individual entering their chosen profession. They find themselves struggling with integrating themselves into this environment and it can serve as a source of burnout throughout the entirety of the first year (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). This cause of burnout can originate from unique experiences that novice teachers encounter throughout the early years of their careers. Additionally, Billingsley et al. (2006) found that to assist novice teachers of students with EBD to decrease the amount of burnout experienced, it is important to increase the amount of support provided to these teachers. Therefore, it was recommended that intensive pre-service and ongoing training throughout the first years of teaching are available.

Research regarding the perceptions of teachers and their interpretation of interventions necessary to reduce burnout is limited; specifically, research related to interventions that pertain to teachers of students with EBD is lacking. Even with limited research, it is clear that administrative support that includes an empathetic mindset, reasonable disciplinary consequences for student behaviors, and allowing teachers' voices to be heard in decision-making can help reduce burnout for teachers of students with EBD (DiPaola et al., 2004). This includes an understanding of cultural norms and expectations as well being able to retain the knowledge necessary to adhere to the practices and policies of the school in which they work (Prather-Jones, 2011).

Additionally, novice teachers often need training to develop a sense of self-efficacy (Chang, 2009; Cooley & Youanoff, 1996). However, there is a limited amount of research regarding how teachers of students with EBD perceive measures that can be taken to reduce their burnout. Without a better understanding of the interventions perceived by these teachers, it is difficult to provide the support necessary for them to remain in the field.

Summary

Research surrounding teacher burnout has increased throughout the past few decades. The extant research related to factors that lead to burnout for teachers of students with EBD includes the challenging behaviors that this student population displays and the inability to maintain positive relationships. Additionally, the impact of burnout can result in symptoms that can include bouts of depression, flu-like symptoms, and acts of depersonalization. These factors related to burnout impact teachers in dealing with a student population that requires strong relationships in order to excel. Because teachers of students with EBD experience burnout more frequently, there is a need to understand their perspectives of what measures can be taken in order to reduce the amount of burnout experienced for these teachers. In order to combat burnout among teachers of students with EBD, there must be a more in-depth look into what components of burnout are specific to them. Additionally, research related to how burnout is perceived among novice teachers and veteran teachers is needed to understand how burnout is dealt with and retain teachers in this field.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

For the purposes of this study, burnout is defined as a “prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” (Maslach, 2003, p. 189). While burnout has been researched, including teachers of students with EBD, Brunsting et al. (2014) have stated that, “there is a need for an updated review of teacher burnout, specifically one focused exclusively on SETs to identify gaps in the research, make recommendations for practitioners, and improve teacher health” (p. 684). In this study, I sought to gain a deeper understanding of how novice and veteran teachers perceived specific factors, impacts, and measures for reduction of burnout that can be implemented. Findings from this study highlight the similarities and differences that exist between burnout for novice and veteran teachers of this student population. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What motivates novice and veteran teachers to choose to teach students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders?
2. How do novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders define teacher burnout and the factors that contribute to it?
3. What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders regarding the impact of teacher burnout?

4. What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders regarding measures that can be taken by teachers and/or building leaders to reduce teacher burnout?

Context of the Study

The educators who participated in the study worked in a regional public day school that serves school districts across a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. The organization is comprised of separate programs that attend to various student populations. As a whole, the programs service over 1300 students in over 85 schools. The organization currently employs over 750 professional classified staff. The study will focus on one program within the organization. This program primarily serves students with emotional behavioral disorders in self-contained classrooms.

Students are referred to this program through an IEP team decision. Students who are referred to this EBD program have demonstrated behaviors that have been unsafe in a more comprehensive setting. The program services grades Kindergarten through 12. While attending the program, students receive their core curriculum within self-contained classrooms. Two teachers are assigned to each classroom and are often responsible for instructing multiple grades and subjects. Students who have demonstrated consistent progress on their IEP goals are eligible to return to the schools that they initially attended prior to the program. They return to a less restrictive environment. The goal of the program is to educate these students to become successful in school and develop the skills necessary to function in a more comprehensive and inclusive setting.

Participants

In order to be eligible to participate in the study, teachers within the organization had to meet the requirements of being a novice or veteran teachers as specified in Chapter 1. At the time of the study, there were 28 veteran teachers and 25 novice teachers who met this criterion. The reasons for defining “novice” as three years or less are two-fold: a) most states consider a pre-tenure period of employment as three years, coinciding with the practical application of a novice teaching period, and b) extant research suggests that the first three years of teaching are associated with less effectiveness and a greater learning period for improving practices (e.g., Munoz, Prather, & Stronge, 2011). Veteran teacher is defined as 10 years or more in the teaching field based on evidence that teachers typically reach a mastery level after 8-10 teaching years (e.g., Rockoff, 2004). Additionally, studies outside of education have found that, in general, it can take 10 years for professionals in complex jobs (e.g., medical field) to reach mastery (Stronge, 2010). Ten novice teachers and nine veteran teachers agreed to participate in the study. The 10 novice teachers ranged in age from 25 to 45. A majority of these teachers were certified in specific content areas while four were under a provisional license for special education. Four of these teachers possessed a master’s degree. Comparably, of the 10 veterans, six teachers possessed certifications in special education. Only three veteran teachers possessed certifications in general content areas. Seven of these teachers possessed a master’s degree.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation that was used for this study consisted of an in-depth interview conducted with each participant. The interview protocol was constructed to

generate data based on the research questions of the study. The Table of Specifications identifies the questions and connects them with the extant research. In an effort to validate the interview protocol being used, a Review Panel reviewed the interview protocol and provided feedback in order to refine any changes prior to use of the instrument. I piloted the interview with one participant from each group. Revisions were made to the final question based on the feedback received from the pilot interviews. The data gathered from these pilot interviews were not included in the data collected for the research.

Table 1

Table of Specifications

| Interview Questions | Associated Research Questions | Research Foundation |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| A1. What motivated you to be a teacher of students with emotional behavior disorders? | 1 | (Herzberg, 1958; Hongying, 2007; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012) |
| A2. Can you elaborate on these reasons? | 1 | (Herzberg, 1958; Hongying, 2007; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012) |
| B1. In your own words, how do you define burnout as it pertains to teachers? | 2 | (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Banks & Necco, 1990; Billingsley et al., 2006; Nichols & Sosnoswsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997) |
| B2. What factors lead to experiencing burnout? | 2 | (Cancio & Johnson, 2013) |
| C1. How does burnout impact teachers in their daily teaching practice? | 3 | (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Albrecht et al., 2009; Brown, 2012; Fimian & Blanton, 1987; Jones & Youngs, 2012) |
| C2. How does burnout impact teachers in their personal lives? | 3 | (Armon et al., 2010; Bianchi et al., 2013) |
| D1. What specific measures can be taken by teachers to reduce the amount of burnout that is experienced? | 4 | (Jennett et al., 2003; Pishghadam et al., 2014) |
| D2. What specific measures can be taken by administrators to reduce the amount of burnout that is experienced by teachers? | 4 | (DiPaola et al., 2004; House, 1981; Prather-Jones, 2011) |

Data Collection

With this study, I sought to understand the perception of teachers of students with EBD in self-contained settings as it relates to burnout. In order to gather this data, I used a qualitative approach. Creswell (2013) states that qualitative research “comes from anthropology, sociology, the humanities, and evaluation” (p. 13). Specifically, I subscribed to a constructivist framework. I attempted to understand how the participants develop meaning within their current contexts. This framework led to the open-ended questions identified in the interview protocol, which are associated with the four research questions for this study.

I e-mailed each eligible teacher asking for his or her consent to participate in the study. Teachers that agreed to participate in the study were sent a follow up e-mail that contained a link to sign up for an available time and date to conduct an interview. Each time slot was allotted for two hours. The interviews were primarily conducted in person. However, a few interviews were conducted over the phone. Interviews lasted 10-30 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the use of a digital recorder. Additionally, I took notes during the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were provided a transcription of the interview and their feedback was sought as a member checking method for verification of accuracy. This process was the same for both novice and veteran teachers who were interviewed.

In order to select the sample, a request for research was sent to the regional public day school that serves the 500 EBD students and employs their teachers. The application for research within the organization can be found in Appendix A. The organization

approval period is open throughout the calendar year and is approved by the Executive Director. Approval was granted by the organization, and teachers who met the criteria were provided an open invitation via e-mail to participate in the study. Follow-up invitations were sent in an effort gain adequate number of participants. The sampling selection was equal size sampling—that is, approximately an equal number of novice and veteran teachers were sought to participate in the study. A goal of interviewing 10 individuals from each group was considered sufficient. In an effort to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, teacher-identifying features were excluded from any reporting.

