UNDERSTANDING THE SELF-EFFICACY FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHER RETENTION IN URBAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the self-efficacy factors that promote the retention of teachers and job satisfaction in urban school settings. While much research has been conducted to determine the reasons that urban teachers leave the teaching profession, little is known about the factors that promote the retention of teachers who serve at-risk, urban students. Participants in the qualitative study were elementary, middle, and high school teachers with more than three years of urban experience in a Southern metropolitan district. Through a survey of self-efficacy skills, participants were identified and placed into three groups based on years of service. Triangulation of the data resulted from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and survey data. The findings of the study identified disciplined, composure, relatability, and optimism as the key factors in building teacher self-efficacy. Educational leaders seeking to support urban teachers will provide time for reflection, administrative support, mentoring, and ongoing professional development.
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to the evolution of the public education system and teachers receiving their professional status in the world of careers. Teachers take on so many roles and are not given the recognition for all that they do. I hope that through this small contribution to the educational research sector that the change educators deserve and want to see will happen.
Acknowledgments

First, I say thank you to God for his grace and mercy that allowed me to have the endurance to complete this process. He blessed me to have the mindset and right people in place to encourage and keep me focused.

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- Disciplined
- Relatable
- Optimistic

### Factors that Increase Teachers’ Retention in Urban School Settings

- Supportive School Relationships
- Location
- Personal Life
- Knowledge around Content and Data Analysis

## Summary

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## Introduction

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Introduction and Background

The focus of the K-12 public school system in the United States is to provide a high-quality education to every student. According to the 2004 RAND Corporation report, an adequate supply of effective individuals is needed to serve as teachers (Brewer, Daley, Guarino, Santibanez, 2004). The need for those who are committed and able to teach a diverse student population of learners is vital to the success of a school and making a difference in a student’s life (Adeyeye, Ajagde, Orbar, & Oke, 2016). Yet, teacher turnover persists at a ratio of one in four teachers who are likely to leave the field or leave a present school for another each school year (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). Teachers enter the profession based on vacation time, working conditions, fixed salary, and the intrinsic value of helping students, but those reasons soon diminish when reality sets in (Hughes, 2012). Studies have indicated that teachers are likely to experience more stress than workers in the white-collar professions (Demir, 2018). An educator’s stress includes teacher-student conflict, teacher-family conflict, student discipline problems, insufficient support, lack of promotion, dissatisfied colleagues, and inadequate participation with school decision-making. Despite all these disturbing issues, some teachers choose to remain. Not only have some teachers selected to remain in education, but they also work in challenging urban schools.

A National Center for Education report described the conditions of urban schools the term “abysmal” (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996). Urban high-poverty public schools are
often assumed to have fewer well-qualified teachers and fewer resources available. The students in urban areas experience health risk, difficulties with speaking English, and belong to a racial or ethnic minority. Urban students are more likely to be disadvantaged by having one parent, less educated or unemployed parents, handicapped conditions, learning, emotional, or health disabilities, difficulty speaking English, or homelessness (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996).

**Statement of the Problem**

There is minimal information available regarding the self-efficacy factors associated with teachers who remain in urban school settings more than three years. According to Demirdag, teachers with strong self-efficacy have greater desires for teaching and are more likely to remain in the education program (2015). Yet, little to no research exists that shows tangible examples of teacher’s strong self-efficacy skills in urban schools. The factors that help keep teachers in urban schools need to be identified. To retain and recruit more teachers, it is important to recognize the factors that contribute to strong self-efficacy. Self-efficacy affects people’s behavior, thinking, and motivation. The self-efficacy of a teacher has many benefits in education. Therefore, knowing the factors that promote self-efficacy abilities of teachers is important in retaining teachers in a demanding setting like an urban school.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify the self-efficacy factors that promote the retention of teachers and job satisfaction in an urban school setting. The gap in research exists between knowing the information on why teachers are staying to educate students instead of all the focus on the teachers leaving (Battle & Looney, 2014). It is imperative for policymakers to examine ways to better equip teachers and identify factors to encourage them to remain in the education field. Teacher retention research is incomplete in building information for
understanding teachers who remain in education versus teachers who leave (Battle & Looney, 2014). Hence, research is needed that investigates the self-efficacy of teachers who remain in urban school settings. Schools should be equipped with well-designed recruitment and retention strategies that can assist teachers in achieving educational goals (Brewer, Daley, Guarino, Santibanez, 2004).

**Theoretical Foundation**

Understanding how people are motivated to work in relationship to motivation and behavior characteristics provided the foundation for this study. The concept of job satisfaction was also highly applicable in the study’s foundation. The research of Tolman on behavior (Yancey, 2013), Vroom (Guest, 1965), Atkinson (Seals n.d.), and Eccles on motivation; and (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), and Bandura (1993) on behavior and cognitive psychology framed the study. These theorists provided a link between understanding the factors that can lead to high self-efficacy of teachers who remain in urban schools after three years.

The motivational research of Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles provided elements regarding the study on teacher self-efficacy. Their information detailed the importance of motivation for teachers that remain satisfied and engaged. Job and motivation have a shared effect on one another (Guest, 1965). However, the question that remained was: what is motivating these teachers? If monetary options are limited and the urban school settings are the most difficult, then what stories and data did the teachers in this study share about why they remained in seemingly unbearable situations.

Through the investigations conducted by Tolman, Bandura, Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles, a foundation for this study was formed that can help further the investigation on the self-efficacy of teachers. Listening to the personal stories of teachers in urban school settings to
collect the voice of the urban teacher can provide insights of ways to increase urban teachers’ self-efficacy.

**Research questions**

These research questions were developed based on a review of literature:

1. What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?
2. What factors increase retention of teachers in urban school settings?

Answering these questions can identify the factors associated with the teachers who remain in the educational field at urban schools and have strong self-efficacy beyond three years.

**The Researcher**

Being a teacher and working with other teachers in urban schools promoted an interest of this topic to know key factors associated with teachers who choose to be in urban schools more than three years. Effective teaching requires individuals who are passionate, inspiring, confidence-builders, and innovative. Teaching is a career full of rigorous demands and a salary that does not reflect the workload. Although this may be true, some professionals remain teachers in these dismal conditions. Working as a teacher is a significant task with no monetary or status reward. Surprisingly, several educators continue to be faithful workers in these urban schools by striving to reach the high demands to make the public-school system effective. Those educators should be identified and studied to understand their self-efficacy factors that keep them effective in urban schools. Understanding the factors that are linked to teachers that are staying helps to cultivate educational programs and schools where teachers will want to remain and teach. It is important to realize that instead of focusing on all the reasons teachers are leaving, the attention should be focused on why teachers are continuing in education despite all the poor conditions.
Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout the study in relationship to the key research questions:

- **Self-efficacy:** The concept of self-efficacy was coined by Albert Bandura in 1977 (Elkatmis, 2018). The term is used to help understand a person's knowledge about themselves regarding their competencies and limitations.

- **Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is a perception of contentment individuals experience at work and is associated with higher levels of performance (Dermirdag, 2015).

- **Teacher retention:** Teacher retention is the percentage of teachers that are moving to another campus or school district or who are completely vacating the field (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017).

- **Motivation:** Motivation is the study of action. Motivated people perform work tasks better when ownership is associated with their roles which can also spreads to others working in their group (Fullan, 2011).

- **Urban schools:** Schools referred to as inner city or urban that are greatly affected by economic and social issues creating difficult environments for learning to take place and education be valued. (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996).

Organization of the Study

The qualitative research study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides the basic framework for this study, which includes introduction and background of the study, statement of the problem, theoretical foundation, research questions, information about the researcher, and definition of terms. The second chapter is an overview of the literature important to the development of this study focused on teacher retention based on self-efficacy. The third
chapter is the methodology section. It includes a description of qualitative research, the specific research approach used, a description of the research participants, data collection methods and procedures, the analysis of the data, and a summary of the chapter. The fourth chapter reports the findings from the data collected during the study. The fifth chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the data study, contains the limitations, and the recommendations for future research.

Summary

Educators endure stress that stems from work overloads, high-stakes testing, demanding administrators, disgruntled colleagues, and irate parents (Demir, 2015). Along with all those challenging issues, teachers also chose to serve in urban school settings that are characterized by other problematic issues. Despite those work stressors and urban environments, many teachers experience job gratification and give their absolute best at work. The teachers who remain in the profession are both resilient and persistent and perform under the same challenges and obstacles that drive others to leave (Yost, 2006). Strong self-efficacy and motivation are the words that are directly related to the educators continuing to pursue careers in urban schools. The educational realm needs to know in a concrete matter how those teachers are motivated and develop strong self-efficacy.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature important to the development of this study focused on teacher retention based on self-efficacy. Teacher retention measures and the reasons numerous teachers leave the education field have thoroughly been studied over the years and are detailed in the literature supporting this study. Despite all the attrition that teachers experience, there are several that remain in the field beyond three years. The subjects of this study were teachers that remain in the urban education field. These subjects were studied to enhance understanding of their self-efficacy characteristics. The literature support for this study includes self-efficacy, urban school settings, teacher retention, and job satisfaction. The related theoretical literature included the works of Edward Tolman, Victor Vroom, John Atkinson, Jacquelynne Sue Eccles, and Albert Bandura. Motivation and behavior were analyzed to understanding how people are motivated to work. This study was designed to examine the self-efficacy of teachers that remain in education regardless of all the negatives and understanding their self-efficacy abilities that motivated them to continuing to teach in urban schools beyond three years.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of Tolman, Vroom, Atkinson, Bandura, & Eccles

The research on motivation and behavior that related to understanding how people are motivated to work provided the foundation for this study. Information that promoted deeper knowledge on job satisfaction was highly relevant. The research of Tolman on behavior; Vroom,
Atkinson, and Eccles on motivation, and Bandura on behavior and cognitive psychology comprised the theoretical framework that contributed to understanding the self-efficacy of teacher that remain in urban schools for more than three years. Each of these researchers furthered understanding of the self-efficacy of teachers that remain in urban schools for more than three years.

**Edward C. Tolman (Latent Learning)**

Edward C. Tolman is most noted for cognitive behaviorism, research on cognitive maps, the theory of latent learning, and the concept of intervening variable (Cherry, 2017). His research on latent learning was relevant for this study. Tolman devised a model from doing research with rats that an organism that thinks will adapt as it learns (Crutchfield, Krech, & Tryon, 1960). Tolman worked with three different groups of rats responsible for navigating a maze. The first group of rats received food at the end of the maze every time, the second group never received food at completion of the maze, and the third group received food at the end of the maze after the 10\textsuperscript{th} day. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} group of rats were demonstrated interesting results. On the day following finding food at the end of the maze, their average error rate decreased, and their time completing the maze increased compared to the rats that received food beginning on day one (Jensen, 2006). This research provided the data for Tolman to infer that learning can take place in the absence of any reinforcement. This classic experiment of Tolman developed the theory of latent learning, which suggests that learning occurs without any thing that can strengthen or increase a behavior (Cherry, 2017).

Tolman’s research regarding latent learning supports this study’s attempt to understand why teachers remain in the educational field at urban school settings. Urban schools usually present the greatest challenges for teachers because students in these environments are deemed to
achieve less in school, attain less education, and encounter less success in the labor marker later in life (Burns, Lippman, and McArthur, 1996). Also, the issues of poverty, limited English proficiency, family instability, and poor health are prevalent in urban school settings (Burns, Lippman, and McArthur, 1996). However, despite all these negative factors, teachers remain to educate those urban school students and make the difference. Similar to Tolman’s study with rats in which the rats learned the maze and completed the challenge with no incentives or rewards, teachers in urban schools are working through obstacles to better assist urban students.

**Albert Bandura (Self-Efficacy)**

The research of latent learning and cognitive maps by Edward Tolman prompted the development of self-efficacy by Albert Bandura (Cherry, 2017). Self-efficacy is explained as the beliefs that an individual can or cannot successfully organize and implement a plan of action for achieving a desired outcome in a specific situation (Yancy, 2013). Self-efficacy beliefs influence the way people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. Bandura’s research on self-efficacy beliefs influences four domains: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1993). In the cognitive domain, the individual thoughts are what initially will shape the course of action. Those that possess a high sense of efficacy visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides and supports for performance. This is expressed in the saying “If you can believe it then you can achieve it.” Most human motivation stems from cognitively generating forethoughts. Through forethoughts, people can become motivated about what they can do. Self-efficacy beliefs play a vital part in the self-motivation to goal attainment. Creation of the thought stimulates the motivation to guide the actions needed to fulfill the action. After motivation, comes the affective part of self-efficacy, which is the emotional meditator. The belief of people in their own capabilities determines their stress and motivational levels.
(Bandura 1993). Individuals that believe they can control their stressors do not manifest disturbing thought patterns. However, those that cannot manage threats experience high anxiety arousal and dwell on their coping issues. Lacking self-efficacy causes individuals to magnify the severity of possible threats and worry about situations that rarely happen, which impairs their functioning. When dealing with cognitive, motivational, and affective domains, efficacy was activated by individuals to create their own beneficial environments. In the domain of selection processes efficacy is influenced by an individual’s environment. Thus, personal efficacy shapes the courses of all lives which influences choices of activities and environments. According to Yancey (2013), the self-efficacies of people will govern what they choose to learn, how well they will learn it, and whether they will persist or give it up. Essentially, self-efficacy will affect how people interact with their world. Strong efficacy beliefs lead to more career options considered possible, greater interest in careers, better educational preparation for various occupations, and greater persistence and success in the face of difficult occupational pursuits (Bandura, 1993).