Data were generated from interviews with the two groups of participating teachers. The primary data source took the form of a semi-structured interview but allowed the opportunity for informal follow-up questions to be asked. Craig (2009) states that this style of semi-structured interview “encourages honest responses, which provide valuable information in informing inquiry” (p. 125). The questions are open-ended, which encouraged a freedom and flexibility in the responses. The same interview questions (Appendix B) guided interviews with novice and veteran teachers who participated in the study.

Creswell (2013) defines saturation as when the “researcher stops collecting data because fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties” (p. 248). This was determined during the multi-step process described in the data analysis section later in this chapter. However, as noted earlier in the chapter, it was anticipated that 10 teachers in each of the two groups would be considered sufficient for achieving saturation. This turned out to not be necessary. For a qualitative study, data saturation can

be reached when new data, themes, and coding are no longer present in the data collection process (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Data Analysis

In this qualitative study, the purpose of the analysis process was to identify commonalities and themes found from the data collected. In my attempt to locate the commonalities and themes within the data, the following steps were taken.

Step 1: The first step in the analysis was to organize and prepare the data.

Creswell (2013) states that “this involves transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, cataloguing all of the visual material, and sorting and arranging the data into different types depending of the sources of information” (p. 197).

This step of initial coding of the data was completed with the assistance of a software program, MAXqda. The benefit of using this software was the ability to expedite the transcribing process by being able to save the audio and play in small intervals and highlight specific moments. After the interviews were transcribed, the program allowed me to locate passages of data through search features offered within the program. The ability to organize the data in the first step allowed the coding process to follow.

Step 2: At the completion of transcribing each interview, the next step was the coding process. Creswell (2013) states that coding “involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term” (p. 198). As I began the coding process, the research questions served as the basis for initial coding. Using the research questions as the initial coding framework allowed me to locate specific commonalities and themes. These pre-determined codes provided the initial framework in which to place

the data. Additionally, during this process, I determined if sub-themes and emerging themes occur. These sub-themes and emerging themes provided new organizational themes that had not been addressed in the review of the literature and are further explored in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study. When the coding process was completed, a detailed description of the themes was provided.

Step 3: In the next step of the data analysis process, I identified categories and themes as determined through coding and provided detailed descriptions of each. The description of these items serves as part of the narrative within Chapter 4 of this study. Depending on the findings from the data generated, I used frequency counts and sample narrative passages to illustrate the findings of the study. These passages were included in an explanation and discussion of the findings that allowed the reader to understand the data in terms of potentially unique and interconnecting themes. This also allowed me to make an interpretation of the research, which is the final step of the data analysis process.

Creswell (2013) states that making an interpretation in qualitative research “means that the researcher draws meaning from the findings of data analysis. This meaning may result in lessons learned, information to compare with the literature, or personal experiences” (p. 244). The conclusion of the data analysis provided me an opportunity to convey the lessons learned from my perspective. This allowed me to compare my findings to the existing literature and suggest action steps to be taken or new ideas to explore in future research.

Trustworthiness of Data

In order to determine the validity of the qualitative study’s findings, Creswell (2013) suggests that the researcher “actively incorporates validity strategies” in order to

“enhance the researcher’s ability to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy” (p. 201). As mentioned previously, the same interview protocol was followed with both novice and veteran teachers who met the criteria of the study.

The strategy of member checking was utilized to establish trustworthiness. After the themes were established from coding the data gathered, I presented the interviewees with these preliminary findings, requesting their feedback about whether they felt the findings were accurate. Participants did not disagree with the findings.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

The biggest assumption that I brought to this study was that the participants being interviewed were currently experiencing, or had in the past experienced, burnout. This assumption allowed the expectation that their personal experience with burnout with this student population would provide individualized insight into answering the four research questions. The next assumption was that there were specific measures that could reduce the amount of burnout experienced by teachers of students with EBD. The research questions were based on the assumption that that burnout can be reduced.

Limitations and Delimitations

There are several limitations to this study. The participants in this study were employees within the same organization. This provided the potential for the findings of the study to be based on the same external and internal influences that the organization has on these employees. The ability to interview more participants from other organizations would have allowed the potential for data to be generalized across the field.

Additionally, the criteria to be selected for an interview limited the number of participants eligible within the organization to participate in the study

Another limitation is that at the time of this research, I worked in the organization in which I interviewed participants. This might have allowed the potential for bias to occur in evaluating the data taken and the responses given by participants. The participants might have felt obligated to provide answers that did not put the organization in a negative light. In order to address this limitation, I excluded any identifying information that might allow a reader to recognize the interviewee. Additionally, the member checking process allowed the interviewee to determine if they would like to have any of the data modified or excluded if they feel uncomfortable with their response. No participant requested to have information removed from the data.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this study, I explored motivation and burnout of novice (1-3 years of teaching experience) and veteran (10 or more years of teaching experience) teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD). The educators who participated in the study worked in a regional public day school that serves school districts across a large metropolitan area in the southeastern United States. The study focused on one program within the public day school, which serves students with EBD in self-contained classrooms. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews of teachers who met the experience level of either novice or veteran status. Craig (2009) states that the use of semi-structured interviews “encourages honest responses, which provide valuable information in informing inquiry” (p. 125). The questions were open-ended, which encouraged freedom and flexibility in the responses. The same questions (Appendix B) guided interviews with novice and veteran teachers who met the criteria of the study.

Ten veteran and 11 novice teachers were interviewed for this study. The first veteran and novice teachers to be interviewed served as pilot interviews. They provided feedback on the interview questions as a means of validating the interview protocol. Per the design of the study, these interviews were not included in the data collection or analysis of the study. Thus, the number of teachers included in the data collection and analysis presented in the chapter included nine veteran and 10 novice teachers. Table 2 overviews the age range, certifications, and education of both groups.

Table 2

Age Range, Certifications, and Education of Novice and Veteran Participants

| Characteristics | Novice | Veteran |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Age Range | 25 to 45 | 38 to 62 |
| Provisional License – Special Education, K - 12 | 4 out of 10 | 0 out of 9 |
| Special Education License | 0 out of 10 | 6 out of 9 |
| Specific Content Areas | 6 out of 10 | 3 out of 9 |
| Master’s Degree | 4 out of 10 | 7 out of 9 |

The age range in the veteran group is considerably higher than the veteran group. Additionally, the veteran group contains licensures that are more specific to special education students as opposed to the novice group who specialize in specific content areas. More veteran teachers have master’s degrees.

Findings for Research Question 1

What motivates novice and veteran teachers to choose to teach students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders?

Interviewees were asked to detail the motivation that guides them to work with students with EBD. The responses to this question from both novice and veteran teachers can be consolidated into two themes. These themes are job availability and intrinsic motivation to work with this student population. These themes are examined further, including excerpts taken from each interview.

Table 3

Motivation to Work with EBD Students Among Novice and Veteran Teachers

| Themes | Novice | Veteran |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Intrinsic motivation | 90% (9 out of 10) | 100% (9 out of 9) |
| Job availability | 20% (2 out of 10) | 44% (4 out of 9) |

Intrinsic motivation. A theme that emerged from the data was that of an intrinsic motivation to work EBD students. This idea was the most frequently mentioned for the first research question. Nearly all of the teachers interviewed discussed an intrinsic motivation for working with these students (see Table 3). Teachers identified the idea of intrinsic motivation as a feeling that they possessed a unique vantage point, skill set, or commitment to assist them in serving this student population.

The most common type of intrinsic motivation was that of a teacher’s personal experience(s) that provided him or her with an empathetic approach to the students they serve. These personal experiences ranged from teachers who grew up in abusive households, to those who were the parent of a child with a disability, or who had classmates who were similar to the students they currently serve. The following are excerpts from interviews that were conducted for this study.

- I have my own son [who] has some behavioral issues and Asperger's disorder, so I was used to working with him. Really enjoyed it and really wanted to work with students with disabilities.
- There are issues in my background that I had that I felt that when I move forward I can maybe help others with.

- Yeah, I went to a school where you had like growing up, where you had those types—there were kids who were very well off and yet kids who weren't well off. And I always noticed that the kids who were well off were given all the opportunities, where like the other kids who came from the poor households, the poor neighborhoods, had to work extra hard just to get the opportunity. And I never really thought that that was fair, so I figured if I had the opportunity to work with those kids who weren't as well off or had a disability stuck up against them to kind of give them the opportunities that I saw other kids not getting and that would be a success for me personally.
- I had a couple special kids in my class and I think I didn't have a full understanding of their needs and diagnosis and all that. It's a tough situation where you work in a general [education] setting.

Another type of intrinsic motivation is the commitment that teachers possess was not to vacate the educational obligation of the students they serve. The teachers in this study felt that many previous teachers have given up on these students prior to entering their classroom. One teacher shared:

Not to mention that I enjoy working with this particular population because I know that it takes a person that can relate to them that could have more patience and tolerate some of the things that actually goes on, some of the behaviors that they display.

Many of the teachers in this study felt that they possessed the skills necessary to positively impact students and provide them with a learning environment that previous teachers failed to establish. One novice teacher stated, "I felt that I had a good disposition

for working with students with those kinds of needs as far as my level of patience and things like that.”

A type of intrinsic motivation that was exclusive to veteran teachers was their personal faith and religious background. Faith served as a continued motivating factor that gave them the strength and patience to work with this student population. One teacher shared, “The perspective of my faith provides a huge benefit to me. If I don't have my faith, I would quit.” Veteran teachers also listed a higher calling to work with students with EBD. Another veteran teacher said, “I put a lot of faith in Jesus that helps me through my day. Every day ask for that self-control. So that—I mean that's personal that's, for me.” These participants perceived the additional strength they received from their faith as way to handle the factors that lead to experiencing burnout. These factors will be discussed later in this chapter.

Job availability. Table 3 highlights job availability as a motivating factor for a multiple novice and veteran teachers interviewed. The types of motivating factors varied. For example, teachers who recently graduated from college or who were new to the area listed the initial motivating factor as securing a teaching position. One teacher stated:

I didn't really even know what I was getting myself into. I moved here and I applied and within three days I was hired and then I just did it. I don't really know my background was regular ED [General Education].

This teacher was not able to consider the particular challenges that working with this student population might present due to the desire to secure any teaching position.

Teachers highlighted their personal struggle obtaining a teaching position until they were offered a provisional contract by the public day school. For one teacher, the increase in

pay and benefits that resulted from switching from a private education setting to a public education setting served as a motivating factor. This change into a public school setting brought an increase in pay, training, and benefits. Job availability served as the initial motivating factor for multiple teachers. However, only one novice teacher, currently in their third year with this organization, stated that job availability continued to be a source of motivation toward working students with EBD.

The themes of intrinsic motivations and job availability emerged from the data collected for the first research question. The identification of an intrinsic motivation to work with EBD students was the largest theme throughout the data. The intrinsic motivation varied in interpretation. Participants mentioned personal experiences, commitment to EBD students, and faith as elements of intrinsic motivation. It appeared that intrinsic motivation was the main reason for both novice and veteran teachers to remain working with the students with EBD. Both novice and veteran teachers listed job availability as a reason for working with EBD students. This motivating factor appeared to serve as the initial motivating factor for these teachers but not as an on-going source of motivation.

Findings for Research Question 2

How do novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with EBD define teacher burnout and the factors that contribute to it?

Definitions of burnout. The teachers who participated in this study were asked to define burnout in their own words. Novice teachers' definitions of burnout referenced a feeling of overwhelming and insurmountable work expectations. Teachers felt that they did not possess the experience or skillset needed to meet or exceed their professional

responsibilities. This perception led to a feeling of being ineffective and making an impact with the students they serve. Novice teachers said:

- [Burnout is] just feeling like you have so much work to do and no—I feel like [burnout is] the point when you're not making a difference or you just have so much work that you can't catch up on it.
- I think when you get up in the morning and you think to yourself I got to do the thing, the exact thing that I've been doing for the past 100 days and today is not going to make much of a difference. I think that's burnout and I think, I mean if you get up in the morning and you think to yourself that whatever I do today is not going to matter. These kids are going to be the same at the end of the day; I think that for me is burnout, just being tired of doing basic duties every day.

This sense of hopelessness, when felt over an extended period of time, led novice teachers toward experiencing a lack of passion to continue working with students with EBD.

Similar to the definitions provided by novice teachers, veteran teachers' definitions of burnout referenced an overwhelming amount of responsibility. Veteran teachers emphasized the amount of work that is expected of them and how it seemed to increase each year without considering what is realistic for a teacher working with students with EBD. This feeling led to a lack of motivation to continue working with the students they serve. One veteran teacher said, "Burnout is when I'm so overwhelmed with all of the responsibilities and tasks that I don't feel like getting up and doing anything anymore. My plate is full." Another said, "Burnout, as it pertains to teachers—

probably the best indicator I think of burnout is waking in the morning and really not wanting to come.”

A consistent theme that emerged from the participants’ definition of burnout was that of facing overwhelming expectations. For novice teachers, these expectations stemmed from a lack of experience or skillset needed to meet their professional obligations. Veteran teachers also indicated a sense of feeling overwhelmed. This stemmed from the amount of expectations placed upon them each year without removing existing demands. This feeling of being overwhelmed leads to the feeling of burnout. A conclusion can be drawn when comparing the findings from the first research question to the definitions provided in the second research question. A teacher of students with EBD in this organization who is exposed to factors that lead to burnout can begin to become less motivated to work. The factors of burnout appear to negate the factors of motivation if experienced over an extended amount of time. This leads to teachers feeling a lack of passion to continue teaching students with EBD.

Factors contributing to burnout. The second component to Research Question 2 was for teachers to identify the factors that lead to experiencing burnout. Analysis of the factors that contributed to this feeling of burnout produced common themes. These themes were lack of support, unrealistic expectations, student behaviors, and unsuccessful student outcomes.

Table 4

Factors Leading to Burnout Among Novice and Veteran Teachers

| Factors | Novice | Veteran |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Lack of support | 70% (7 out of 10) | 77% (7 out of 9) |
| Unrealistic expectations | 60% (6 out of 10) | 77% (7 out of 9) |
| Student behaviors | 30% (3 out of 10) | 44% (4 out of 9) |
| Unsuccessful student outcomes | 50% (5 out of 10) | 11% (1 out of 9) |

Lack of support. The factor that was identified most frequently that leads to burnout is the lack of support that teachers receive in order for them to perform their daily responsibilities. The majority of novice and veteran teachers discussed the lack of support as a factor that leads to burnout (see Table 4). The type of support varied throughout the responses provided; however, administrator support was cited most frequently.

Teachers referenced wanting administrators to be more visible throughout the building. This type of visibility provided a sense of support by showing that the administrators were aware of the type of challenges teachers faced throughout a school day. This type of visibility was requested by veteran teachers. Multiple teachers referenced that they wanted their administrators to be more visible in the building and lead by example. However, novice teachers appeared to desire to have an administrator to be present during moments of crisis or provide immediate feedback throughout a school day. One teacher said, “Well, being seen, you know—before, we had situations where administration was just kind of nowhere to be found. It’s one thing to not be in the

building, doing meetings, but it's kind of nowhere to be found." Additionally, both novice and veteran teachers felt that administrators did not support teachers because teachers did not receive adequate training and ongoing support throughout the school year. Initial trainings are provided at the beginning of the year and sporadically throughout the year. Teacher identified that the type of training and support came in the form of initial training in the areas of lesson planning, individual feedback aimed at professional growth, and training in other areas that teachers felt they needed to be more proficient in their current roles.

The final type of administrator action that was identified as lacking was that of emotional support provided to teachers. This type of support was requested primarily by veteran teachers. Teachers stated that not being treated as a professional or lacking a strong support network from their administrators led to burnout. This appeared to be a strong factor for both groups. A common thread between both groups was their desire to have an administrator who continuously monitored the well-being of their staff and ensured that their needs were being met. One teacher said,

You have to be consistent about whatever you do and you got to think about your staff. I feel really bad, you know, we have a staff [member] leaving, this is her last week, and she was in tears because I don't think she really wanted to go but it was almost like...she was pushed into that predicament because [the administrator] didn't think about the actual person. Oh yeah there is an injury here and this is happening here but you got to think about your staff [member] as an individual.

Teachers also felt a lack of support from stakeholders including colleagues and parents. The lack of parental support was evident in two interviews that were conducted.

One teacher shared,

And with parents who don't care and parents who don't [encourage] kids to strive for more and work more for themselves, and already lacking the insight to recognize how important this is for them in the long run. I think it becomes exponentially disastrous.

The other type of stakeholder support that was lacking was from colleagues. Another teacher stated,

The other part of it is when you have to constantly remind individuals that have been here long enough what we should be doing on a daily routine, being consistent with the kids. Sometimes that can be overwhelming, at that particular time it can be a bit much.

This type of collegial support referenced teachers receiving paraprofessionals (teacher assistants) who were able to assist in the classroom and possessed greater skills.

Unrealistic expectations. As listed in Table 4, several participating teachers mentioned unrealistic expectations as a factor leading to burnout. These unrealistic expectations varied in context. One teacher discussed how last minute demands could be placed upon them by administration. This resulted in an additional work, anxiety, and frustration towards administration for the lack of guidance being provided. This teacher said,

I think not [springing] things on teachers—you know the teachers have got a lot going on and then we hate to show up to the meeting on a Thursday and they say,

“By the way, you all need to do this by Friday afternoon.” [Springing] things on teachers, especially when you got a lot going on, is not good.