Bandura’s research provided key essentials to this study by revealing how individual’s self-efficacy will powerfully impact how that person approaches a task or goal (Yancey, 2013). The purpose of this study was to better understand teachers in urban schools who remain in those schools for more than three years. The concepts of self-efficacy helped in determining if the teachers with a strong coping self-efficacy were able to persevere more than three years even when faced with the most difficult circumstances found in urban schools because these teachers have learned how to cope with initial failure. Understanding that teacher resiliency and persistence are strongly related to teacher efficacy was essential to this study regarding self-efficacy embedded in Bandura’s work (Yost, 2006). Those with high self-efficacy for an action
believe that they can exert control over their setting (Yost, 2006). Using the works of Bandura helped to understand the characteristics of the teachers with strong self-efficacy. The beliefs of teachers’ self-efficacy to motivate and promote learning in their students and staffs’ collective sense of efficacy allows teachers to accomplish significant academic progress and remain in urban school settings beyond a three-year period. According to Bandura, those that cannot manage threatening and challenging situations create inefficacious thinking that stresses them and impairs their level of functioning. Teachers that can surpass that three-year mark, based on Bandura’s research, cannot demonstrate those types of self-efficacy qualities (1993).

**John Atkinson & Jacquelynne Sue Eccles**

John Atkinson conducted research in motivation with the expectancy-value theory, as did Jacquelynne Sue Eccles, who applied the theory to the field of education (Seals, n.d.). The expectancy value theory offers an important view on achievement motivation (Wigfield, 1994). It helped in better understanding motivation that is associated with cognitive processes and achievement, and the expectancy value theory by John Atkinson described factors that linearly created one’s behavior or motivation (Seals, n.d.). Atkinson’s research supported the belief that behavior was a function that involved motives, chances of success (one’s own belief that they can be successful), and incentive value (one’s pride in accomplishment). Eccles advanced the research by using it to understand early adolescents’ and adolescents’ performance and choice in the mathematics achievement domain (Wigfield, 1994). She discovered that expectations and values are stimulus toward performance, persistence, and task choice (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Expectations for success are defined as one’s belief that he/she will do well on the upcoming tasks either immediately or sometime in the future.
The works of Atkinson and Eccles contributed to this study’s understanding of the motivation of teachers that remain in urban school settings for more than three years. Bandura’s research on motivation is a key component of self-efficacy (1993). The studies of Eccles and Atkinson on the beliefs, values, and goals of an individual helped provide the research about the factors that prompt someone to engage or disengage with different activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The purpose of this study is to scrutinize those self-efficacy abilities of teachers who have not disengaged but continue in the “thankless” profession. The information from Atkinson and Eccles reveals that teachers’ motivation is a major component to teachers who are remaining in the field of education. However, there is a gap to understanding what specific characteristics of self-efficacy are associated with the teachers that remain in urban school settings.

**Victor Vroom**

Vroom created his model of motivation using three key words: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy is setting a high standard and believing that one can achieve the task at hand and with the best results (Clayton, 2013). With expectancy satisfied, instrumentality is determined by whether one believes that if one does what is asked, then the reward will be delivered. Valence stipulates that the reward is worth the effort. The reward element is essential in Vroom’s model and is also related to Tolman’s works with the rats. Vroom’s research essentially describes that understanding the motivation, described by expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, of someone will explain why people decide one career over another, are satisfied with their work or dissatisfied, and why some persons perform effectively on a job while others fail (Guest, 1965).

The motivational research of Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles all suggested the same elements regarding this study on teacher self-efficacy. Their information emphasized the
importance of motivation for teachers who remain satisfied and engaged. Job and motivation have a shared effect on one another (Guest, 1965). However, the source of motivation for these teachers could still be questioned. If monetary options are limited, and the urban school settings are the most difficult, then what stories and information did the teachers in this study share about why they remained in these seemingly unbearable situations.

Based on the theoretical research, teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are highly motivated stay involved with their work, but what are the specific factors in the teachers that are prompting them to remain in education for more than three years. The research of Tolman, Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles served as a foundation to better understand areas necessary for data collection. Listening to the personal stories of teachers in urban school settings helped to create a narrative with which others can empathize, which should eliminate the stigma of teaching being called a thankless profession. The theoretical research enforced that awareness of motivating factors and self-efficacy characteristics of teachers are important concepts of this study.

**Conceptual Framework**

The goal of grades K-12 in the United States public school system is to provide high-quality educational experiences to all students (Daley, Guarino, & Santibanez, 2006). However, that goal is becoming increasingly hard to attain because numerous teachers are leaving the education field. Educators that are committed and willing to teach a diverse student population are crucial to the success of a school and can effect a significant transformation in the lives of all students (Adeyeye, Ajagbe, Ogbar, & Oke, 2016). Research is needed to understand the characteristics of the teachers that remain in urban schools despite the struggles and challenges.
The purpose of this study was to understand why teachers are remaining in these uninspiring environments. Studies have shown that character and disposition were not the major contributing components of teachers fleeing urban schools (Capraro et. al., 2009). Understanding all the realities of teaching in urban school makes the decision to leave easy, but many teachers are enduring these issues, and not because they must stay. The purpose of this study was to better understand the motivation and self-efficacy factors that are associated with the teachers remaining in urban school environments for more than three years. By researching teacher retention in urban schools based on self-efficacy abilities, several word connections occurred. Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, teacher retention, teacher turnover, motivation, and urban schools are the vital vocabulary words required to structure the knowledge for understanding the factors associated with teachers who remain in urban school settings.

**Defining the Key Vocabulary of this Study**

The concept of self-efficacy was first detailed by Albert Bandura in 1977 (Elkatmis, 2018). The word is used is to help understand a person’s knowledge about themselves regarding their competencies and limitations. It is a personal conclusion that an individual is capable of obtaining his/her desired outcome (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017). In the educational world, self-efficacy became known as teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is defined as the ability to get desired results for student engagement and learning for both the motivated and unmotivated student. The teachers’ self-efficacy drastically influences the students’ behavior in class and their academic success (Demirdag, 2015). The stronger the educators’ self-efficacy abilities, the more likely the students will have positive school experiences.

The premise of job satisfaction is also relevant to this study. Job satisfaction is considered as a perception of contentment individuals experience at work and is associated with
higher levels of performance (Demirdag, 2015). Employers’ concentration on job satisfaction is to keep their employees pleased, which increases performance and retention (Maforah, 2015). In the educational sector, job satisfaction stems from working with children, seeing students make growth, working collaboratively with colleagues, and overall school climate (Demirdag, 2015). Job satisfaction also is correlated to self-efficacy. If the individual possesses strong self-efficacy, then there is a direct line to job gratification of employees. When teachers experience job satisfaction, then predicating teacher retention is easy (Perrachnione, Pertersen, & Rosser, 2008). People that are fulfilled with their work environment are least likely to leave their job abruptly.

In the face of a growing school-aged population, schools and districts struggle to maintain standards for effective teaching and to simultaneously recruit new educators along with retaining the effective existing teachers (Daley, Guarino, & Santibanez, 2006). Teachers are the employees that play an extremely important part in schools and the lives of students. Ultimately, employees (teachers) contribute immensely to the performance and accomplishments of an organization (schools) and are the most valuable aspect of that organization (Adeyeye, Ajagbe, Ogbar, & Oke, 2016). Furthermore, taking measures to keep qualified and effective teachers in our schools is a high-priority task. The concepts of teacher retention and teacher turnover are two terms that are closely related to this study. Both teacher retention and teacher turnover are similar but have clearly defined differences.

Teacher retention is explained as the percentage of teachers who are moving to another campus or school district or are completely vacating the field altogether (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017). Retaining teachers is a constant challenge in education. One in four teachers are likely to leave the field or transfer from one school to another (Boe, Cook, &
Policies and/or incentive programs need to be implemented to help with the high demand of replacement teachers, but instead states are reducing public education funding (Daley, Guarino, & Santibanez, 2006). Advocates of public education are needed to supply valid, comprehensive, and up-to-date evidence about the teacher turnover and retention issues to institute changes and new policies and practices (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008).

Motivation is the study of action. According to Vroom, job and motivation have a reciprocal effect on one another (Guest, 1965). Vroom’s research stated that once there is an understanding of the theoretical basis of job motivation relationship, then one can proceed in a systematic manner to explain why people select or evade certain jobs, why they are satisfied or dissatisfied with a job, and why some individuals perform effectively on the job while others fail (Guest, 1965). Motivated people better implement because it develops the ownership within a person that spreads through the group (Fullan, 2011). Motivation is not about rewards and incentives because those only offer temporary drive. Instead of creating a dynamic of extrinsic motivating factors, individuals need to develop an intrinsic motion (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Motivation that offers a lasting and effective feeling comes from the relationship of self-efficacy. If an individual believes that he/she can complete a certain task, then his/her motivation will promote achievement. An individual’s success stems from those beliefs about how well he/she will do on upcoming ventures (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Urban schools are also paramount to this study. Schools referred to as inner city or urban are greatly affected by economic and social issues (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996). Urban schools serve students who are growing up in poverty and are more likely to have health risk that place their well-being in danger. The materials in urban schools for teachers to use consist of outdated textbooks in short supply, outdated computers and other technology, and inadequate or
nonexistent science equipment, materials and labs (Hudley, 2013). At urban schools, there are large enrollments that results in larger class size for teachers (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996). Teachers also have minimal input regarding the curriculum used in their classrooms. All these issues contribute to why urban schools were labeled as unfavorable work environments, and teachers who work in these schools with students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds experience lower job satisfaction.

Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, teacher retention, teacher turnover, motivation, and urban schools are the academic terms that provided the research foundation for this study. Those terms each added a different element needed to understand the gap in the education research for materials on retaining teachers as opposed to why the teachers are leaving. This calls for a change to the direction that public education has moved toward, and efforts should be on support for the teachers.

**Related Studies to Teacher Retention Based on Self-Efficacy**

Teaching in the 21st century is full of challenges for teachers, which has created an all-time high teacher turnover (Boe, Cook, Sunderland, 2008). Within the first five years, 20% - 30% of new teachers vacate the profession (Al-Bataineh & Kaufman, 2011). With so many teachers leaving the field, there is a demand in the United States for qualified educators. Numerous educational studies have been completed to help find answers. Several of those studies focus on educational issues. Teacher retention research may not be considered most compelling research regarding understanding teacher movement (Battle & Looney, 2014). Yet, there is much to be learned from the educational studies in relationship to self-efficacy, job satisfaction, teacher retention, motivation, and urban schools. This study aimed to determine the characteristics and motivations of teachers who remain and begin to help others develop those
abilities. Regardless of all the undesirable issues that surround teaching, there are several teachers that are enduring these conditions and remaining in the field. Bandura asserted that self-efficacy of teachers aided in the decision of those that choose to remain in education (Hughes, 2012). Strong self-efficacy enables an individual to readily select a field of study, feel motivated to achieve, to spend time working on the task, and not to feel frustrated in case of failure (Elkatmis, 2018).

According to Elkatmis (2018), several results were found in connection to the self-efficacy of teachers. First, there was no difference with the self-efficacy of male teachers versus female teachers, but females viewed themselves as more competent to completing their work-related task. Also, it was determined that those who choose to become educators are not entering the profession by chance. There is a strong correlation between the reasons for selecting the profession and self-efficacy beliefs (Elkatmis, 2018). This connection relates to Bandura’s premise that one’ expectations of accomplishing or not accomplishing a certain task is why some are drawn in to teaching. Cayirdag (2017) stipulated that teachers who are expected to cultivate creativity in students should possess a strong sense of personal creative self-efficacy, along with taking personal responsibility to improve their capabilities to foster students’ creativity and teach creativity. This all supports the idea that teachers with self-efficacy are needed in the schools. Dahlkamp, Peterson, & Schumacher (2017) noted how principals’ self-efficacy had no effect on teacher retention and school climate.

Research has supported the belief that self-efficacy is critical for the retention of teachers in the classroom. However, more specific factors contributed to the teachers’ strong self-efficacy that those that who left the profession did not possess. More research is needed to understand why teachers remain in these environments beyond three years. The personal
narratives of teachers needed to be shared so that state and districts can focus on what needs to be done to keep qualified teachers in this field beyond three years. According to Hughes, experienced teachers are better qualified for teaching students (2012).

**Stress and Urban School Teacher Turnover**

Teachers take on so many roles to help in meeting the needs of students, which leads to high levels of stress early in their careers (Demir, 2018). The stress teachers experience is higher than the workers of other white-collar professions. Understanding teachers’ stress is significant for the stability and effectiveness of educational systems across the nation (Brown et al., 2017). The level of stress teachers experience in urban schools is at a higher level compared to rural and private school settings. These high levels of stress create the issue of teacher burnout. High stress and burnout are results of teachers having to handle the misbehavior of students, continuously having to motivate needy students, dealing with an overwhelming workload, feeling a lack of control with the students, curriculum, and other issues that affect them, not being able to relax after work due to the amount of work to complete at home, and the constant pressure of being held accountable for student outcomes (Brown et al., 2017).

When teachers have a deficiency with the social and emotional abilities needed to manage the demands of teaching, their well-being starts to deteriorate and leads to a decline of the classroom climate and teacher stress, triggering a “burnout cascade.” In contrast, teachers with high levels of social and emotional abilities can manage the demands of the classroom, maintain a positive classroom climate, build and maintain supportive relationships with their students, and establish consistent classroom connections that promote student learning.