Additionally, continuous initiatives that are placed upon teachers by the regional public day school and administration without the proper support contributed to their burnout. This resulted in teachers feeling overwhelmed by the lack of clarity and intent behind these initiatives, which resulted in further confusion. One teacher shared, “they want to put initiatives in place but sometimes either the person telling us about the initiative or the follow up of the initiative is not clear, is not consistent, and this get[s] wishy-washy.” Additionally, unrealistic expectations came in the form of requiring teachers to perform many roles within a school day. These teachers stated that role overload occurs when working with the EBD population, which requires them to serve in other capacities in addition to their basic professional role as a teacher. For example, one teacher stated, “You know, we’re parents, we’re counselors, we’re doctors, we’re nurses, we’re all those things; and sometimes, it will burn you out.”

Teachers did note that their students do have access to a school nurse. Additionally, certain students have access to a school psychologist if designated on their Individualized Education Program (IEP). However, the teachers stated that the frequency and severity of behaviors their students displayed required them to serve in multiple roles to meet the immediate needs of their students. Another teacher said, “my job title is teacher but I feel like I’m psychologist, counselor, doctor, nurse. I mean you name whatever it is and it’s a hat that I should wear and I don’t—and I just want to wear teacher.”

The complexity of their jobs also led teachers to believe they serve students who require services and support that they are not qualified to provide. Veteran teachers described their perception of serving students in recent years that would have been typically served in a residential placement. The veteran teachers felt that these students needed additional treatment and services that the organization could not provide. They stated that a lack of funding from the community limits the amount of students that can be served in more intensive settings. A novice teacher shared,

It's almost like you're asking us to create something for this child that's not realistic. They're like 50/50 of my class would say some are sick and mentally ill and some are just ADHD and busy which is manageable. It's the others that add the element for the burnout I think because on the regular, I have two or three kids that are hospitalized and then come back and they're hospitalized and they come back. And when they're hospitalized, it's like a major crisis at school.

Teachers felt that these expectations were unrealistic without the specific support and training needed to achieve the level of expectations placed upon them within the organization. Additionally, teachers from both groups brought up the notion that expectations placed upon them continued to increase without consideration of removing current demands already placed upon them. Teachers highlighted that they were not able to successfully perform their responsibilities with the current planning and support being offered to them. One teacher stated, "I think that administrators have to either take something off of our plate or help us in some kind of way to get the things that we have to do done."

Teachers also listed the academic expectations set within the organization in recent years as unrealistic due to the various learning and behavior challenges that students with EBD possess. This type of organizational change was described as a renewed focus on implementing best instructional practices within the classroom and maintaining high academic expectations for students served within the organization. Teachers stated that they did not disagree with this focus, however, the organization did not factor in the type of support (professional development, removing existing expectations) necessary to implement these type of strategies with this student population. One teacher said,

Like I said overly exuberant expectations, because I just don't want to say high expectations, because I think especially in our field it's important to have those high expectations. But sometimes you expect perfection, we both know that with these cases it's never going to be perfect you know.

Student behaviors. The third factor that contributed to burnout among the teachers in this study was that of the students' behaviors. Several novice and veteran teachers identified student behaviors as a factor of burnout (see Table 4). The types of behaviors varied but teachers stated that the consistency and severity of behaviors interfered with their ability to perform their job responsibilities, which was a factor that led to burnout. One [novice/veteran] teacher shared,

Well the behaviors of the kids start to wear you down. You know, you'd like to think you have thick skin and I think for me, I felt like I started off having pretty thick skin. But being in it so long, I feel like it's getting thinner and I feel like—

It's—how do I say it? I don't know, I guess stuff starts to get to me a little bit more than I used to.

Another teacher had a similar reaction, saying, “When you’re dealing with emotionally disturbed kids, you know they're going to be uncooperative. Their behavior it takes its toll.” This consistent exposure to behaviors presented by this student population appears to exhaust the teachers within this organization.

Unsuccessful student outcomes. In a related factor, many novice teachers and one veteran teacher shared concerns that the lack of successful student outcomes hindered the overall optimism of the teachers. As listed in Table 4, participants presented this as a factor of burnout. Students who demonstrated minimal progress in both academic and behavioral growth appeared to affect teachers’ perception of the impact they felt they had on the students they served. Other teachers mentioned that the students they serve often experience unsuccessful outcomes outside of the classroom. These include breaking the law and being exposed to negative influences in the community. She stated, “I think the burnt out comes when they [teachers within the organization] can't see any improvement in the kids.” Many novice teachers mentioned this factor of burnout. These teachers perceived themselves as ineffective (lacking adequate skills to be effective at their position) at making an impact on their students due to on the students they serve. They perceived themselves as not possessing the skillset necessary to benefit their students. This lack of confidence in their job performance appeared to increase the burnout they experience. This mindset then impacts teachers in their approach to their position to just “survive” the school year.

Common themes emerged from both groups as to the factors that lead to burnout. These themes were unclear expectations, lack of successful student outcomes, lack of support, and student behaviors. Novice teachers appeared to experience more doubt in their own ability to impact the students they serve. However, the largest factors of burnout were the role overload placed upon teachers by the organization and the lack of ongoing support and training provided by administrators to successfully meet these obligations.

Findings for Research Question 3

What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with EBD regarding the impact of teacher burnout?

Interviewees were asked to provide their perceptions of the impact that burnout has on teachers. They were asked specifically to discuss how it impacts them in their personal lives and daily practice. The responses to this question from both novice and veteran teachers can be consolidated into three themes. These themes are lack of engagement and emotional and physical exhaustion. These themes are examined further, including excerpts taken from the interviews.

Table 5

Impact of Burnout on Teachers

| Themes | Novice | Veteran |
|--|-------------------|------------------|
| Lack of engagement | 80% (8 out of 10) | 77% (7 out of 9) |
| Emotional and physical exhaustion | 20% (2 out of 10) | 44% (4 out of 9) |

Lack of engagement. Participants were asked to identify how burnout impacts them in their daily practice. As listed in Table 5, the majority of novice and veteran teachers in this study cited a lack of engagement with the students they serve as a way burnout impacts daily practice. This lack of engagement consistently led to a feeling of being disconnected from the students who are being served and a decrease in the quality of instructional planning provided to them. This was consistent across both novice teachers and veteran teachers. One teacher said, “[Teachers experiencing burnout] sit around and just let a lot of things go and the kid—it affects the kids by not being able to provide them with what they are—what they need.” This sense of hopelessness and feeling unable to achieve continued progress with their students led to a lack of engagement in their daily practice. Another teacher stated, “Oh, I just don't think [teachers experiencing burnout] are motivated. [They] probably don't put forth their best effort or probably [get] short tempered with the kids. Again, a lot of apathy I guess. I don't care type attitude.” The feeling of not being engaged in the classroom can impact the way teachers approach their daily practice and feeling connected to their students.

Emotional and physical exhaustion. Teachers in this study were asked to identify how burnout impacts them in their personal lives. As listed in Table 5, twice as many veteran teachers listed emotional and physical exhaustion as one way that burnout impacts their personal lives when compared to novice teachers. Exhaustion was described as the inability to maintain responsibilities and relationships in personal lives due to the amount of efforts they put forth in meeting the expectations of their occupation. One teacher said, “It really does impact on everything that I do because I don't have a social life.” Another stated,

I think sometimes it can lead to depression; it can lead to some mental health issues for teachers that maybe were there before and they were dormant but it starts to reactivate those things. I do know there were some teachers in my first year when I was at [this school], they had to go to a doctor and be on antidepressants or anxiety medicine because of the work that we do and your emotions are up and down all day.

Additionally, a teacher discussed the type of impact that it had on their personal life.

My husband can tell you when he comes home, I'm usually knocked out and my bedroom is full of paperwork that I'm doing. When he comes home, it's either I'm working or I'm sleeping so I have no relationship with him and that's throughout the school year and he knows that during the week, leave me alone, because I'm doing my paperwork or I'm just tired from that day. It really does impact me on everything that I do because I don't have a social life.

Participants identified the impact that burnout can have on the personal lives and daily practice of teachers. The theme that emerged from the responses was that of emotional and physical exhaustion that transferred into teacher's personal lives. This exhaustion impacted their ability maintain a balance between work and home.

Additionally, teachers experiencing burnout felt a lack of engagement in their daily practice. The findings from this question suggest that teachers who are exposed to continuous factors of burnout are impacted both physically and emotionally.

Findings for Research Question 4

What are the perceptions of novice and veteran teachers who instruct students with EBD regarding measures that can be taken by teachers and/or building leaders to reduce teacher burnout?

Teacher-controlled Factors to Reduce Burnout

Participants were asked to identify specific measures that could be taken by teachers in order to reduce burnout. Four themes emerged. These themes were finding an outlet outside of work, building relationships with other teachers, building relationships with students, and staying organized. Teachers were also asked to identify specific measures administrators could take to reduce the amount of burnout experienced by teachers. Four themes emerged. The following themes related to teacher-controlled factors will be examined further, including excerpts taken from the interviews that were conducted.

Table 6

Teacher Measures for Avoiding Burnout

| Themes | Novice | Veteran |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Finding an outlet outside of work | 70% (7 out of 10) | 88% (8 out of 9) |
| Building relationships with other teachers | 70% (7 out of 10) | 55% (5 out of 9) |
| Building relationships with students | 20% (2 out of 10) | 66% (6 out of 9) |
| Staying organized | 20% (2 out of 10) | 11% (1 out of 9) |

Finding an outlet from work. Finding an outlet from the workday was one of the most frequently cited themes that teachers identified as a way to reduce burnout. Nearly

all of the participants identified finding an outlet from work as a way to reduce burnout. The type of outlet varied from exercising, finding a hobby, or leaving school work at work. Novice teachers appeared to understand the importance of disconnecting from work as a way to reduce burnout. However, it appeared that many novice teachers did not understand how to accomplish this. Veteran teachers who listed finding an outlet as a measure to reduce burnout appeared to experience this same issue earlier in their careers, but later found outlets. One veteran teacher shared, “Really an exercise routine is always a good idea to go home and do something and that also lets you mentally get rid of it. So if you’re a runner, go run. That’s excellent.” Another said, “Don’t take things personal in school and you don’t allow it to stress you and out of your school, you leave it in the school and let it be.” A third said,

My advice to them is to find something that brings them joy literally. Sometimes when I’m to the point where I feel those strategies that I implement for myself don’t play I have to find something else that brings me joy and I focus on that.

Veteran teachers found outlets from work by making it a priority throughout their career. They would seek out guidance from colleagues in an effort to find various outlets available to them. These outlets varied in response; however, veteran teachers highlighted the importance of seeking these outlets out throughout the entirety of their careers.

Building relationships with other teachers. Participants frequently cited building relationships with others teachers as a method for combating burnout. As listed in Table 6, the majority of teachers highlighted seeking support from colleagues as a measure to reduce burnout. The type of benefits that these relationships brought to the teacher varied based on their years of experiencing teaching. For novice teachers, the

support requested was that from an administrator or mentor who could provide guidance on how to perform their job responsibilities more efficiently. One novice teacher said,

Though you're stressed out you talk to administrator or principal about it, if they can communicate with their supervisors or dean in any way they can help them or they will help them to see how they can adjust the stress or support they can give on to them, one way or the other.

For veteran teachers, seeking emotional support from colleagues was more of a priority to help reduce burnout. One veteran teacher said, "For others, I guess I know develop a good core closeness with your fellow coworkers after school social meetings if you want to call it that or just communication. Being able to talk with someone." This support was that of an emotional release from the work day.

Building relationships with students. As listed in Table 6, many more veteran teachers stated that focusing on relationships with students was a way to reduce burnout, compared with only two novice teachers. The ability to form strong relationships with students was viewed as a way to decrease the student behaviors teachers experienced on a daily basis. One [novice/veteran] teacher shared,

Just keep coming each day and just—we might not see it but the reason why these kids come each day and it's because they want to see you. They curse you out and they say things to you, in the back of their heads they are coming there because they feel comfortable, they feel loved. So I think just that in the back of people's heads should help them.

Another teacher said,

Like I said before, building relationships with students and hopefully, if you are working with a good student population, develop those positive relationships and getting them into a change structure and discipline in the classroom. And I think that minimizes the burnout for teachers and, yeah, burnout can happen over a short period of time.

Veteran teachers felt that the impact of positive student relationships benefited the students and the teachers. Teachers felt a strong sense of connection to these students when they made relationship building a priority. Stronger relationships lessened the factors of burnout mentioned in the previous section. As a result, student behaviors decreased and teachers maintained a strong commitment to their daily practice.

Staying organized. Both novice and veteran teachers mentioned the theme of staying organized as a measure that can be taken to reduce burnout. This finding is not typically associated with being a strategy to overcome burnout. These responses included a commitment to being fully prepared for the workday and maintaining a strong work ethic. This allowed teachers to be able to adhere to an organization strategy with fidelity. One teacher shared, “When it comes back to us we feel like it depends on the individual. Like if you’re organized, and have everything together, and have a good work ethic, then it minimizes your burnout.” A focus on staying prepared and remaining organized throughout the school year appeared to help combat the burnout factor of attempting to meet the expectations placed on teachers.

Participants identified the measures that teachers can take to help reduce the amount of burnout they experience. Four themes emerged from the data. The first theme to emerge was the most frequently cited. This theme was the need for teachers to

disconnect from the workday. Novice teachers appeared to understand the importance of being able to disconnect but admitted to finding difficulty in actually practicing this measure. Veteran teachers expressed similar difficulties earlier in their career but found ways to disconnect which assisted them in combating burnout. The findings from this question suggest that novice teachers appear to understand ways to combat burnout but encounter difficulty in effectively practicing them. The second theme to emerge was that of building relationships with other teachers. This support differed between novice and veteran teachers. Novice teachers sought to build relationships with administrators in order to increase the amount of support they receive. Veteran teachers sought to build relationships with other teachers in order to provide more emotional support. More than half of the veteran teachers identified seeking positive student relationships as a measure to reduce burnout. This commitment to student relationships appears to reduce the student behaviors that have been identified to decrease the amount of burnout experienced. A small number of novice and veteran teachers highlighted the importance of staying organized as a measure to reduce burnout. This measure appears to assist in reducing the factor of burnout related to meeting the increased responsibilities being placed upon teachers at the organization in which they work.

Administrator-controlled Factors to Reduce Burnout

Participants were asked to identify actions that administrators could take to help reduce the burnout that teachers experienced. Three themes emerged related to administrator actions. These themes were appraisal support, emotional support, and adequate resources.

Table 7

Administrative Measures to Reduce Factors that Lead to Burnout Experienced by Teachers

| Themes | Novice | Veteran |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Appraisal Support | 70% (7 out of 10) | 11% (1 out of 9) |
| Emotional Support | 20% (2 out of 10) | 100% (9 out of 9) |
| Instrumental Support | 50% (5 out of 10) | 55% (5 out of 9) |

Appraisal Support. Novice teachers mentioned ideas related to the theme of being provided consistent appraisal support from administrators. As listed in Table 7, the majority of teachers stated that administrators should provide support that is individualized to their specific needs. Novice teachers stated a preference for more direct appraisal feedback in order to understand how to perform this job proficiently. One novice teacher said, “I think it's based on the individual teacher and this is a very tough working environment and you do the best you can with what you have.” This type of leadership from administration requires consistent observations and conferencing with novice teachers throughout the school year. The feedback provided by administrators allows novice teachers to understand ways to grow as a professional. This direct feedback is individualized to address the specific concerns and areas of improvements for novice teachers.

Emotional support. The most important measure that administrators can take for veteran teachers is providing emotional support. As listed in Table 7, although only two novice teachers mentioned this as a means of reducing burnout, all of the veteran teachers identified this theme. This type of support can range from morale building activities to

checking in on staff to ensure they are okay after a crisis or regular workday. For veteran teachers, the factors of burnout weighed heavily in the area of managing expectations and workload of the regional public day school. Veteran teachers in this study were confident in their ability to perform their job responsibilities; however, they required increased support from their supervisors to ensure that they felt that their well-being and motivation remained a priority. One novice teacher shared,

If you're not keeping up your staff morale to me, then your building would fall apart because then everybody would not want to be there. So yeah, I guess about in a sense, they should be held—they should be held accountable for the morale of the building.

This absence of emotional support was also identified by veteran teachers as a lack of administrators being visible in the building during a school day or supporting teachers during moments of crisis as a factor of burnout. Veteran teachers highlighted the importance of administrators demonstrating a willingness to experience the same challenges they face on a daily basis. One veteran teacher said,

A lot of times, it's not what you say; it's how you say it. Because I've seen some administrators that say stuff to other staff and some staff that said other stuff to other staff that needed to be said, but it just wasn't appropriate place in time to say it. Once you say it in front of people that didn't need to hear, it's already done and that causes frustration and can cause burnout for the staff.

Another said, “You know it's like a boss is—there is a difference between a leader and a boss. A leader is willing to scrub the toilet with you basically.” Teachers expressed a

desire to work in a challenging environment with an administrator who faced the same type of challenges they experienced on a daily basis.

Instrumental support. Instrumental support is that of material aid that can directly benefit those in need (House, 1981). Half of novice teachers and a majority of the veteran teachers highlighted this as an area of need. For novice teachers, this type of instrumental support includes resources such as adequate instructional materials, increased funding to buy instructional materials, and shared collaborative spaces for teachers to share resources. Throughout the interviews, novice teachers expressed frustration in not being able to locate and access materials needed to prepare for their lessons. Novice teachers said things like, “You know, getting new tools you know up to date resources to teach with.” And, “Like...the people who were coming in to help you...giving you the resources you need.” Conversely, veteran teachers expressed the need for instrumental support in the area of being provided adequate planning time in order to fulfill their professional obligations. Several veteran teachers expressed concern over increasing responsibilities without consideration without time for planning during the school day. This led to having to work outside of school hours.