Salary, disruptive students, administrative support, lack of parental involvement, lack of professional prestige, and lack of collegiality were cited as reasons that people leave the
education field (Hughes, 2012). Additionally, the high stress levels of teachers and the poor working conditions within schools and districts all contribute to the increasing teacher turnover rate. In an urban school setting, the work conditions include teaching students that have been marked less likely to achieve in school and encounter less success in career options later in life (Burns, Lippman, McArthur, 1996). Urban schools that are identified high poverty concentration are the most unfavorable situations for work. When dealing with both urban locations and high poverty, students have an even lower chance of success. Urban schools are viewed as environments that are failing to educate many American students. Both the students and teachers are suffering and creating an educational decline. Teachers reported that coping with strong negative emotions toward teaching is a major stressor in the field of education. Teachers who experience high levels of stress and frustration may convey those undesirable feelings on their students, which creates an uncomfortable dynamic. Nevertheless, several teachers are still deciding to teach at these stressful and unfavorable urban schools.

**Humility and Forgiveness Toward Self-efficacy**

Sezgin & Erdoagn (2018) found that positive and significant relationships among teachers increase self-efficacy, humility, and forgiveness. The results were deliberated in the context of teacher self-efficacy, positive psychological state improvement, and teacher training. Self-efficacy is a positive feature for educational research (Hoy and Tater, 2011). A teachers’ increased belief in his/her innate ability to achieve a goal will increase teachers’ performance and student success (Bandura et, 1996. Caprara et al., 2006: Usher and Pajares, 2006). Humility and forgiveness were also found to positively predict teacher’s self-efficacy. Humility is a value that requires courage, self-esteem, self-respect, and respect. According to Freire (1998), humble people support learning and teaching. Additionally, modest teachers believe that self-effacement
is adopting democracy as opposed to autocracy in a classroom environment. Humble teachers were likely to be more devoted and effortlessly received peer support from their professional and personal development. Furthermore, to increase student participation and success, a democratic classroom environment in which values support a participatory atmosphere should be promoted by teachers. Acceptance of unpretentiousness by teachers and transformation of such value into real behavior develops both teacher-student communication and the quality of learning for a student. Forgiveness was found to be very beneficial for solving interpersonal and intrapersonal problems (Denton and Martin, 1998). Researchers have explained that forgiveness includes a serious and conscious decision-making process for giving up revenge and forgiving mistakes (Elines et al., 2003). According to Peterson (2006), numerous scholars explain forgiveness as giving a second chance to people when they make a mistake and not encouraging grudges.

**Job Satisfaction and Motivation**

Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles used motivation to explain why teachers remain in the education field. Relations with students, students’ success, and performance reward play roles in teacher job satisfaction (Cansoy, Parlar, & Turkoglu, 2017). Teachers need motivation in their work place for job satisfaction. Individual self-efficacy can help improve a teacher’s motivation level. Several studies have cited reasons that teachers are motivated to leave a certain school or abandon the field. However, this study focused on teachers that shared their specific motivators for staying in the education field for more than three years. Vroom and Atkinson both defined motivation as an independent variable, but discovery of teachers’ motivation factors was the primary emphasis of this study (Dikkers, Jansen, Kooij, & Lange, 2007). Instead of focusing on understanding teachers that are leaving education, the lens should focus on those teachers that
are remaining and their motivation and self-efficacy. An increase in job satisfaction produces an enhanced job performance (Maforah, 2015).

**Teacher Retention Through Different Avenues**

Quality teachers are the most important school-related aspect for predicting student achievement (Capraro et al., 2009). However, in recent years, 20% to 30% of teachers are fleeing the profession before becoming the effective teachers needed (Al-Bataineh & Kaufman, 2011). This points to the need to identify the measures that cause teachers to remain in urban schools and to examine the teachers’ motivation factors that led to their positive self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1993), career choice and development are examples of the influence self-efficacy beliefs affect the lives we choose to live. If an individual has strong self-efficacy, his/her ability to remain in difficult or trying occupations increases. This information elucidates the connection between teachers’ self-efficacy and remaining in the difficult urban schools. It does not identify those specific details that indicate why teachers are considered to have strong self-efficacy or how the teachers built or demonstrated those qualities. Identifying those factors will help in the teacher education preparatory programs and mentoring, which should facilitate the retention of quality teachers.

Maforah’s study focused on how Maslow and Alderfer asserted that all employees have needs and that the degree to which those needs are met will determine their level of job satisfaction and motivation on the job (2015). Bandura (1993) emphasized self-efficacy factors and motivation. Self-efficacy determines the goals people set, how much effort they disburse, if individuals will persevere in hard times, and their reaction to failure. Maforah (2015) determined that there is a moderate to high positive correlation to job satisfaction and salary along with fringe benefits. Monetary gains are consistently a top tier desire of teachers, but the
cost to alleviate the attrition associated with teacher salary would be estimated at a 20% increase, which would be too much of a strain on an already limited budget (Hughes, 2012). Teacher retention based on self-efficacy characteristics was the focus in this study and not monetary incentive factors. Job satisfaction can exist without receiving money incentives.

Results also demonstrated a positive relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships. Colleagues that work collaboratively with one another are more likely to experience job satisfaction than those working in isolation. To retain teachers, districts need to minimize teachers’ feeling of isolation (Al-Bataineh & Kaufman, 2011). Teachers that believe they are part of a team or family-like environment are more likely to experience job satisfaction and remain in their role. Individuals want to have genuine interpersonal relationships with all faculty and staff. Maforah (2015) detailed that 70% of the population had interpersonal relationships with their teacher peers versus 58% that stated a dissatisfaction with the interpersonal relationships with the administration of the schools. Strong relationships in the school building help to build a school culture that has a shared vision and mission that creates the idea of collective efficacy (Yost, 2006). Collective efficacy is when all involved have the belief that the team can be successful as an operating whole. If self-efficacy can produce positive student outcomes, then it is also capable of spreading among colleagues. (Demirdag, 2015).

Battle and Looney (2014) centered their research around the psychological theoretical framework toward learning about teacher retention. The work of Eccles on the expectancy theory was present in the Battle and Looney study. Expectancy theory aims focus on success, similar to Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Looney and Battle (2014) considered the teacher’s psychological orientation, not his/her self-efficacy abilities. The emotional viewpoints of teachers were noted, and the correlation between teachers’ knowledge
of development and valuing of teaching was investigated. In the expectancy-value model, ability beliefs are influential to one’s expectancies for success on a specific goal or task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Ultimately, the goal is to better understand the direction to take in the future to better managing teacher retention through analyzing the teachers that remain in education and not focusing on those that abandon the educational fields (Battle & Looney, 2014).

**Self-Efficacy Factors of Teachers in Urban Schools**

Currently, there is significant research available that details reasons that teachers are leaving the profession or are dissatisfied with the profession. There are numerous issues and concerns, yet the difficulties faced by teachers in urban school settings are rarely noted. The research lens needs to move from focusing on those teachers exiting the field and magnify those teachers that are choosing to stay. Battle and Looney (2014) argued the psychological theoretical framework for interpreting teacher retention. Filling this gap in educational research may inform the whole teacher retention challenge through offering information that can build the self-efficacy and motivation in teachers to stay. Teacher efficacy was found to be an important element to teacher retention, both with intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Hughes, 2012). Research needed to be performed on how strong teacher self-efficacy specifically looks so that it can be replicated and instilled in the college teacher preparatory programs and in the school-level teacher mentoring programs. Research detailed that support from peers and administrators, along with guidance and encouragement from administrators, are factors that keep teachers in the educational field (Al-Bataineh & Kaufman, 2011). The question remains of how those teacher retention essentials appear in a tangible way that can be replicated. Maintaining an adequate supply of quality teachers has become a concern across the United States, and something must be
done to help provide the highest standard of education for students (Al-Bataineh & Kaufman, 2011).

**Summary**

Educators endure stress that stems from work overloads, high-stakes testing, demanding administrators, disgruntled colleagues, and irate parents (Demir, 2015). Along with those problems, some teachers serve in urban school settings that produce another list of issues. Despite those work stressors and urban environments, many teachers experience job satisfaction and give their best at schools. The teachers that remain in the profession are both resilient and persistent and perform under the same challenges and obstacles that drive others to leave (Yost, 2006). Strong self-efficacy and motivation are the terms that are directly related to the educators continuing to pursue careers in urban schools. However, given all these points about teacher retention and job satisfaction there is still a gap in the research of identifying the factors associated with the self-efficacy of teachers that remain in urban schools beyond three years. The educational realm needs to better understand how those teachers are motivated and develop strong self-efficacy. According to Cansoy, Parlar, and Turkoglu (2017), self-efficacy correlates positively with teacher job satisfaction, which reveals that when a teacher’s perception of self-efficacy increase, his/her job satisfaction will also increase. When job satisfaction increases, then teacher retention rates will increase. The whole idea of education is preparation of the youth to be productive citizens of society, and if qualified teachers are not in place, then the educational system will continue to dwindle.

For this study, self-efficacy and motivation were defined through using the works of Victor Vroom, Edward Tolman, John Atkinson, Albert Bandura, and Jacquelynne Sue Eccles.
The works of these theorists helped promote understanding of the teachers’ motivation who remain in the educational field.

Vroom, Eccles, and Atkinson focused their research heavily on motivation. Victor Vroom’s expectancy value model asserted that by understanding the theoretical basis of the relationship between job and motivation, then one could understand why people pick or avoid certain jobs, experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a job, or why some succeed or fail on a job (Guest, 1965). Jacquelynne applied Vroom’s expectancy value model in the educational aspect. Her worked explained how expectancies and value are assumed to influence performance, persistence, and task choice. John Atkinson described motivation as the contemporary influence on direction, vigor, and persistence of action (Dikkers, Kooij, & Lange, 2007).

The works of Edward Tolman and Albert Bandura focused on behavior. Tolman argued that an organism’s behavior is guided by its beliefs about the best manner to goal obtainment, even though the organism’s beliefs are influenced by past learning experiences (Yancey, 2013). This information surrounding expectancy offers a cognitive explanation for behavior. Through the concepts of Tolman, Bandura developed the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is what allows an individual to initiate his/her capabilities to achieve a mission (Demirdag, 2015). Self-efficacy affects a person’s behavior, thinking, and motivation. Bandura believed that one’s beliefs in his/her capacity to improve his/her present knowledge and skills to the desired levels is part of self-efficacy (Elkatmis, 2018).

Extensive current research analyzes the reasons that teachers are leaving the profession and experiencing high levels of job dissatisfaction. Therefore, there is a necessity for research that focuses on the reasons that teachers are remaining in the field and choosing to be in urban
schools for more than three years. The educational world needs the documentation of practices to obtaining and retaining qualified teachers. The self-efficacy of a teacher increases his/her performance and increases the success of students (Sezgin & Erdogan, 2018). Thus, research should seek to understand the self-efficacy aspects of teachers that are remaining in these problematic educational situations and the necessity of teacher retention to the building of America’s urban schools.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

Introduction

The third chapter describes the research method used to investigate the retention of teachers in urban schools based on self-efficacy abilities. This section addresses the organization of the study and how the study was developed and conducted. Information on the population and sample, description of instruments, research procedures, time-period related to the study, and data analysis was included.

Research Questions

The current world of educational research has focused an enormous amount of time on teachers who have left the teacher profession or are dissatisfied with their jobs in the educational field. Ironically, there are noteworthy teachers that have decided to remain in the undesirable urban schools. The research of Vroom, Eccles, and Atkinson on motivation showed that theorists recognized that actions and expectations are related to job satisfaction (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Edward Tolman and Albert Bandura focused on the behaviors that drive a person to goal attainment (Yancey, 2013). The theorists presented the notion of self-efficacy for being the behaviors, thinking, and motivation that helped to bring someone to their desired level of performance (Elkatmis, 2018). The concepts created by these theorists led to the development of the following qualitative study questions:

- What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?
- What factors increase retention of teachers in urban school settings?
Research Approach

This study used qualitative research to acquire personal perceptions of the participants to understanding the factors associated with teacher retention in urban schools. The qualitative approach to research is preferred when exploring zones that little is known on a topic (Patton, 2002). Much research has been conducted to determine why teachers are leaving the field of education or are unsatisfied with their careers. However, little is known about why teachers remain in these difficult assignments. Descriptive statistics are part of a qualitative study to describe and summarize observations (Ary, Jacob, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010). This study used observations as one means of collecting data. The descriptive technique to be used depends on the purpose the statistics served, and the scale of measurement used. Numbers were assigned to the category teacher experience (3-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years) for identification purposes.

Qualitative research provides a more descriptive way of interpreting information through surveys, interviews, and observations. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, which allowed for a variety of questions to be asked to the participants. A planned list of questions was designed, but additional questions arose as the interviews progressed. The personal interviews provided insight and in-depth information about the teachers who have remained in urban schools. Surveys were used to identify the teachers who met the criteria that would lead to conducting the personal interviews. The teachers who had taught more than three years and displayed strong self-efficacy based on the responses to the survey comprised the interview participants. Teachers observations were another important component of this qualitative study. The observations allowed for viewing the teachers’ interactions with students, parents, and administrators to determine if their actions were aligned to their responses in the interviews.
Description of the Study Participants and Setting

The population of the study included 150 teachers in three urban schools in a southern district. These teachers were contacted via email and asked to complete a questionnaire that gathered data on demographic characteristics and years of service in the urban district. Through the emailed surveys, the teachers who voluntarily participated answered questions to assist in determining the teacher’s level of self-efficacy. Urban elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools were utilized. Once the questionnaires were returned from the teachers, 20 participants who showed strong self-efficacy were identified for planning interviews and observations. All teachers were in Title I schools, which share certain characteristics that describe urban schools. Participants had taught a minimum of three years.