The findings from the inquiry of measures that administrators can take to reduce burnout provided similar themes between both novice and veteran teachers. These themes included providing appraisal support, emotional support, and instrumental support. Within these themes, novice teachers appeared to desire more direct appraisal support from their administrators. This type of support could allow novice teachers to feel more confident in their own abilities to perform the responsibilities of their position. Additionally, novice teachers sought to receive professional support in receiving

adequate resources to fulfill their professional obligations. However, veteran teachers sought out the emotional support of their administrators. While confident in their ability to perform the responsibilities of their position, they sought a supporting supervisor in order to maintain their level of motivation to combat burnout. Similar to the findings from the actions that teachers can take, the data suggest that veteran teachers focus more on actions that can continue to improve the factors that motivate them in their daily practice. These findings, along with others within this chapter, will be further examined in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Discussion of Findings

In this qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of novice (1-3 years) and veteran (10 or more years) teachers of students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD) regarding factors surrounding motivation and burnout. Participants worked at a regional public day school in a large metropolitan area in the Southeastern United States. The teachers service students with EBD in self-contained classrooms. Teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. A total of 11 novice and 10 veteran teachers agreed to participate. The first novice and veteran teachers who were interviewed served only as a source of instrumentation validation. Therefore, data were analyzed for 10 novice and nine veteran teachers. The findings from the research produced several themes that emerged from both novice and veteran teachers.

Motivating Factors

Teachers who participated in this study were asked to list the factors that motivated them to work with students with EBD. Herzberg (1959) stated that the understanding of factors that lead to motivation served as the “primary cause of satisfaction” (p. 57). The types of motivators come in two forms. The first is that of extrinsic motivation. Cain (2015) stated that these motivators are external in nature and are set by organizations that “employ material motives for their teachers to achieve organizational objectives” (p. 154). One extrinsic motivating factor emerged from the interviews conducted for this study.

A common extrinsic motivator that emerged as a theme for both groups of teachers was that of job security. In total, six teachers mentioned job security as an initial motivating factor. The type of security that the job offered varied. Teachers highlighted that they entered the field as a way to secure employment in their desired career of education. This included securing a position out of college or being offered a provisional license when they were still seeking a teaching certificate. One novice teacher stated that job security came in the way of increased pay and benefits compared to a previous work setting. Among all participants, one novice teacher stated that job security remained a factor of motivation to work with this student population.

These findings suggest that the extrinsic motivating factor that led these teachers to work for this regional public day school was only an initial motivator. For example, the teachers in this study who accepted a position due to the offer of a provisional license were more likely to leave the position. Additionally, teachers who are inadequately certified or prepared to teach in an area that they are hired are more likely to experience dissatisfaction within the workplace (Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Therefore, it would be logical to assume that teachers who enter this organization solely for job availability are more likely to leave when they experience the factor that lead to burnout. None of the veteran participants and only one novice teacher (currently in the second year of teaching) listed job availability as a continued motivating factor.

The second type of motivation identified by Herzberg (1959) was intrinsic. This type of motivator is contingent upon a teacher experiencing job satisfaction from completing a task within an organization (Lin, 2007). This type of motivation was shared in 95% of the interviews conducted for this study.

Out of the novice and veteran teachers interviewed, nearly all stated that an intrinsic factor served as the motivation to work with students with EBD. The intrinsic factors varied. Teachers who had experienced school failure in their personal history as students felt that they understood what students with EBD were going through in their educational lives. They felt that this understanding motivated them to provide them a positive learning experience. This was a similar approach for teachers who grew up in abusive households. A smaller group of teachers stated that they felt a calling to work with this student population that is rooted in their possessed faith. Others felt that they possessed a skill set to work with this student population that other educators did not possess.

These findings suggest that intrinsic motivation is necessary for teachers to remain working with this student population. Herzberg's (1959) findings support this in the idea that intrinsic motivations are more powerful towards the satisfaction of teachers when compared to extrinsic motivations. The identification of intrinsic motivations could be enhanced through professional development. Adera and Bullock (2010) suggested in their quantitative study focused on identifying job stressors for teachers of students with EBD that "sensitivity training for all educators working with students with E/BD may better equip them with the required skills and prepare them to be more empathetic as they address the needs of student E/BD and their families" (p. 12). Veteran teachers demonstrated a strong awareness of their reason for working with their students. This is like Prather-Jones's (2011) finding that teachers with EBD seeking rewards in the "minute student achievements, from slight gestures of appreciation, and even more so, from within themselves" (p. 184). Throughout the interviews in this study, these intrinsic

motivators were mentioned as the way in which teachers could handle the factors that lead to burnout. Therefore, it appears necessary for organizations to help teachers identify intrinsic motivators. Additionally, it should be considered by the organization to potentially seek out the motivation to work with these students during the recruiting and hiring process.

Teacher Burnout

Researchers have found that teachers of students with EBD experience the highest level of burnout among all teacher groups (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Banks & Necco, 1990; Billingsley et al., 2006; Nichols & Sosnoswsky, 2002; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). Burnout has been found to be a factor that contributes to turnover and a consistent shortage of teachers for this student population (Prather-Jones, 2011). However, there is limited research in how these teachers perceive burnout and the factors that contribute to it (Brunsting et al., 2014).

Teachers who participated in this study were asked to define burnout in their own words. Novice teachers attributed burnout to a sense of feeling overwhelmed and facing unachievable work expectations for an extended period. Novice teachers discussed the frustration of experiencing burnout and not being able to actively combat it due to a lack of skills or support. Veteran teachers also often attributed burnout to consistently facing unrealistic expectations in the workplace. This included facing increasing responsibilities without consideration for removing current demands placed upon them. Both novice and veteran teachers discussed burnout as a lack of motivation to continue working with this student population. The common message across these groups was that the lack of motivation occurred after a prolonged exposure to factors that contribute to burnout. This

is like Maslach's (2003) findings of how burnout occurs; he defined burnout as a "prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressor[s]" (p. 189). The factors that lead to burnout vary and will be addressed in the next section.

Factors leading to burnout. All of the teachers who were interviewed stated that they are currently experiencing burnout, experienced burnout in the past, or have been exposed to colleagues who are experiencing burnout. Teachers who participated in this study were asked to identify factors that lead to burnout in their work setting. Three common themes emerged between both groups of teachers.

A theme that emerged during data analysis was that of teachers being exposed to insurmountable or unrealistic expectations. Throughout the interviews, teachers discussed being required to teach multiple subjects, oversee a safe learning environment for staff and students, and meet the expectations of administration in order to achieve academic and behavioral progress. These expectations were coupled with a lack of planning time, spending the entire day in the classroom, and handling multiple initiatives set by the organization. This led to teachers having to work additional hours outside of school to meet responsibilities. Teachers in this study stated that they face additional challenges and expectations with limited to no time for planning. The consistent exposure to these expectations resulted in a strain on teachers to meet the requirements of their occupation.

A lack of support from administration and the organization was another theme that emerged from the data analysis. Researchers have found that the type of support that teachers of students with EBD receive has an effect on burnout (Embrich, 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). Teachers in this study defined the lack of support from administration as not providing adequate training, and not providing the emotional

support needed for working with this student population. Teachers stated that administrators did not appear invested in initiatives that were rolled out and did not focus heavily enough on ensuring the well-being of those they led. The consistency with which this theme emerged appears to be an important area of improvement for this organization. The support (or lack of) that is being provided to these teachers appears to be ineffective at reducing the burnout they experience; it may also be contributing to the amount of burnout experienced by other novice and veteran teachers.

Many teachers also mentioned the theme of managing behaviors exhibited by this student population. Researchers have found that the behavior displayed by students with EBD is one of the top identified factors that contribute to burnout (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Cancio & Johnson, 2013). The teachers who were interviewed in this study identified these behaviors as the severity that is displayed by the students and the expectation to maintain safety within the classroom. This included physical and verbal aggression as well as threats to harm others. The consistent exposure to these types of behaviors appeared to increase the amount of burnout experienced by teachers and contributed to the lack of motivation to work with students with EBD.

Impact of burnout. Teachers who experience burnout in the workplace can be impacted in their daily practice and personal well-being. I identified three themes related to the impact of burnout that emerged between both groups of teachers. These were emotional and physical exhaustion, lack of engagement displayed by the teachers, and an overall lack of motivation in a teacher's daily practice.

Two novice and four veteran teachers mentioned that teachers lacking engagement had as an impact on teachers who experience burnout. Teachers mentioned

being unable to balance the responsibilities of their position with their personal lives. This led to working outside of their contracted work hours and not being able to handle the demands placed on them. This type of exhaustion can impact the overall physical health of teachers. Bianchi et al. (2010) found that teachers who experienced burnout experienced symptoms of depression and dissatisfaction within themselves. Several teachers mentioned colleagues who began taking medication to cope with the burnout they were experiencing. It was also mentioned that teachers had little time or energy to maintain positive relationships in their personal lives due to the challenges they were facing at work.

The majority of teachers also mentioned that burnout led to not making efforts to deliver engaging instruction or develop positive relationships with students. Schaufeli and Buunk (2003) found that teachers who experienced burnout could feel a desire to distance themselves from their students. Teachers in the study stated that they had witnessed teachers who were experiencing burnout and did not adhere to classroom management strategies and interventions, did not make attempts to engage with their students or develop stronger relationships, or minimally planned lessons. This lack of engagement can impact a student population that is already exposed to poor relationships and minimal success throughout their educational career (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012). This included teachers not meeting their professional obligations and taking additional time off from work. Roth et al. (2007) found that the impact of burnout that is experienced by teachers leads to an increase in reported teacher absences and poorer performance in daily practice. These findings suggest that increased exposure to burnout (specifically in novice teachers) can result in teachers reaching a point in which they no

longer can be motivated to provide the effort necessary to make an impact on this student population and are at an increased risk for leaving for a different educational setting or leaving the profession.

Measures taken to reduce burnout (teachers). Teachers were asked about specific measures that educators could take to reduce the amount of burnout they experience. In a quantitative study examining teacher's self-awareness of their own burnout experienced and the necessary measures to alleviate this feeling, Pishghadam et al. (2014) found that there was a need in research to understand the perceptions that teachers have related to how to address the burnout they experience in their daily practice. I identified four themes that emerged between both groups.

The majority of teachers identified building relationships with other teachers as a measure teachers can take to reduce burnout. Specifically, support in the area of individualized need for the teacher who is experiencing burnout is one measure. This action was mentioned as a way to seek increased training and support where teachers feel inadequate or in need of additional feedback in order to perform adequately at their position. Increased support and training aimed at the specific needs of teachers may decrease the amount of burnout that is experienced (Billingsley et al., 2006; Lane et al., 2011; Oliver & Reschley, 2010). Novice teachers did state that they often did not know where to go to seek support or feared asking for support from their supervisors.

The idea of establishing relationships with students as a measure to help reduce the amount of burnout experienced was mentioned by a majority of veteran teachers and only two novice teachers. Veteran teachers highlighted the benefit of establishing strong student relationships to help increase the commitment they have towards the students

they serve and reduce the level of behaviors that are demonstrated by the students. This focus on the relationship between teacher and students can improve the working conditions of teachers of students with EBD (Albrecht et al., 2009). Novice teachers in my study stated that they experienced difficulty in establishing relationships with their students and implementing effective classroom management techniques. The organization could focus on providing more strategies and support with which to assist novice teachers in establishing stronger relationships with their students.

Novice teachers also identified a need for finding a strong organizational method that can assist them throughout the year. This idea is not often associated as a way to combat burnout. However, based on findings within this study, novice teachers may experience burnout due to not being able to meet overwhelming expectations within the organization. They stated that they do not possess the experience or skillset to meet all expectations. A clear method of organization could assist them in their ability to meet the demands of their occupation.

Measures taken to reduce burnout (administrators). Teachers who participated in this study were asked to identify measures that administrators could take to reduce the amount of burnout that teachers experienced. The themes that emerged from the data aligned closely to House's (1981) theory of supportive behaviors from supervisors. First, novice teachers stated a need for appraisal support from administrators. Novice teachers sought more training needed to improve their daily practice. Researchers have found the development of self-efficacy to be an effective measure to combat burnout for teachers of students with EBD (Banks & Necco, 1990; Carlson & Thompson, 1995; Weber & Toffler, 1989).

Veteran teachers sought more emotional support from their administrators. This included administrators ensuring the well-being of those they lead and being supportive during times of crisis that might occur when serving this student population. This is similar to House's (1981) findings that emotional support is an important measure that administrators must provide to decrease the amount of burnout teachers experience. This finding is similar to that of Prather-Jones (2011), who stated: "Continued support from both administrators and colleagues was an important factor in [teachers'] decisions to remain at their current position" (p. 1). This idea of providing consistent support and promoting empathy within administrator actions is especially important to veteran teachers within this organization.

Finally, both groups of teachers identified the need for instrumental support. Novice teachers stated a need for instrumental support in the area of additional funding for resources and a collaborative space to share resources with colleagues. Additionally, novice teachers sought to receive additional training on how to implement resources effectively. Access to adequate resources, along with the appropriate training about how to utilize the resources effectively, was essential for teachers of students with EBD (Albrecht et al., 2009). Veteran teachers sought instrumental support in the area of planning time in order to fulfill professional duties that are assigned to them. These types of administrator support call for the use of the Principal Support Survey, based on the framework established by House, which has been found to be a reliable instrument to use with administrators to measure the effectiveness of support provided by administrators (DiPaola, 2012). Based on the findings of this study, I found that the type of support

needed for novice teachers and veteran teachers might vary and administrators should be able to identify the individualized needs of their staff and provide appropriate supports.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The focus of this section is to make recommendations based on the findings of this study. Table 8 links the findings to the recommendations. Each recommendation from Table 8 will be explored further in this section. It is the intent of this section to provide guidance on how the motivation and burnout of novice and veteran teachers can be addressed by the organization in which they work as well as the teachers themselves. Additionally, these recommendations attempt to meet the needs of the teachers. If the needs of teachers are not met, burnout is likely to impact their daily practice. This will ultimately impact the needs of students with EBD, who have proven to be one of the most at-risk student populations in education.

Table 8

Policy/Practice Recommendations

| Findings | Related Recommendations |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Novice and veteran teachers listed intrinsic motivations (personal experiences, skill sets, etc.) as the primary motivating factor to work with students with EBD (Emotional Behavior Disorder). Job security served as only an initial motivating factor for most teachers. | Policy/Practice Recommendation # 1 |
| Novice and veteran teachers listed an overall lack of commitment to their daily practice as a definition for burnout. Several common themes emerged between both groups (unrealistic demands, lack of support, student behaviors). Novice teachers desired more ways to become self-efficient. | Policy/Practice Recommendation #1 |
| Novice and veteran teachers stated seeking support and disconnecting from work as ways for teachers to reduce burnout. There were other unique factors for each group. Novice teachers demonstrated difficulty in putting these strategies into practice. | Policy/Practice Recommendation #2 |
| Novice and veteran teachers produced similar themes for administrative measures to reduce teacher burnout. Novice teachers sought more direct support and resources. Veteran teachers sought more emotional support. | Policy/Practice Recommendation #2 |

Policy/Practice Recommendation # 1: Reduce unique factors that lead to burnout.

All novice and veteran teachers in this study demonstrated a strong understanding of the motivating factors that enabled them to work with this student population. These intrinsic factors continued to be influential in their daily practice and were often mentioned as a driving factor for their continued employment within the organization. However, these factors that lead to burnout might create an environment in which the

intrinsic motivators are not enough to overcome other challenges associated with the job. Some factors were common across both groups that participated in this study; however, there were factors that were unique to each group. Novice teachers sought more direct and ongoing support from their supervisors to develop their self-confidence and self-efficacy. Veteran teachers sought more emotional support from their supervisors.

Herzberg (1959) found that motivating employees occurs when factors leading to burnout are eliminated. The organization would benefit from conducting an analysis of the type of support that is provided to their novice and veteran teachers. This would allow the opportunity to potentially individualize the training and support that is provided to their employees and aimed to reduce the unique factors that lead to burnout. The ability to reduce these factors could lead to less burnout among teachers and increased motivation.

Policy/Practice Recommendation # 2: Provide individualized support to novice and veteran teachers.

Administrators can provide teachers of students with EBD with effective induction and mentoring programs, adequate resources and support and professional development opportunities to help develop a sense of self-efficacy necessary to combat burnout (Cancio et al., 2013; Chang, 2009; Cooley & Youanoff, 1996). It might also prove beneficial for the organization to effectively measure administrator support through a reliable survey instrument. DiPaola (2012) stated that “A primary function of the principal is to support their teachers, both in terms the teaching task and their social and emotional well-being. The [Principal Support Survey] PSS provides a reliable measure for mapping both these essential functions” (p. 123). The PSS could provide reliable data regarding the type of support that a principal is providing and the type of support that

needs to be improved. This also will provide administrators within the organization with the ability to better understand the effectiveness of their support. The ability of principals to better understand the type of support necessary to meet the needs of the teachers they serve is vital to make an impact on the students that are served in this organization.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative study explored 19 teachers' perceptions of factors of motivation and burnout when working with students with EBD. Data collection for this study was conducted through qualitative measures and the use of semi-structured interviews. Ten novice and nine veteran teachers participated in this research.