Teachers who agreed to participate the study were divided into groups based on the number of service years (3-5, 6-10, and 11 or more). The group division provided information about connections related to the teachers’ years of service in an urban setting who remained in the field. All participants had at least three years of service in the urban district and presently teach at an urban school in Tennessee. The 20 survey respondents with scores that demonstrated strong self-efficacy on Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale and Collective Teacher Beliefs questionnaires comprised the participant group. Both questionnaires were developed by Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy at Ohio State University (2001).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

This study is a qualitative study that utilized triangulation to make the research more valid. The study collected data through observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Grounded theory was the qualitative research type because its purpose is to inductively build a concept about a practice or phenomenon using interviews and observations as the primary data collection
tools. Descriptive data played an important role in the study because a significant portion of
information collected was in the form of words through documents, notes, and interviews (Ary
et. al., 2010). The research in this study used data sources to understand what builds self-
efficacy abilities to retain teachers in urban schools for more than three years. The study was
completed in a four-month time period, including data collection.

The 150 participants were emailed a survey in a questionnaire format and given ample
time to respond to the email. The returned questionnaires were placed into groups of those with
strong self-efficacy abilities and those lacking these characteristics. After the groups were
narrowed down to 20 participants (those with top self-efficacy scores), six were chosen to be
interviewed. The six chosen were a convenient sample of the 20 participants with strong self-
efficacy abilities and at least three years’ experience in an urban school. Interviews were
conducted using a prearranged question set, but additional questions were asked that were
relevant based on the participants’ responses. Participants had access to the questions prior to
the scheduled interview and understood that some clarifying questions could be asked during or
after the interview. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for coding.

The coding for this study helped determine the information that was relevant to
answering the research questions. Due to the fact the study was grounded theory, the
components of open coding and axial coding were all essential at different points of the results
(Ary et. al., 2010). The responses to the questions were transcribed and read over multiple times
in search of key categories identification. Open coding is when the development of core
concepts, categories, and properties happen (Ary et. al, 2010). Open coding was used initially in
the study to search for key elements within participants’ responses relating to factors that
pertained to these participants remaining in urban school settings for more than three years. The
open coding process required multiple reads of the interview transcripts to successfully identify the list of the key categories for answering the research questions. Axial coding occurred by analyzing those lists and looking for commonalities between the participants’ responses. Axial coding is used to find patterns and taking the information obtained during open coding to find connections (Ary et al, 2010). Participants interviewed were a convenient sample of six individuals that agreed to be part of the study. They were divided into groups based on the number of service years (3-5, 6-10, and 11-up). The process of axial coding allowed for identifying the themes shared throughout the interview responses, such as: leadership, professional development, colleagues, etc.

Member checks of the transcripts and results from the open and axial coding were used to verify the accuracies in the interpretations of the participants’ responses. In member checks, researchers request feedback from the participants about the study’s discoveries (Ary et al., 2010).

The components identified from the participants during the axial coding were reanalyzed for identifying motivational factors. According to Atkinson’s expectancy value theory, an important view on achievement motivation is offered (Wigfield, 1994). It helped to better understand motivation that is associated with cognitive processes and achievement. An additional analysis was conducted on detecting self-efficacy factors in the participant interviews. These different reads were part of selective coding: when the data collected is analyzed and assimilated with the theoretical framework associated with the study (Ary et al, 2010).

Peer debriefers, or peer reviewers, were used to help identify any bias or misinterpretation in the study (Ary et. al., 2010). Colleagues or peers were given the data collected and the coding interpretations to examine for any misconceptions or bias in the results.
Using several human instruments is better than one to ensure the data is reliable and information is not misconstrued.

Below is the step-by-step procedure used for the study:

1. Prepared all the consent and permission paperwork to begin contact with participants and data collection.

2. Emailed out 150 surveys to teachers in a questionnaire format to identify the teachers in the school with three or more years of experience in an urban school setting and possessing high self-efficacy. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale and Collective Teacher Beliefs questionnaires from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy were used (2001). Only 20 participants of those that responded to the questionnaire were selected. These teachers displayed strong self-efficacy abilities, according to the questionnaire results, taught for more than three years, and are presently teaching.

3. Scheduled six interviews from the 20 participants with strong self-efficacy abilities, participants who had three or more years of service in urban districts, and were still presently teaching based on responses to the questionnaire.

4. The personal interviews were conducted and recorded (audio only). Only six participants of the 20 were selected for the interviews. All interviews were transcribed to easily code and produce results.

5. Observations were conducted for three of the six participants who were interviewed.

6. After the interviews were completed and transcribed, the transcribed interviews were read and analyzed multiple times using opening coding to find all the categories in participants’ responses. Axial coding helped categorize the information and create connections across the different categories of data collected. Member checks were
used to clarify and create accuracy with interpretations of participants’ responses. Peer debriefing helped to check for bias and identify additional patterns or themes not noticed during the data coding. Peer reviews were utilized for preventing any skewed data interpretations during coding and creation of the results for answering the research questions. Coding also focused on assimilating data relative to the theoretical connections of motivation to job satisfaction and self-efficacy factors. Once all data was categorized and organized, results allowed the research questions to be answered.

Limitations

The data collected was limited to teachers teaching within a Tennessee school system in Title 1 schools. This was a limitation because the data is only representative of teachers’ perspectives from Tennessee. Time restrictions prevented all 20 teachers selected from being interviewed or observed. Not including all teachers creates a limitation to the results for the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct research in the school district was granted by the appropriate school board and the principal of the research school. Prior to data collection, Carson-Newman’s Institutional Review Board granted permission for the researcher to conduct the study. Before any interviews or classroom observations were conducted and questionnaires were administered, the participants signed informed consent forms (Appendix A). The forms reminded the participants that they volunteered to participate in the study and could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were also informed that no incentives would be offered for their participation and that interviews would be audio recorded and that transcriptions, field notes, and questionnaire responses would all be safely secured and protected.
The participants were also informed that the name of the school would not be shared, and they would be assigned an alias throughout the study to protect anonymity.

**Summary**

The goal of this study was to understand why teachers decided to remain in the toughest schools and deal with the worst circumstances for a career. The qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study because this topic has not been researched extensively and a more personal narrative can be developed from the information gathered. Descriptive data created the narrative to share the results of this study. Participants in this study completed surveys, interviews, and were observed in their educational settings. The multiple data sources were valuable for developing the results needed to understand the teachers that remain in urban schools for more than three years.
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The theorists Tolman, Bandura, Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles created the foundation for this study on self-efficacy of teachers. The purpose of this qualitative study in the style of grounded theory utilized triangulation to collect data to answer the questions: What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings? What are the factors that increase retention of teachers in urban school settings? Teachers in an urban elementary, middle, and high school were asked to complete a survey to gather data concerning the participants’ self-efficacy skills. The survey was adapted from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale and Collective Teachers Beliefs questionnaires by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy at Ohio State University (2001), which is centered around student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management (Appendix B). Twenty participants with the highest self-efficacy score and years of service in the ranges of 3-5, 6-10, or 11 plus years were used to help in the selection of the six interviews. To provide additional data for triangulation, three of the six teachers were observed in their classrooms. The names of each teacher and their respective schools were removed and replaced with descriptors that are used with consistency throughout the analysis and discussion of the study’s findings.

Description of Participants

The six teachers used in this study were interviewed individually over a three-week period and had a high self-efficacy score as determined by the returned surveys. The highest score on the survey was 108, and all surveyed teachers had an average of 99 with the lowest score
a 92 and the highest score of 108. Four teachers were female, and two were male. Teachers who agreed to participate in the study were divided into Teachers A and B with 3-5 years of service, Teachers C and D with 6-10 years of service, and Teachers E and F with 11 plus years of service. Teachers D, E, and F were used for classroom observations. All teachers were presently working in an urban school. Teachers A, B, and D worked in an urban elementary school, teacher F worked in an urban middle school, and teachers C and E worked in an urban high school setting.

**Research Questions**

The research questions were based on the work from Tolman, Vroom, Bandura, Atkinson, and Eccles that was included in the literature review on self-efficacy. The study focused on using interview questions that would create a personal story from each teacher in the urban school settings that provided their insights on the two foundational questions:

- What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?
- What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings?

The research questions developed from the 15-question interview guide. The questions were used to gain an awareness on the participants behaviors, self-efficacy abilities, and motivation in the educational field. The questions of the interview guide are provided in the appendix (Appendix C).

The participants interview responses, surveys, and observations all helped to identify the factors associated with the teachers who remain in the educational field at urban schools and have strong self-efficacy. Each of the interview questions were labeled using the key words of motivation, self-efficacy, and/or behavior questions. The labels emerged from the research of Vroom, Eccles, and Atkinson’s work on motivation which showed how theorists believed that actions and expectations are related to job satisfaction (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). The self-
efficacy label is based on the work of Edward Tolman and Albert Bandura, which focused on the behaviors that drive a person to goals attainment (Yancey, 2013).

After completing the six interviews using the interview guide questions, the information was transcribed, and each question was read several times to pull the main message chunks. Those main message chunks were then read several times, and the gist was determined. After reading through those determined gist several times then the process was to identify the commonalities and those commonalities are what created the themes for answering the main research questions. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the abbreviated coding process used to get organize the themes that emerged for this study. The observations were conducted to see these teachers and their classroom actions as they are related to the themes. The themes that emerged for factors that build strong self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings were discipline, composure, relatable, and optimistic. The themes that appeared as factors that increase teachers’ retention in urban school settings were relationships, location, personal life, and knowledge around classroom content and data analysis.

- **Figure 4.1 Factors that Build Self-Efficacy in Teachers in Urban School Settings**

<p>| Research Question 1: What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings? |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raw Data | Open Coding | Axial Coding | Selective Coding |
| “I had one student to curse to out and I had to see how I wanted to handle it. Cause I don’t take disrespect lightly coming from my background and from them coming from their background it’s understood that you don’t curse at adults or you don’t curse anybody period.” | <em>Student to curse</em> | Student curing teacher |
| “I don't remember exactly what the child said to me, but it was something like I should smack your Punk ass. I said, ‘go get the principal’ and he ended up being expelled for the rest of the school year.” | <em>Take disrespect lightly</em> | |
| “(Student name removed) apparently had a really bad morning and when the students were coming, he came into my class late and when he came into my class he pushed me from behind and like pushed me over. I was like ‘Whoa wait a minute. Why are you pushing me? You supposed to be going to your seat.’ He proceeded to share some expletives with me like “F” you and “F” all of this and I don’t want to do this. I was like ‘Whoa you need to calm down.’ I was a bit younger and he walked up on me aggressively to push me. That’s when I grabbed him and restrained him and held him down in the class.” | <em>Smack your Punk Ass</em> | |
| | <em>Pushed me</em> | Student curing teacher and using violent behavior |
| | <em>”F” word used</em> | |
| | <em>Walked up aggressively</em> | |
| | <em>Grabbed him and restrained him</em> | |
| | <em>Flip desk</em> | |
| | <em>Start throwing</em> | |
| | <em>Composure</em> | Teachers being put in highly stressful situations (students using expletives and... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics that describe teachers with strong self-efficacy skills.</th>
<th>Twenty-nine different words used only one repeated was determined</th>
<th>Disciplined is that word used to describe someone that could possess all those different characteristics that make up a teacher with strong self-efficacy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Eleven</em></td>
<td><em>Hated school as a kid</em></td>
<td>*Wanted to teach students that were from the same racial background and neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Help those that look like me</em></td>
<td><em>There had to be a better way</em></td>
<td><em>Wanted to give back based on the experience the teacher had as a youth under teachers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lived with a teacher</em></td>
<td><em>Have those that look like me</em></td>
<td><em>Pave the way for the future leaders and make sure well prepared</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>wanted to be in this role</em></td>
<td><em>Teaching students that look like me</em></td>
<td><em>Relatable</em></td>
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<td><em>that look like me</em></td>
<td><em>Future doctors, lawyers, police officers, teachers</em></td>
<td>The teachers with strong self-efficacy all could relate to the teaching profession in some way. The teacher had positive teacher role models, wanted to do something to promote educational growth, and/or just wanted to give back based on their experience or race.</td>
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<td><em>doing these things know what they’re doing</em></td>
<td><em>Bring the best out a foster student that</em></td>
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**“But there would be days where he would flip desks, he would just like stare me down at my face, walk over to my teacher’s desk, and pull out my drawers, just like start throwing them over. He punched himself in the face multiple times trying to give himself a black eye and was going to tell his parents that I gave him the black eye and that he can get the law called on me.”**

“Because I hated going to school when I was a kid. I just everything came backwards for me. I learned to subtract before I learned to add. I learned to divide before I learned to multiply. School was just not my thing. I’m like there’s got to be a better way to do this.”

“As I went through the process of becoming a teacher it became so much more. I wanted to help out those that were- they looked like me that came from the same background I came from and just trying to be a positive role model.”

“I actually lived with a teacher during high school. And it just I don’t know- I’ve always wanted to be in this role and work with children.”

“I enjoy teaching students who look like me. I feel comfortable in that environment and I would like to see them you know succeed.”

“I wanted to help the people that look like me—little black babies.”

“I just kind of look at the fact that the children that we’re teaching now are they’re gonna be our doctors, they are gonna be our lawyers, they’re gonna be you know police officers, they’re gonna be teachers, and I want to be sure that the people that are out here doing these things know what they’re doing. That they’re capable of doing it.”

I’ve seen him evolve into a better student you know a better person. I’ve saw the change in his confidence because when he initially started he was kind of withdrawn. Because he didn’t really know me and so I could tell that there was withdrawn. Because he didn’t really know me and so I could tell that there was the change in his confidence because when he initially started he was kind of
“Luckily, I had a great principal that kind of stood behind me 100% and was kind of the mediator between me and the parent.”

“There's been a few times where you know I've had to go into meetings with parents. I always feel like they're on my side and the kids side … it's always nice to have that extra support there in your corner.”

“They have a major impact on me because they know kind of make sure that I'm doing okay. They inform me about different opportunities that they have in place for teachers, and they also provide me with great feedback. When they come to observe they give me feedback. They will also help to strengthen my instruction and so that helps a lot.”

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### Research Question 2:

**What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th>Open Coding</th>
<th>Axial Coding</th>
<th>Selective Coding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Luckily, I had a great principal that kind of stood behind me 100% and was kind of the mediator between me and the parent.”</td>
<td>*Principal…mediator with teacher and parent</td>
<td>*Meetings with parents … extra support</td>
<td>Teachers relying on school leaders for feedback, support for parent conferences, help with various school clubs and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There's been a few times where you know I've had to go into meetings with parents. I always feel like they're on my side and the kids side … it's always nice to have that extra support there in your corner.”</td>
<td>*Provide great feedback … help strengthen my instruction</td>
<td>*Assistant principal … great support system</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
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<tr>
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<td>*Wanting to make a difference in the lives of students</td>
<td>*Showing students that every action will have a reaction</td>
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**Optimistic**

Teachers with strong self-efficacy shared stories of being positive examples for students and making a difference in their lives in various ways. Teachers have to be able to see the bigger and brighter side of things despite all the negatives and issues that are a part of urban schools.
“My assistant principal does a fantastic job with just being a great support system.”

“Whenever, I go and I need things…Pretty much saying yes to my events or to everything. Just saying the word yes when I need something is supportive.”

“The school administrators and we have you know a principal, assistant principals, we have coaches, and we have facilitators. So, we have quite a few of them and I'm able to go to each one of them for different things now…But most times I would rely on my co-workers, fellow teachers for things but if I have an idea I want to try out or something the principal has been very supportive.”

“I guess like if I wanted to do some type of um event, if I wanted to go for an award, go to you know continue my education, or maybe another position I would go to my principals or assistant principals but not for being an effective teacher in a school.”

“I look to my team members for inspiration. I had one team leader who's excellent at being organized and delivering instruction. I could say that this teacher possesses all of the things that we all aspire to have as a teacher. My colleagues play a significant role in me being an effective teacher.”

“I have great team leaders and team members. They have a lot more experience than I have, and if I need anything they are just full of like resources and I think that's what helps me to be as great as I am as a teacher.”

“You need to have somebody that you can just go and like unload your frustrations on and then also like you need to have a solid team that that help you with like planning. Bouncing ideas off of them especially when you're getting ready for evaluation time, test prep, and talking about the standards.”

“My colleagues that I work with in the sense of family that I have…loyalty that I feel towards my teammates and also to my administration.”

“I had one student to curse me out and I had to see how I wanted to handle it. Cause I don’t take disrespect lightly.”

“I don't remember exactly what the child said to me, but it was something like I should smack your Punk ass. I said, 'go get the principal' and he ended up being expelled for the rest of the school year.”

“I have roots in the neighborhood too. Because my great grandfather owned the land right across the street next to the golf course…Plus, my father and everybody all his brothers and sisters graduated from [another school in the area name removed] right around the corner. He was in the second graduating class over there.”

“I actually grew up in the neighborhood, so I showed up at their doors step one day or one night after school.”

“So, I chose [removed school name] in [removed school location] because I just preferred working there. It was closer to my home and I guess I'm more comfortable with the whole community.”

“I love seeing people that you know from my neighborhood from my area succeed it is wonderful to see.”

“My favorite part of the school is the close proximity to my house. Also, the ability to work with the inner-city youth.”

“Any type of move would be something personal like if I wanted to move, but just as far as moving because of teaching. No.”

* Pretty much saying yes
* Yes, when I need something is supportive
* School administrators: principal, assistant principals, coaches, facilitators
* Each one help with different things
* Wanted to go for an award, continue my education, or another position
* Team member for inspiration
* I have great team leaders and team members
* Unload frustrations, solid team that can help you with planning
* Colleagues that I work with in the sense of family
* Remember I was an educator
* Handle different situations
* I was an educator and had to handle it a little differently from how I would have
* Go get principal

* Grandfather owned the land right across the street
* Father, brothers, and sisters graduated from a school in the neighborhood
* Close up in neighborhood
* Closer to home…more comfortable with the whole community
* Love seeing people from my neighborhood
* Close proximity to my house
* Did make me want to move and teach in a different setting

* Family roots in the neighborhood that created a familiarity

* Family roots in the neighborhood that created a familiarity

Grew up in the neighborhoods that the school is located in.

Teachers with strong self-efficacy expressed the importance of being close to their urban school or at least familiar with the areas. Teachers either grow up in the area or had family roots there.
"I visited [state removed] and they teach their students to be creative and build. …Now that did make me wanna just move and teaching in a different setting."

"I exercise everyday before I come and sometimes twice a day after work and that has really helped me to be able to do what I do every day."

"I do my daily scriptures. I also do the motivational books, and I also listen to different motivational speakers in my spare time."

"I wake up every morning realizing that my job is bigger than myself. So, I come to work knowing that I'm trying to impact somebody life and if I can impact just one life per day I'm doing my job."

"I work out like I have to work out! If I don't work out and family time like going out with my husband...Like I think you have to have outlets and separating work because teaching is one of those crazy jobs that is never-ending."

"I have a council of people that I talk to. I drink, I go out, and I also spend time with my kids that kind of helps refocus me to say okay I can get up and do this again."

"Alcohol helps! Uh luckily my wife teaches as well so she understands I can talk to her about different things."

"Well you have to have a personal life…Do it completely and do the best you can for each student, but you also have to be able to separate that and have a home life. And have family and everything so that you don't get burned out and you're refreshed."

I stopped taking papers home to grade them, so I try to use my time while I'm at school…I used to go into the weekend doing my lesson plan. I don't take my lesson plans home."

"It's hard work but it's rewarding."

"Also, realizing that the work will be here tomorrow. So being able to let go and balance your work and your personal life because you still have to have a personal life."

"Going back to what I said before about having a reflective mindset. Having an open and reflective mindset in teaching. It's a crazy profession where no matter how good you are you can always be better... Well glows are great to hear but then you also have to hear your grows. Like this is something I noticed that could be better in your lesson and you have to take that feedback and change from it and to grow."

"Also, receive advice find somebody in your building that is a level five teacher and that is willing to say hey okay these are the things that I did, some things that you need to know about the culture of the school, or what do you need to be sure you're doing to so be on a trajectory towards a level five teacher."

"mmm… What was my best day? I'm trying to go back through all the years and think of what my best day was like. I really can't remember, but when I found out I had scored 80% of my students passed a state test. Well that let me know my hard work from last year paid off."

"Because I can see it in my students’ grades, I can see it in the way that they critically think, and I can also see it with the data. Like we do a lot of data tracking and I can just see the growth from the beginning of the school year."

| Exercise everyday | Physical Activities
| Daily scriptures | Mental Activities
| Motivational books | Spiritual Activities
| Realizing that my job is bigger than myself |
| Workout | *Family Support System*
| Family Time with husband and friends | *Recreational drinking*
| Council of people | *Maintaining from school related activities on the weekend*
| Time with my kids | *Keeping work and play separate*
| Alcohol and wife that teaches | *Data Tracking*
| Personal life | *Reflecting over feedback from leadership on areas of strength and areas to strengthen*
| Do you job but keep it separate from home life | *Using model teacher as a guide for instructional practice*
| Stopped taking papers home to grade and over weekends | *Knowledge in the areas of Curriculum and Data*
| Being able to let go and balance your work and your personal life | Teachers in the classroom especially in urban schools must be knowledgeable on present curriculum and how to track students data for the benefit of student growth.

Knowledge in the areas of Curriculum and Data

Teachers in the classroom especially in urban schools must be knowledgeable on present curriculum and how to track students data for the benefit of student growth.
“Trying to balance all of that and you're doing it for the first time, so one thing that I did that I would share is like every year I chose one thing that I wanted to strengthen. So, like my first year I remember I was like alright I just need to get classroom management down, and I taught and I did what I was supposed to and I did like pretty well on my [state test name removed] but like classroom management was my thing. Then, the next year I was like alright I need to get better at math, so I became a math fellow. I started doing like all the math PD that I could then when I started feeling confident about that. I became an ELA fellow like doing these extra roles with the district, and I'm like doing extra PD on reading strategies I can implement. How can I be a better reading teacher? What does that look like in literature? One year I focused on literature, the next year I was like alright now let's focus on informational text, and this year I've strictly just done phonics… But don't try to tackle it all at once get through your first year and then just choose one thing to strengthen.”

Factors that Build Self-Efficacy in Teachers in Urban School Settings

Self-efficacy is used to help understand a person’s knowledge about themselves regarding their competencies and limitations (Elkatmis, 2018). Previous studies have found that self-efficacy is critical for the retention of teachers. In this study, factors were identified that describe what a teacher with strong self-efficacy should possess. Using triangulation by survey, interviews of six teachers, and three observations of teachers that have strong self-efficacy the factors of discipline, composure, relatable, and optimistic were identified in these urban school-teachers.

Composure. The factor of composure was shown in each of the teachers by showing the control of their feelings and thoughts in highly stressful situations. These highly stressful situations are a daily dynamic when working in an urban school setting. According to the survey results, teachers had a strong sense of themselves by scoring high on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey. Interviews and observation showed how teachers must be in control of their thoughts and feelings always when working at an urban school. Every teacher interview brought up a situation where he or she had to deal with being directly disrespected or some sort of school violence. Despite having had to deal in those high stress situations the teachers remained in the
field and continued to teach in their urban school setting. The teachers also demonstrated their strong self-efficacy abilities by how they handled the situations.

Teacher C was in a situation where a student decided to curse him out. He talked about how at that moment he knew that he had to think about how he wanted to handle the conflict. “Cause I don’t take disrespect lightly coming from my background and from them coming from their background it’s understood that you don’t curse at adults or you don’t curse anybody period. Unless you know you want to take it to the next level.” As an educator, people are put in situations that test their personal beliefs, but they must act according. Teacher C was clear that he understood he was a role model and had to handle things differently from how he would have in his past. He shared how he walked the student to the office and allowed the administrators to deal with the situation. The teacher had to maintain his composure and show that he had strong self-efficacy and was able to control his actions in the tense situation. Teacher F went through a very similar situation like Teacher C. The situation was where a student used disrespectful words toward her and she had to rely on school leadership for help. Teacher F didn’t remember the exact words of the child, but she was sure that he called her out of her name. During the class observation of Teacher F there was a small quarrel between two students. Teacher F never raised her voice at the students, but she was able to gain their attention and eradicate the situation before it escalated. She even was able to keep the other students in control during the student disagreement. Her calm and easy class demeanor are related to the theme of composure that teachers with strong self-efficacy demonstrate.

Teacher E had an experience where she was disrespected along with the student getting physically violent toward her, but she still managed to maintain her composure. Teacher E shared that the student pushed her several times while he yelled expletives at her. The student
was going to attack her again. She said, “I was a bit younger and he walked up on me aggressively to push me. That’s when I grabbed him and restrained him and held him down in the class.” This is another situation where a teacher had to control his or her thoughts and feelings to maintain a healthy teacher and student relationship despite the student’s actions. Teacher E could have lost control and pushed the student back as a person’s natural reaction but as an educator she had to maintain composure.

Teacher D is an elementary school teacher who had to deal with a student that displayed daily irrational and violent behaviors. She is a self-contained teacher, which means she teaches her students all subjects. Based on the class observation the smallest distraction can throw off an already very tight schedule; however, she had to deal with a student that was able to change the whole dynamic of the classroom. The student would flip desk over, throw things out of the teacher’s desk, and do physical harm to himself in the classroom. She also had to always take daily precautions when it came to the preparation of the student and make sure he stayed safe along with the rest of the class. He wasn’t allowed to use any sharp objects. Teacher D explained that the one challenging student created an entire challenging year for her. With all those things happening in her class daily, Teacher D continued to work in an urban school setting. It is because of her strong self-efficacy displayed through control of her thoughts and actions (composure) that she was able to prevail in this stressful dynamic.

Teacher D used the support of the school counselor to handle the difficult student just like Teachers F and C who also relied on the support of the school leadership. The school leadership element will be discussed later as an important relationship dynamic to increasing teacher retention in urban schools. All teachers in these situations had to demonstrate
composure. Teachers with strong self-efficacy abilities must utilize composure to continue their journey as an urban school teacher.

The information collected from the teacher surveys, interviews, and observations aligned with the concepts of Bandura about how those with strong self-efficacy can exert an energy to control their setting. When these teachers were put in compromising situations they were all able to maintain their composure. According to Bandura, those that cannot manage threatening and challenging situation create ineffectual thinking that stresses them and impairs their level of functioning (1993). Therefore, teachers that have strong self-efficacy show that their composure during highly stressful situations is a much-needed characteristic in the urban school setting.

**Disciplined.** The next theme that emerged from the interviews, surveys, and observations as a factor to describe teachers with strong self-efficacy is discipline. Discipline is about showing a control in your way of working. The teachers all shared information on how they had to be flexible, problem-solvers, multi-taskers, and organized. All those characteristics relate directly to being discipline in handling teaching in a controlled manner. Teachers take on so many roles to help in meeting the needs of students, which leads to high levels of stress early in their careers (Demir, 2018). This stress can be successfully managed by teachers through having a personal life (discussed later in study results) and through teachers being discipline as it comes to their educational career.