Implementation of Principal Support Survey

A recommendation for future study in terms of this findings is the use of the PSS in other school contexts has provided administrators with reliable data regarding specific types of support that are provided to teachers. In my research, it appeared that administrator support was not individualized or adequate to support the needs of novice and veteran teachers within the organization. A study on providing adequate feedback of their support could determine ways in which to provide professional development to administrators to improve the type of support that is given to teachers within the organization. The administrators would then have to use the data from the survey in order to change or alter the type of support they provide their teachers.

Analysis of Burnout before and after Professional Development

A recommendation for future study in terms of these findings is a stronger understanding of self-efficacy development has been noted to combat burnout (Pishghadam et al., 2014). The findings from the study conducted suggest that novice

teachers had a strong awareness of the type of factors that contribute to burnout. However, they lacked the self-efficacy to address them. It could prove beneficial to conduct research on the level of burnout that teachers are experiencing before they are provided with professional development related to self-efficacy and the level of burnout they experience after the completion of these trainings. This could assist the organization of this study with developing appropriate trainings aimed specifically at novice teachers.

Analysis of Administrator's Perceived Role Compared to the Teacher's Perception of Administrator's Role within the Organization

The data suggest that teachers within the organization do not feel sufficiently supported from their administrators. This leads to an increased risk of experiencing burnout. This perception was consistent across all participants. It could prove beneficial for research to compare how administrators view their role and the support they provide within the organization and the perceived role of administrators by teachers within this organization. The findings could help provide more training opportunities for administrators to better understand the necessary support needed to meet the needs of teachers.

Summary

In this study, I sought to understand teachers' perceptions of the factors that led to motivation or burnout when working with students with EBD. Similar themes emerged from analyzing the data collected. The most prominent similarities included a perception of unrealistic expectations set by administration, need for increased support, and establishing a routine to disconnect from work effectively. There were differences between novice and veteran teachers in this study. Novice teachers indicated a need to

develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy and felt a need for direct support from their administrators. Veteran teachers sought more emotional support from their administrators. These findings present an opportunity for the organization to explore ways to address these commonalities and differences experienced by novice and veteran teachers of students with EBD.

Appendix A

Application to Conduct Research

Procedures for Conducting Pilot, Research, and Survey Research

A. Procedures for Submitting Research Proposals.

encourages educational research proposals that might provide knowledge or information leading to the improvement of the educational process.

The following procedures are intended to facilitate the most effective use of research activities and ensure respect for persons, justice, and beneficence.

1. All requests to conduct research should be submitted to the Executive Director or to the Associate Director for Programs for which the research is proposed. Researchers should not go to individual schools before submitting a request. This requirement is essential because a centralized administration of research will enable the organization to digest and disseminate information most effectively. The Director will give or deny their permission to proceed with the application process.
2. The Application to Conduct Research and Distribute Surveys must be submitted to the Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance at least one month prior to the time research is expected to begin. Additional copies of the proposal may be requested if instructional staff or affiliated school divisions may be involved. Prior to acceptance, readers may suggest revisions to the proposal.
3. Proposals should include the following:
 - a. Identification of the problem
 - b. Statement of the study's purpose and the hypothesis to be tested.
 - c. Description of related studies
 - d. Description of methods involved.
 - e. Outline of data analysis procedures

In the case of candidates for a Master's or Doctor's degree, proposals must meet their university and department requirements. A copy of the signed approval by the Advisor or committee members must also be included with the request. Many universities require written administrative approval to proceed. If this is the case, the Associate Director will complete a letter of acknowledgment and authorization (or include a statement of condition on an existing university form). Note: This authorization is contingent on obtaining final university approval and receipt of all final documents prior to initiating the study.

B. Procedures for Administering Surveys and Questionnaires and Initiating Research involving staff or classrooms/sites

1. All requests to administer surveys and questionnaires must accompany the research application submitted to Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance.
2. The survey or questionnaire will be reviewed by the Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance and by the Associate Director of the program to which the study/project applies.
3. The individual must not initiate their study until they have received a written notice of approval of the research project from the Associate Director of Programs or their designee.
4. In the case of a denial, the individual may contact the Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance to discuss the factors contributing to the denial and resubmission of the application.

C. Following Submission of the Application Packet

1. Following receipt and review of all documents, the Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance will contact the individual by phone or email to schedule a meeting to discuss any necessary revisions and/or additions.
2. If changes are substantive, the individual may need to obtain additional approval from their faculty advisor or the university's institutional review board.
3. Prior to initiating any research, the individual should verify the following:
 - The Application to Conduct Research and Distribute Surveys has been completed and all signatures obtained and dated.
 - Individual has received a letter of acknowledgement and authorization to conduct the research from the Associate Director of Programs. Note: This authorization is contingent on obtaining approval from the IRB.
 - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval has been obtained and a copy of the signed approval has been provided to [REDACTED] Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance.
 - A copy of the final research proposal and final copy of all research documents and instruments reflecting any revisions have been submitted to the [REDACTED] Coordinator for Professional Development/Quality Assurance.
 - Individual has received notice of final approval/disapproval from Coordinator of Professional Development/Quality Assurance.

[REDACTED]
 Department of Professional Development/Quality Assurance
Application to Conduct Research or Distribute Surveys

Date of application: _____

I. Identifying Information

Name _____
 Work Location _____
 Work Address _____ Telephone _____
 Email _____
 Home Address _____ Telephone _____

II. The Research/Project

A. Title _____

B. Why are you conducting this study?

Graduate Class Requirement _____ Master's Thesis/Paper _____
Dissertation Research/Project _____ Independent Research _____

C. University Affiliation _____
Faculty Advisor _____

D. Has this study been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

Yes, it has been fully reviewed and approved. (Please attach IRB approval notification to this application)

Date of IRB approval _____

No, review is pending. Evidence of IRB review may be submitted at a later date but must be received and a copy provided to [redacted] prior to initiating the study.

Expected date of IRB approval _____

No, this study is exempt from IRB approval. If exempt, please provide the rationale _____

Name and contact information for IRB Chairperson _____

No, this research is not affiliated with a university and is not governed by an IRB.

E. Expected Date of Research/Project Completion _____

III. Participants

A. Population/Level

Elementary Middle Secondary/High Other _____

C. Grade Level(s) _____

D. Subject(s)/Content Area _____

E. Name of School(s) _____

F. Special Characteristics (if any) of Population _____

| <u>Group</u> | <u>Number Needed</u> | <u>Minutes/time required per person to complete task</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|--|
| Students | _____ | _____ |
| Teachers | _____ | _____ |
| Principals | _____ | _____ |
| Parents | _____ | _____ |
| Other | _____ | _____ |

IV. Required Attachments

_____ Concise description of purpose, research design, methods, plan for analyzing data and value to [redacted]/school division.

_____ Copy of cover letter to be sent to participants describing the study, the informed consent (if human subjects involved), and all data collection instruments (surveys, questionnaires, tests) that will be used.

V. Please read each of the following statements and initial to indicate that you have read and agree to abide by each statement.

_____ I understand that acceptance of the request for approval in no way obligates _____ or the school divisions it serves to participate in this research. Further, I understand that approval does not constitute commitment of resources or endorsement of the study findings by _____ or the school divisions.

_____ If approval is granted, I will abide by all the policies and regulations of _____ and participating school divisions and will conduct research within the stipulations accompanying any letter(s) of approval.

_____ I acknowledge that participation in research studies by students, parents, school staff and _____ administration is voluntary. I will preserve the anonymity of all participants in all reporting of this study. **I will not reveal the identity or include identifiable characteristics of schools or the school systems unless authorized by the division's Department of Accountability.**

_____ Upon completion of the research, I will provide _____ with a copy of the results.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Professor or Faculty

Advisor's Signature Date

PLEASE SUBMIT COMPLETED PACKET TO:

_____, Professional Development/Quality Assurance

For Office Use Only

_____ Copy of IRB approval received (if applicable); Date: _____

_____ Copy of final proposal and all research documents/instruments received;

Date: _____

_____ Research approved; study may begin. Individual notified on _____

_____ Research disapproved; study may not begin. Individual notified on _____

Appendix B

Survey Instrumentation

Interview Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Interview Instructions:

The interviewer will ask each question to the interviewee in sequential order. The interviewee will respond to each question that is asked. The interviewee may ask questions to the interviewer in order to clarify the question that has been asked. Any additional questions will be transcribed by the interviewer.

A1. What motivated you to be a teacher of students with emotional behavior disorders?

A2. Can you elaborate on these reasons?

B1. In your own words, how do you define burnout as it pertains to teachers?

B2. What factors lead to experiencing burnout?

C1. How does burnout impact teachers in their daily teaching practice?

C2. How does burnout impact teachers in their personal lives?

D1. What specific measures can be taken by teachers to reduce the amount of burnout that is experienced?

D2. What specific measures can be taken by administrators to reduce the amount of burnout that is experienced by teachers?

Do you have any additional information you would like to add regarding both motivation to teach and burnout from teaching students with emotional behavioral disorders?

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