Teacher D explained how during her first-year as an urban school teacher she didn’t have any furniture to store classroom materials. She went on to talk about the poor funding creating an issue for urban school settings not having all the things needed such as paper, pencils, and classroom furniture. Teachers must be flexible and problem-solvers when faced with situation like Teacher D. Her experience of not having shelves didn’t deter her from continuing
her job, as she is presently in year 6 as a teacher. Instead, she improvised until she could get shelves later. The class observation showed that she presently has a well-organized classroom with lots of shelves and storage with class supplies. The teachers interviewed each spoke about how resources and funding are issues but that they could find ways around the problem. Being able to move into all these roles show how teachers with strong self-efficacy have survived by being discipline in their practice of education.

Teacher B in the elementary school shared about having to figure out how to do several things with only a little. He went on to share that he was lucky enough to have been in situations where he inherited a retiring teacher’s classroom, and they would leave behind all these resources that he was able to use or share with others (a relationship element that will be discussed later).

Teacher E brought up an interesting point that continued the meaning behind being discipline, “I think a lot of people have ideas in their mind about what they’re walking into. A preconceived notion and they don’t go in and observe to see what it is that they must work with. So, when you have preconceived notions and things go in a different direction then a lot of people aren’t built to deal with it to persevere and say okay how do I regroup and start from this point.” The answer is in those teachers must be disciplined emotionally, physically, and cognitively. Teacher A specified that with her teaching practice she can maintain the discipline needed by keeping a positive attitude, regardless of the things happening around her. Teacher F interview revealed that discipline as a factor of self-efficacy means to be self-motivated and a self-teacher. She referred to it as “figure it out mentality” and not being too rigid allowing yourself to be flexible and having a problem-solving mentality.
In every teacher interviewer the question was asked to share five words to describe themselves as a teacher. Out of the six interviews 29 different words were shared to describe these teachers with strong self-efficacy. The only word that repeated was determined which was used by Teacher C and Teacher E. However, this just goes to further support that teachers with strong self-efficacy must embody so many qualities that the only way to describe it is with discipline.

**Relatable.** When the teachers were asked why they became teachers their answers involved a model example of a previous teacher in their life or some school experience either positive or negative. They all shared this longing for wanting to give back to students what they either had or wanted to have had as an experience. Atkinson and Eccles’s theoretical research revealed that teachers’ motivation is a major component to teachers who are remaining in the field of education more than three years (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). When it comes to the theme relatable there is a direct connection back to the theoretical research surrounding motivation. The work of Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles all suggested the same conclusion regarding how strong self-efficacy is a huge factor in job motivation. Teachers with strong self-efficacy remain in the field because they are satisfied and engaged from being motivated to education from an experience (relatable).

Teacher B had a unique school experience as a youth by he learned things backwards (subtracting before he could add) and he wasn’t fond of school, so he wanted to create a different experience for his students. Teacher B said that he became a teacher for the following reason “School was just not my thing. I’m like there’s got be a better way to do this.” Although the teacher was not motivated from a positive experience, he was still motivated to the career because of a relatable moment.
Teacher C grow up in an urban environment and attended urban schools. When he went to college, he decided that teaching was an easy route to becoming a coach. He was motivated to be a coach, but when he started the program his motivation shifted. He stated, “As I went through the process of becoming a teacher it became so much more.” Teacher C started to have relatable moments to the students and modified his goal of just aiming to be a coach but to being a positive teacher role model as well. He wanted to create an environment for students where they had someone that they could relate to from having similar growing up experiences.

Sometimes the motivation for being a teacher starts at a young age like with Teacher D. She was sure from age 6 that she wanted to be a teacher. She came from a difficult childhood and she shared how teachers were always her light and an example of what good parents were like. Teacher D lived with a teacher during her high school journey. It was through these experiences that she motivated to work in the role of being with children. This motivation was also demonstrated in her observation through the high energy instruction style she used and meticulous organization displayed in her classroom.

Teacher A wanted to be a teacher because when she was growing up she had lots of great teachers that were her positive role models. Based on these experiences she was motivated to becoming a classroom teacher and producing those type of experiences for future generations.

All the teachers interviewed attended public schools and knew that in the urban schools is where the most change can be influenced. Teacher F came from a family and neighborhood that was full of teachers and principals and when it came to a career change, she selected the field of education. When Teacher F was asked about why she continued in the urban school setting, she based the decision on being able to relate to the community and teaching students
that she described by “look like me.” Teacher E, a high school teacher, shared the same sentiments of Teacher F by wanting to teach students that shared the same ethnicity.

These teachers were all motivated by the element of being able to relate to the thoughts and feelings of students that are in urban school settings. Motivation at a job is important for keeping teachers in the classrooms past three years.

Teacher F not only was motivated by having the same ethnicity as the students, but she also shared that she knew that she had an obligation to making sure that these students are prepared to be the leaders of our world. She explained, “I just kind of look at the fact that the children that we're teaching now are they're gonna be our doctors, they are gonna be our lawyers, they're gonna be you know police officers, they're gonna be teachers, and I want to be sure that the people that are out here doing these things know what they're doing. That they're capable of doing it.”

These connections that each had to the education profession is an important element for relatable being a factor associated with self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings. Their motivation for getting in the field affects their self-belief that they will be able to conquer the task desired of them as an educator.

**Optimistic.** This theme can be linked to the motivational theoretical work of Vroom, Atkinson, and Eccles. Being optimistic is about allowing the positive to dominate over the negative. Teachers with strong self-efficacy show the characteristics of being optimistic.

One of the questions on the interview guide asked if teachers were being motivated to teach in urban school settings was because they believed they could make a difference. All the teachers interviewed in this study answered with yes and shared an experience where they directly were able to make a difference with a student. This was also observed watching the
teachers at work with the students during the three observations. The teachers, during their interviews, discussed some of their issues they face teaching at an urban school, yet they can continue their work and be positive on getting the job done. Teachers with strong self-efficacy are highly motivated to stay involved in their work.

Teacher A shared about how important it is to keep a positive mindset as a teacher and how she made a difference with a foster child in her classroom. She communicated the difficulties the child showed at the beginning of the year to where the student is now: “I've seen him evolve into a better student you know a better person. I've saw the change in his confidence because when he initially started he was kind of withdrawn. Because he didn't really know me and so I could tell that there was a wall kind of built. But now you know he is more affectionate with me you know. He comes in the morning gives me a hug. And if I'm teaching and he's really engaged like he'll just come up and hug me like after the lesson. And just being able to actually see him you know from where he started to where he is now like it's been really really good for me.” Teacher A would not have been able to reach that student if she displayed a negative demeanor in her classroom, but because of her optimistic attitude she was able to make a positive influence on her student.

Teacher B and F both believed that all teachers regardless of the school being urban or not should teach because they believe that can make a difference. The motivation to be a teacher that makes a difference with students should not be just for students at an urban school but for all students. Teacher B explained, “Every school needs teachers that make a difference, so it I don't know if it necessarily means urban or elsewhere.” Teacher D had the same sentiments: “I would hope that any teacher that decided to teach was teaching because they could make a difference.
So, I think just like any urban school non-urban school I believe that some teachers probably a large majority of teachers believe they can make a difference.”

Teacher B then went on to discuss when he made a difference in the lives of students by showing them that misbehavior comes with consequences. He had three students that had gone to the restroom and were purposely urinating on the restroom floor. The students were assigned in-school suspension, and Teacher B made 550 pages of work that they needed to complete over the next three days in ISS. This situation is an example of a teacher being motivated to show the students that all actions are attached to a consequence. Whether that consequence is positive or negative depends on the choices that are made.

Teacher C is a high school coach, and when it came to him making a difference with a student it didn’t happen on the court or classroom. Teacher C was able to connect emotionally with a student by feeding the student when she was hungry. Through that small deed the life of a student was changed to create a life-long bond of a teacher and a student.

Teacher D had a situation where she dealt with a student who was new to the school and earning poor conduct marks. The parents of the student demanded a conference with the principal and teacher present on how they had made the wrong decision and wanted their child transferred to another class. Teacher D and the principal assured the parent that the student just needed more time to get accustomed to the new school and class. Near the close of the school year Teacher D received an email from the student’s mother, which detailed how she was happy with how her child’s school year had played out. If Teacher D hadn’t been able to communicate a positive way of thinking to the parent when she showed concern, then the student wouldn’t have been able to excel.
Teacher E had an impact on a student that had poor classroom behavior. She was working in a classroom that was using the process of inclusion. Her old student, who was a part of the inclusion classroom, found her on Facebook and explained the positive influence she had over his life: “I was used to throwing a fit in class and the teacher just like pushed me to the side. He said you just would not let me throw a fit and you made me like I had to do my work.”

Every one of these teachers with strong self-efficacy discussed how they had to be hopeful and confident when it came to the future and making a difference as an educator. These teachers were motivated by other teachers or teaching experiences and in return wanted to extend their positive interactions on to the future generations. Expectations for success are defined as one’s beliefs that he/she will do well on the upcoming tasks either immediately or sometime in the future (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Therefore, optimism was certainly a strong theme in the factors that build self-efficacy in teachers in urban schools.

Factors that Increase Teachers’ Retention in Urban School Settings

Teachers play an extremely important part in schools and the lives of students. Those who remain in these urban school settings need to demonstrate specific characteristics to perform under the challenges and obstacles that drive others to leave the field of education (Yost, 2006). The second research question was to find factors that increase teachers’ retention in urban school settings. Based on the six interviews, surveys, and the three observations the themes that emerged about teacher retention in urban schools was the importance of supportive school relationships, location, maintaining a personal life, and knowledge around content and data analysis.

Supportive School Relationships. Sezgin & Erdoagn (2018) found that positive and significant relationships among teachers increase self-efficacy, humility, and forgiveness. The
present of relationships at work was a huge theme that showed up in several of the answers from
the teachers. The dynamic of supportive relationships was also present during the classroom
observations. The relationships were among the students, other fellow teachers, parents, and
school administrators. The connections that were formed while at work created an essential
element of support. That support is what aided the teachers interviewed to continue teaching in
an urban school setting. People want to feel connected and supported in the field of education.
It was that same relationships aspect that motivated them to become an educator and those same
relationships are needed for them to continue the work past three years.

Earlier in the data analysis, relationships came up when the discussion was on how
school leaders were vital to some of the situation when the teachers had to maintain their
composure. Teachers C and F relied on the school principals to help when the students decided
to use foul language to disrespect teachers. Also, teacher D stated earlier how she depended on
the school counselor to help when dealing with her unruly and violent student. Every teacher
made mention of how the development of a relationship with another teacher or school
administrator was helpful.

Teacher A had to deal with a dissatisfied parent and having the support from the principal
was extremely important: “Luckily, I had a great principal that kind of stood behind me 100%
and was kind of the mediator between me and the parent.” Teacher B had experiences where he
had an encounter with parents and experienced the same leadership support as Teacher A. He
explained the leadership support by saying how nice it was to have that extra backing when
parents overstep trying to get too much for their kid.

Teacher A also mentioned how the principals help to keep her informed and educated on
certain aspects of the teacher field: “They have a major impact on me because they you know
kind of make sure that I'm doing okay. They inform me about different opportunities that they have in place for teachers, and they also provide me with great feedback. When they come to observe they give me feedback. They will also help to strengthen my instruction and so that helps a lot.”

Teacher B explained that the school leadership is always open and available if you need anything. The same supportive relationship was discussed with Teacher C, D, E, and F. Teacher D spoke about the large number of teachers she has encountered who have left a school in the middle of the year because of the lack of support from their administration. Teacher D discussed how teaching is a hard job and having the support of your administration by hearing positive comments sometimes is the fuel to keep you going. Teacher F revealed how her leadership is always open to answering her questions. Without a relationship, element teachers wouldn’t feel comfortable in seeking the guidance and advice offered from school administrators or other school leaders in certain situations.

Teacher F shared the same opinions as Teacher E when it came to the school leadership. The relationship is present where she felt comfortable to ask for help on certain things but showed a priority of relying on the relationship among fellow teachers. Teacher E said, “I guess like if I wanted to do some type of um event, if I wanted to go for an award, go to you know continue my education, or maybe another position I would go to my principals or assistant principals but not for being an effective teacher in a school.” Teacher F went on to speak very highly of her relationships among other teachers. She talked about how her colleagues are an inspiration on her as an effective teacher. During the class observation, another teacher stopped by Teacher F’s classroom to ask a quick question.
Teachers A and C spoke about the more experienced teachers being a vital contributor to their success in the educational setting. Teacher A explained her relationship with the other teachers as being a resource for anything she may need.

Teacher C also explained the relationship with other teachers as her family and a huge factor in why she hasn’t elected to go to move to another school. She spoke about how much she loved working with her colleagues: “You need to have somebody that you can just go and like unload your frustrations on and then also like you need to have a solid team that help you with like planning. Bouncing ideas off of them especially when you're getting ready for evaluation time, test prep, and talking about the standards. Like collaboration is huge and I think that when you have a good team it just makes your job easier and more enjoyable.”

Supportive school relationships were a theme that appeared in several of the responses from the teachers interviewed. It was even evident during the observation that supportive relationships are a driving factor for teacher retention. The teachers support from their colleagues and school leadership created a school culture that helped to make their job more bearable for them to remain in these urban school settings.

**Location.** School location was another key theme that teachers shared in their interview responses. Being familiar with the area where the school was located, the school being close to where the teacher lived, or the teacher having made an impact on them continuing in their urban school environment.

Teacher B shared a strong connection with the neighborhood in which he presently teaches from his family roots: “I have roots in the neighborhood too. Because my great grandfather owned the land right across the street next to the golf course. Well northwest corner of [street name removed] and [street name removed] and he farmed that, and my grandfather
grew up there. Then my parents, some of his brothers, and sisters tell me stories about when they grew up over there and went to visited over there too. So, it's just kind of crazy. Plus, my father and everybody all his brothers and sisters graduated from [another school in the area name removed] right around the corner. He was in the second graduating class over there.”

Teacher B shared another story about how he worked at another urban school and had grown up in the neighborhood and felt comfortable enough with the environment to do a home visit. He couldn’t reach the parent by phone and because of him being comfortable with the community he worked in he was able to go to the home to connect with the parent. This is the type of self-efficacy that should be in all teachers to get the best results achieved by students.

Teacher F had a choice between working at a school in the suburbs or teaching in the urban school located near her neighborhood. She picked the school near her neighborhood because she felt comfortable. Teacher F was familiar with the surroundings, had relationships with some of the people in the area, and she felt proud to be a teacher in an area she had grown up in.

One of the questions from the interview was for the teacher to share why a school was their favorite. Teacher C stated, “My favorite part of the school is the close proximity to my house. Also, the ability to work with the inner-city youth.” Teacher E would only think about moving schools if she was moving to another state or relocating herself. She wouldn’t move but then remembered an experience she had in another state which could have persuaded her to change schools.

Location played a role in the teachers’ decisions to be at certain schools. The location of a school being close to the teacher’s home, a neighborhood the teacher grew up in, or felt comfortable because of family history all dictated whether the teacher remained in that urban
school. The comfortable factor and familiarity factor both feed to a teacher self-efficacy of being satisfied with their job.

**Personal Life.** All the teachers came to a consensus that education is a grueling career that requires one to play several roles. Research from the theoretical framework revealed that stress teachers experience is higher than workers of white-collar professions (Demir, 2018). The level of stress greatly increases at urban schools compares to rural and private. Therefore, it is a career that teachers said requires an individual to have a personal life or outlet to relieve stress.

Teacher A and D both rely on exercise to relieve stress and find the energy to continue their work. Teacher A shared that she exercises every day and sometimes twice a day before and after work. She also kept a positive mindset at work by reading and listening to inspirational material. These small daily habits allow her to regulate her stress level that could lead to teacher burnout. The high stress involved with working at an urban school and the poor conditions can very easily lead to teachers leaving but teachers with strong self-efficacy make time for a personal life.

Teacher C shared a similar mindset as Teacher A about keeping yourself positive. Teacher C discussed “I wake up every morning realizing that my job is bigger than myself. So, I come to work knowing that I'm trying to impact somebody life and if I can impact just one life per day I'm doing my job.” Teacher D personal time consist of working out and relationships with her family. She stressed the importance of outlets outside of her work environment. Teacher D used the words outlets, but Teacher E refers to it as her council of people. No matter how they describe it they both urge the importance of having people to lean on for support. Teacher E said, “I have a council of people that I talk to. I drink, I go out, and I also spend time with my kids that kind of helps refocus me to say okay I can get up and do this again.”
Teacher B handled his stress as a social drinker and relies on his wife, also a teacher. He is able to talk with her about his day and she can relate because she works in a similar structured environment.

Teacher F has taught for 23 years and she has incorporated several things to maintain her momentum to continue working in an urban school: “Well you have to have a personal life. Also, you must be able to do your job. Do it completely and do the best you can for each student, but you also must be able to separate that and have a home life. And have family and everything so that you don't get burned out and you're refreshed.” Then, Teacher F went on to tell the specific things she has done over the years. She stopped taking papers home to grade and doing lesson plans over the weekend. Teacher F spends as much of her time at school as possible to get different task related to teaching done. During the class observation, she also utilized a computer program to help with the grading of student assignments. Doing these small habits have allowed for her to remain in the urban education field beyond 20 years.

All those interviewed made it clear that teaching is a demanding field that will require a lot of your time and energy. Research also supports that education is a stressful job with minimal benefits. However, if educators make space for personal time outside of the school environment then teacher will not suffer from burnout which can lead to them leaving the profession. Teachers must understand that when working in education a balance must exist between the job and personal time. The educational profession can consume all a persons’ time if they do not create a healthy balance as proved through the data from the teacher observations and interviews.
Knowledge around Content and Data Analysis

Being knowledgeable is a critical component to the success of a teacher with strong self-efficacy skills. In the six teacher interviews, knowledge on how to deliver instruction and data analysis always came up. Teachers have multiple roles that they must play, and the most critical key is the delivery of instruction because that is the main reason that students attend school. Public education is intended to provide a high-quality education to every student. Therefore, teachers must have the knowledge of curriculum and be able to read student data to provide the instruction needed for them to succeed.

Teacher D talked about the importance of gaining knowledge through having a reflective mindset. Teaching is a field that will require a teacher to always seek the latest and most helpful new strategies and techniques. Teacher B states that “you can’t expect for the kids to be the same way every year, every year there something’s different or something won’t work like it did the year before, so you gotta just keep plugging away at it and be persistent.”

Teaching is an ever-changing profession that requires continuous adapting and moving forward to the next greatest or latest educational practices. Teacher E suggested that when educators are striving to be the best then they must surround themselves with others that can put them on a trajectory of excellence. Teaming with those educators that are strong with academics and data-driven instruction will also create a relationship that aids in teachers that have strong self-efficacy. Teacher E explained, “Don't take it personal! Don't take the actions of students and the actions of adults, don't take it personally. Take it as okay what can I learn from this? What's the next thing that I need to do to move forward. Also, receive advice find somebody in your building that is a level five teacher and that is willing to say hey okay these are the things
that I did, some things that you need to know about the culture of the school, or what do you need to be sure you're doing to so be on a trajectory towards a level five teacher.”

The importance of data analysis was another area that the teachers brought up as an area that was critical to knowing if they were effective. Teachers A-F all referred to using data as a measure of effectiveness for being at an urban school. Teacher that were part of the observations all had some sort of data tracking posted in their classroom.

Teacher F mentioned she knew she was effective because “Well my scores, I base it off that” along with the fact that 80% of her students scored passing on a state test. Teacher E mentioned her results on that state test as a measure of her effectiveness: “I know from the results of my students you know from when they take the [state test name removed]. The data that I get back and also, I know how my students changed through the course of the year. How they come to me versus how they leave I can see the difference in their growth.” Teacher F shared a similar outlook as Teacher E notices the growth in her students from the beginning of the school year to the end.

Teacher D made several excellent points about gaining knowledge around curriculum delivery. She talked about managing the work load of learning all the aspects of teaching along with her data. Teacher D explained that for her not to feel overloaded she uses each year to focus on a different element of the classroom. She focused one year on classroom management, then moved to math instruction, then the components of English Language Arts. If an educator tries to tackle all the constant pressures of education daily, it makes the workload impossible. However, through finding focal points it allows the teacher to strengthen their craft. Teacher D gave useful advice on the process to gaining knowledge and at the same time being able to maintain her quality scores. She talked about how the era we live in is all about technology and
data driven. She relies on the feedback from her performance evaluation and student perception surveys to keep her moving in the right direction.

Gaining knowledge in curriculum and data analysis were two avenues that the teachers indicated makes them effective. Being effective at what you are doing based on numbers and having the expertise was a noted theme around teacher retention in urban schools.

Summary

This qualitative study concerning understanding the self-efficacy factors associated with teachers who remain in urban school settings more than three years focused on answering two research questions.

• What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?

• What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings?

The participants were all urban school teachers that had taught past three years. The six teachers used in this study were interviewed individually and had earned a high self-efficacy score as determined by the returned surveys. The six teachers were identified in the study as Teachers A and B with 3-5 years of service, Teachers C and D with 6-10 years of service, and Teachers E and F with 11 plus years of service. Teachers D, E, and F were used for the classroom observations. Teachers A, B, and D worked in an urban elementary school, teacher F worked in an urban middle school, and teachers C and E worked in an urban high school setting.

The Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey, six interviews, and observations all produced valuable evidence for themes of discipline, composure, relatable, optimistic, supportive school relationships, location, personal life, and gaining knowledge in the areas of curriculum and data analysis. When it came to the research question: What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings? The related themes were discipline, composure, relatable, and optimistic.
The research question: What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings? The themes that were revealed that increase teachers’ retention in urban school settings were relationships, location, personal life, and knowledge around classroom content and data analysis.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Minimal material is available regarding self-efficacy factors associated with teachers who remain in urban school settings more than three years. Self-efficacy affects people’s behavior, thinking, and motivation. According to Demirdag, teachers with strong self-efficacy have a greater desire to teach and are more likely to remain in the education sector (2015). Therefore, knowing the factors that promote self-efficacy abilities of teachers is important in retaining teachers in a demanding setting like an urban school.

The purpose of this study was to identity the self-efficacy factors that promote the retention of teachers and job satisfaction in an urban school setting. Through the process of surveys, interviews, and observation those factors were identified to answer the research questions of this study.

- What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?
- What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings?

The survey was adapted from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale and Collective Teachers Beliefs questionnaires by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy at Ohio State University (2001) and centers around three main areas: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The interview guide included 15 questions to determine the characteristics associated with self-efficacy and job satisfaction of teachers in urban schools. The observations took approximately 30 minutes and were scheduled after the teachers’ face-to-face semi-structures interviews.
This chapter contains a summary of the major findings and implications from this study as well as recommendations for the future areas of study. This study provided information to fill the existing gap in the research, knowing why urban teachers persist. The majority of previous research focused on the reasons urban teachers leave urban schools or the profession. This study aimed to investigate the self-efficacy of teachers and identify the factors that motivate them along with the factors that keep them in the urban school settings. In this study, the factors that emerged through the data collection will be discussed as it related to the factors that build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings and the factors that increase teacher retention in urban school settings.

**Findings**

The questions that guided this qualitative study were

- What factors build self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings?
- What factors increase teacher retention in urban school settings?

Through the process of triangulation using a survey, interviews, and observations several commonalties were identified among the data. The findings were either related to the factors that build a teacher’s self-efficacy or a factor that promotes retention of teachers in an urban school. In the next section, the eight themes will briefly be discussed as to how they relate to the research questions that guided this study.

The factors that build self-efficacy in urban school settings were disciplined, composure, relatable, and optimistic which were evident in the teachers’ responses. The factors that increased teacher retention in urban school settings were supportive school relationships, location, maintaining a personal life, and gaining knowledge in the areas of content and data.
Those themes emerged from the coding of the interviews transcripts, survey results, and observations.

**Factors that Build Self-Efficacy and Promote Retention in Urban Schools**

The theme disciplined developed from the fact that all the teachers discussed the many factors that omit harsh treatment but in the mindset of being in control of knowing all the characteristics a teacher must take on to be successful. Teacher F and D explained that a teacher needed to be flexible and able to roll with the daily changes and let go of things to move to something else. Teacher E shared that there had to be a will in the teacher to push the envelope and being able to take chances that could lead to beneficial results. Teacher A referred to this pushing of the envelope as her being a rebel. She said, “I like to push boundaries because with our curriculum. I feel like I’m kind of stifled as a teacher, and I can’t really you know do or be as successful as I possibly can.” Therefore, she pushes the envelope or rebels to get the control and results she aims for with her students.

**Composure** is the theme that refers to teachers maintaining their thoughts and feeling in these highly stressful and difficult situations. All six teachers had to deal with a situation where a student or parents was highly aggressive in their classroom, yet the teachers keep their composure. They also had to be in situations where they do not always get the things needed to be successful at their work, but they adjusted and moved forward. Teacher D shared that Working in an urban setting specifically like not having the things you need to teach. Like the basic things you need like you’re not given pencils you’re not given paper and it just seems absurd to me that in this profession, we work in like you don’t have those things. Yet, teacher D has worked in an urban school beyond five-years and has strong self-efficacy. Teacher E has worked 16 years and suffered a physical attack from a student, but she continues to make great
strides as an educator. She earned a national award based off her school data and she allow the physical attack that happened early in her career to move her to another field. Composure was a theme that came up when Teacher C and F both were able to maintain their cool when students used expletives toward them. They relied on their administration to help them in those stressful situations instead of losing their cool. This reliance on the administration also was a part of the supportive relationships theme that appears later with the factors that increase teacher retention.

The next theme that developed from the teacher interviews was relatable. All the teachers had some sort of relationship that developed from strong previous teachers or wanting to create a better experience from what they had. Teacher B said, “School was just not my thing, and I’m like there’s got to be a better way to do this.” Teacher A stated that when she was coming up she always had great teachers and they were great role models. Teachers were a great parental example and provided a home for Teacher D which ultimately led her to becoming a teacher. Teacher E and F have family members that inspired them to be teachers along with them both wanting to do something to make a difference in the world. The theme of relatable was a vital factor of the teachers with strong-efficacy skills that lead them to being in urban schools.

Optimistic is an important theme that came from the responses of the teachers with strong-self efficacy. Optimistic refers to the hopeful and positive attitudes that the teachers must maintain in their field. Teacher A said that “You just have to be able to overcome obstacles that you really aren’t prepared for,” and “I just have to stay positive.” Being open-minded and dedicated was how Teacher C described the characteristics of teachers that aim to be successful in an urban environment. He said, “Open-mindedness, again they have to be dedicated to it
passionate, and they must understand that their job and their role in these kids’ lives. It's bigger than even themselves.”

The next important themes were supportive school relationships, location, personal life, and knowledge in the areas of curriculum and data. Those were the themes that developed as the factors linked to increase retention of teachers in urban school settings.

Supportive school relationships were important to several of the teachers. Whether the relationships were between the school leadership or with other fellow teachers. Teacher F had such poor relationships with teachers at one of her urban school environments that he forced her to leave. She explained that she left because she did not get the support needed. She said she was used to, “We worked as a team of teachers…so we all worked together as teachers to get stuff done.” Teacher E spoke very high of her colleagues and how they all inspire her as a teacher.

Location was a theme because the interviewed teachers mentioned living close to work, familiar with the neighborhood, or had some type of family roots in the area. Teacher C said that his school was close to his home. Teacher B had family that was from the area where his school is located, and his family even went to another school that was very near. Teacher F missed out on becoming a science lab teacher to take a job that was close to where she lived, and, in the neighborhood, he loved. Therefore, location was a theme for teacher retention.

Having a personal life was another major theme for teacher retention. Each teacher talked about the theme of having the knowledge of curriculum and data but making time for self was also important. Teacher F said, “You have to have a personal life.” Teacher D talked continuously in her interview about the necessity of having outlets and working out. She even shared her step-by-step plan for obtaining the knowledge of curriculum and data analysis two
aspects to being successful in the classroom. Teacher A was also one that worked out twice a day to give herself the energy to do the work of a teacher.

**Implications**

This study used qualitative research to acquire personal perceptions of the participants to understanding the factors associated with teacher retention and teacher self-efficacy abilities. The teachers in this study shared some significant information that was used to identify the specific factors for improving the conditions for teachers in schools. With the way teacher turnover rates are growing, this study is necessary to examine ways of equipping teachers and recognizing factors to encourage teachers to remain in the education field.

When it comes to building the self-efficacy of an urban school teacher, the need for protocols around teachers understanding how they must be disciplined, composed, relatable, and optimistic is necessary. Teachers need to have a strong sense of believing in themselves to engender this belief in their students. The study also revealed that relationships, location, a personal life, and knowledge in the areas of curriculum and data analysis were important to the retention of teachers. Therefore, based on all the data collected the next steps is four simple recommendations reflection time, administration support, mentoring, and professional development. Through having someone in each school building depending on the number of teachers to help run this program then conditions can teachers could change.

**Reflection Time**

Reflection time refers to making time for teachers to actively think about their actions as a classroom teacher. It is through self-reflection that one is about to look inward and become self-aware. Self-awareness is the ability to understand ones’ strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals. Teacher need this time of debriefing to sort through all the events that occur in their
profession. This reflection time helps teachers identify professional developments to attend, to analyze student work and the instruction it reflects, analyze student data, or if visiting a peer teacher class would help. Keeping a teacher journal is another great self-reflection tool that educators can use to write about behaviors observed, memorable moments, and interactions with students and peers. When teachers take the time to reflect on their class practice the reward is gaining a deeper understanding about themselves as teachers and could potentially lead to them staying in the profession to achieve experienced and effective teacher status.

**Administration Support**

In order, for an athletic to improve they must practice and be coached. School administrators must serve as coaches for their schools. Effective educational leadership produces the pivotal component needed for school reform and improvement. Therefore, teachers will be in dire need of support from the administration team. School administrators need to offer teachers support by being accessible, instructional, protective, and communicative. Teachers want to know that their principals are going to leave their office to help and support them by showing up in their classrooms and building a trusting work relationship. Making time to observe (formally and informally) teachers and provide feedback, arrange professional development, team teachers with great mentors regardless of years of service, and being open to having a dialogue with teachers are ways administration can provide necessary support to keeping teachers in the profession.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring in education is an opportunity for an experienced teacher to guide a new teacher by observing, giving instructional support, and providing feedback to them. It is also a time were a collaborative school relationship can form that helps to give confidence to a teacher
needed to stay in the profession and transform the experienced teacher towards a school leader.

A mentorship can also assist teachers by keeping them from feeling isolated, advances their professional growth, helps make them more effective in a shorter time, and reduces the slow self-destruction of new teachers. Mentoring for teachers should not be a choice because it provides a necessary element needed to maintain teachers in the profession.

**Professional Development**

Professional development is a crucial element of teaching. To keep up with the changing world, teachers should always be engaged in activities that continue their education beyond just receiving their teaching license. Teachers need the development to help shape their teaching style and figure out what works best in their classrooms. Teachers usually face challenges around classroom/time management, working with parents and other family members, differentiating instruction, handling difficult student behaviors, and how to effectively assess student learning. The array of activities offered with professional development helps teachers to address those challenges along with learning new skills and learn more about classroom curriculums being used. Essentially, effective professional development helps teachers to be educated on the best available research and information in teaching needed to be successful in their profession.

America’s classrooms need teachers that can make a difference and will remain in the field beyond three years. Teachers with strong self-efficacy need to be disciplined, show composure, have had relatable school experiences, and that are optimistic are needed in these public-school classrooms. These same teachers also value relationships, location of their school, having a personal life, and knowledge of the areas of content and data analysis. The components of reflection time, administrator support, mentoring, and professional development are the
specific steps to supplying support involved in turning the conditions for teaches around. When teachers take the time to reflect, have administrators’ support, involved in a teacher-mentoring program, and attend professional development the overwhelming responsibilities of being a teacher can be minimized and becoming an effective urban school teacher is achieved.

**Recommendations for the Future Research**

This study sought to gain insight on factors that build teacher self-efficacy in urban schools and factors that lead to teacher retention in urban schools. There was minimal information that was available regarding those area at the time of this study. The information around education is focused on the negatives. After gathering and analyzing data this study with a survey, interviews, and observations, there is information to address those areas, but some other themes were brought up as recommendations for future research.

First, relationships were an important factor that lead to teacher retention. Several of the participants in the study mentioned relationships with other teachers or with school leaders as an important part of the day. Therefore, research needs to be conducted on how to develop and/or foster these necessary relationships that should exist in urban schools. Secondly, an area for future research is investigating teacher retention and self-efficacy at other schools outside of Tennessee. Also, even looking at those same areas at suburban, private, charter, and other school settings. Opening the perimeters of the study could allow for more in-depth information that could strengthen the data collected in this study.

**Limitations**

The data collected was limited to teachers teaching within one urban Tennessee school system in Title 1 schools. This was a limitation because the data is only representative of teachers’ perspectives from Tennessee that teach in an urban school setting. Time restrictions
prevented all teachers with a high self-efficacy score from being interviewed and/or observed. Not including all teachers creates a limitation to the results for the research questions.

**Summary**

This study was intended to highlight the positive side to teaching and offer information to cultivate the field of education. Research stated that strong-self efficacy is an important indicator for teachers that remain in the field. Through the data analysis of the survey, observations, and interviews on the urban school teachers the themes emerged that offered recommendations that specifically can aid in these cultivations. People reading this study will be able to understand factors that are associated with effective urban school teachers. Chapter five presented the conclusions for this data study, contains limitations, and recommendations for future research.

The major findings were factors that build strong self-efficacy in teachers in urban school settings were disciplined, composure, relatable, and optimistic. The major findings that appeared as factors that increase teachers’ retention in urban school settings were relationships, location, personal life, and knowledge around classroom content and data analysis.

The implications that were noted after the completion of this study was to use reflection time, administrative support, mentoring, and professional development in schools to help teachers. The components are those specific steps to supplying support involved in turning the conditions for teaches around.

The recommendations for future research was to investigate more on relationships and opening the perimeter of the teachers included to research on about self-efficacy and job retention in all schools. The limitations associated with the study were about not having time to interview all teachers which leads to limited perspective information.
References


https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2005/RAND_TR164.pdf


file:///E:/Articles%20for%20Dissertation/Urban%20Schools%20The%20Challenge%20of%20Location%20and%20Poverty.pdf


Appendix A

Study Consent Form
TITLE OF STUDY

Understanding the Self-Efficacy Factors Associated with Teachers Retention in Urban School Settings

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Michelle Wilson
Carson-Newman University
(901) 355-5659
mvwilson@cn.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to identify the self-efficacy factors that promote the retention of teachers and job satisfaction in an urban school setting. Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s ability to successfully organize and implement a plan of action for achieving a desired outcome in a specific situation. There is little to no research that exists that shows tangible examples of teachers’ strong self-efficacy skills in urban schools. The factors that help keep teachers in urban schools need to be identified. In the quest to provide quality public education programs certain steps need to happen to retain and recruit more teachers. Identifying strong self-efficacy factors in our effective teachers could potentially help.

STUDY PROCEDURES

You will be asked to complete a Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey for this study.

Based on the survey results the researcher will contact people to take part in interviews and observations. Thirty to forty-five minutes will be allotted for each interview and thirty minutes will be allotted for the observations.

Interviews and observations will be audiotaped to aid in transcribing the data for this study. The audiotapes will be destroyed at the end of the study.
RISKS

There is a limited amount of potential risk in this study. Due to the nature of the study, you might feel some stress from answering the questions during the interview or survey because the questions are designed to elicit personal views and information. However, you will be allowed to see the questions prior to sitting down for the interview. Measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and those assurances are outlined in the Confidentiality section below. You may decline to answer any or all questions, and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, I hope that the information obtained from this study may contribute to the understanding of teacher self-efficacy in urban schools. This study holds great promise due to the potential benefits offered to teachers. It is imperative for policymakers to examine ways to better equip teachers and identify factors to encourage them to remain in the education field. Therefore, if we can learn the factors that promote self-efficacy abilities of teachers it could possibly aid in the retaining of teachers in a demanding setting like an urban school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to this survey and any interview questions will be confidential. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, surveys, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. All electronic information will be on a separate flash drive and stored in the locked cabinet as well.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact the Carson-Newman University Institutional Review Board at (865) 3543000, ext. 4822.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to take part in this study or not. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read, and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature ______________________________ Date __________

Investigator's signature _____________________________ Date __________
Appendix B

Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey
Dear Colleague: I am a doctoral student at Carson-Newman University and a classroom teacher within the district. As part of my program, I am conducting research to learn the factors that encourage teachers to continue teaching in urban school districts. Below you will find a brief survey to complete. Your completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in the study. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will remain anonymous, unless you provide your contact information for a follow-up interview. In that case, your responses will be kept confidential. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me by email at mwilson@cn.edu. I sincerely appreciate your participation.

Thank you,
Michelle V. Wilson

Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey
Adapted from Tschanenn-Moran and Hoy Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses, ranging from (1) Nothing/Not at all to (5) Some Influence to (9) A Great Deal as each signifies a degree on the continuum. Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

(1) Nothing/Not at all to (5) Some Influence to (9) A Great Deal

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<th>Question</th>
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<td>1. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
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<td>2. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
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<td>3. To what extent can you create good questions for your students?</td>
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<td>4. How much can you do to motivate students with little to no interest in school?</td>
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<td>5. How much can you do to influence how your students value learning?</td>
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<td>6. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
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<td>7. How much can you do to measure student comprehension of the material you taught?</td>
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<td>8. To what degree can you develop expectations that are clear about student behavior?</td>
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<td>9. How much can you do to make a difference with difficult students?</td>
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<td>10. How well can you control unruly or disobedient students in the classroom?</td>
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<td>11. How well can you establish routines and procedures to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
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<td>12. To what extent are you able to get students to believe they can perform well in school?</td>
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More questions on the back...
Follow-up Information

- How many years have you worked as a teacher?
- Have you always taught in an urban school?
- Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview?
- If yes, please provide information for follow-up.

  Name:

  Email:
Appendix C

Interview Guide
Interview Guide

1. How long have you worked as a teacher?
   a. During that time, in how many schools have you worked?
   b. How many of them were urban schools?
   c. Which school was your favorite school? Why was it the favorite?
   d. Which school was your least favorite? What lead to your dissatisfaction with work at this school?

2. Looking back, why did you want to be a teacher? (motivation question)

3. Did you always intend to work in an urban school? How did you imagine that working in an urban school would be like? How was it different from what you imagined? (self-efficacy question)

4. What five words would you use to describe yourself as a teacher? (self-efficacy question)

5. If I asked your team members or principal to describe you as a teacher, what would they tell me? (self-efficacy question)

6. Why do you think teaching at an urban school is described as challenging? (behavior question)
   a. Did you ever think about moving to a suburban school or another district?
   b. What made you continue in the urban school setting?

7. Your work setting is challenging, but you stay and succeed. What are the characteristics of teachers who can be successful in working in this environment? (self-efficacy question)

8. Research indicates that many teachers are motivated to work in urban schools because they believe that they make a difference. Do you believe this is true? (motivation question)
   a. Can you think of times that you believed that you have made a difference in the life of a student?
9. Tell me about the worst day you have experienced working in an urban school. (behavior question)
   a. What made it so bad?
   b. How did you handle this stress?

10. Tell me about your best day of work at school. (behavior question)
    a. What made it so good?

11. Effective urban teachers must have great grit and resilience. How have you developed resilience? (behavior and motivation question)
    a. How do you re-charge your “batteries”?

12. What role do your team members or other teachers play in your ability to work effectively in this urban school? (behavior questions)

13. What role does your school leadership (principal and/or assistant principal) play in your ability to work effectively in this urban school? (behavior question)

14. Each year new colleagues enter the profession and are placed in an urban school in this district. What do they need to know about this work?
    a. What advice would you give them? (behavior, motivation, and self-efficacy question)

15. Do you think you are an effective teacher for an urban school? How do you know? (self-efficacy question)